



Life is busy for our families and the pressures of work and childcare logistics has meant that time spent for traditional experiences like cooking are limited. We feel passionately that cooking is not only a great life skill for the children to acquire, but it also an incredible tool for developing a wide range of skills. The benefits of learning to cook and prepare food alongside an adult are significant.

Health - When children are involved in preparing food, they are more likely to try out new tastes and discuss the different food types. Children can become carrot converts or falafel fans, and so improve their chances of eating a more varied diet.

Language development - Through cooking, children can learn new vocabulary spontaneously as they will often want to talk about what they are seeing and doing.

Physical skills - Cooking helps children to practise a range of physical skills, particularly their hand-eye co-ordination. Movements such as peeling and grating also strengthen the hands.

Emotional development - Children can develop a sense of pride and also feelings of competence when they cook. Time spent with the adult can also help to develop relationships.

Mathematics - Cooking provides genuine opportunities for children to count, measure and calculate.

Early science - Cooking is rooted in science. Children can observe how different ingredients mix together, and also the effect of heat, including freezing on mixtures.

Understanding the world - Cooking provides opportunities to talk about food production – for example, the parts of foods, how fruit and vegetables are grown and where they come from.

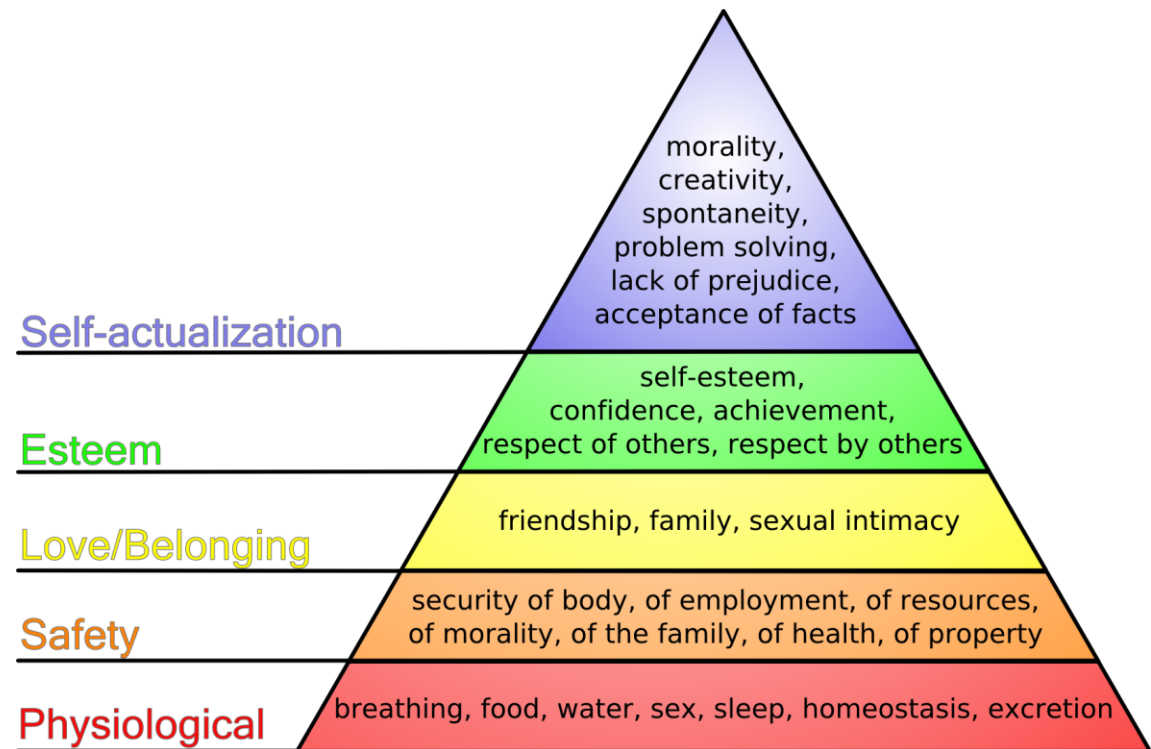
Independence – Children can make decisions for themselves and thrive on the sense of autonomy at being involved in a typically ‘adult’ activity.

Risk Taking – Children are trained and trusted to use tools that involve sharp blades. They are encouraged to assess risk and make decisions to keep themselves and others safe.



Whilst we plan time for cooking as an enhancement to our curriculum, we also offer rolling snack across the morning as part of our continuous provision. We understand that children need their physiological needs (Maslow, 1954) to be met in order to be motivated and successful. Children's hunger is not linear and does not always fall into the designated snack times of the day. We therefore have access to fruit snack throughout the morning. Children are trained to recognise when they are hungry and to be independent in managing preparing fruit safely and tidying up after themselves. This is another opportunity which develops our children's physical development and communication and language skills, as they will openly engage in discourse with their peers as they share a snack.

Cooking activities roll over 2 weeks to ensure all children have the opportunity to access them. Pupil Premium learners and those needing further development of their Prime Areas are given priority in choosing a cooking activity. Adults ensure they are engaging in high quality interactions whilst promoting independence and problem-solving skills in the learners. Children are encouraged to see the purpose of cooking and to follow the process through to outcome. They are involved in following recipes, putting mixtures into the oven and monitoring its temperature and timings.





Skill Development

The majority of our learners have hot school meals. On starting school in September, many find using cutlery challenging and do not possess the motor strength or dexterity to handle cutlery effectively. To support our learners, the first term of school develops their cutting skills through our cooking enhancements. We also focus on the skill of spreading to encourage further movement in their wrists.

During the Spring Term, we broaden the children's cooking experiences by introducing more skills to their repertoire. From our assessments, we have observed that some children need further development of their fine motor skills. In response to this need, we continue to practise skills that develop the learner's strength in their shoulder and wrist pivot points eg. peeling, mashing, kneading and rolling.

Finally, by the Summer Term the children will have secured many cooking skills and will move on to applying these to make a product. They will engage in the whole cooking process as opposed to focusing on specific elements eg. cutting, spreading etc. They will explore adding heat and freezing items to see how foods can change state.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Focus Skill	* Cutting soft ingredients – using scissors and knives. Encourage using hand to hold item steady.	*Spreading *Cutting harder ingredients - include using a fork to hold steady *Grating *Following a recipe	*Peeling – using fingers and peeler *Mashing – with masher *Following a recipe *Spreading – with increased precision	*Mixing *Weighing – using cups and spoons *Kneading *Rolling *Adding Heat	*Washing *Peeling *Cutting – slicing, more controlled size *Blending – using hand held blender	*Freezing *Mixing *Weighing – using cups and spoons *Kneading *Adding Heat
Health and Safety	Knife safety Safety gloves	Knife safety Safety gloves	Blade safety - peeler Safety gloves	Oven Safety	Blade safety	Oven safety
Potential Ideas	Fruit salad Apple crumble	Crackers Sandwiches Icing digestives	Mash Banana bread Pizza	Salt dough Biscuits	Fruit salad Smoothies Soup	Ice lollies Bread Cheese Sticks

***Cutting, grating and peeling are ongoing skills which are developed through the continuous provision in the Snack Station.**