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Nebraska Extension-Buffalo County
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Tips for Family Baking Success

Baking is an inexpensive family activity that provides opportunities for families to develop stronger relationships and help children learn time management, team skills, following directions, and problem solving.

It is important to allow plenty of time when baking with children. Weekends are a good time as schedules can be more relaxed. Turn off distractions such as television, cell phones and computer.

Put safety first. Teach children the importance of staying safe while cooking by showing them how to hold kitchen tools safely, how to use oven mitts to protect hands from heat, and how to turn appliances on and off safely. Start with age-appropriate tasks to help children master simple tasks before moving on to more complex skills. Children feel a sense of accomplishment and mastery when they can make a recipe from start to finish.

Wash hands and counter tops before starting. Wear an apron or large T-shirt over clothes to protect clothes from getting soiled. Long hair should be tied back or covered. Roll-up long sleeves to keep them out of the way.

Before starting read the entire recipe and gather all the ingredients and equipment. Re-wash hands before beginning to measure and mix. Take it one step at a time. Do pre-preps for ingredients as needed.

Teach children to use the right tools and to measure ingredients correctly. Pour liquids into a clear liquid measuring cup placed on the countertop and read at eye level. Use standard measuring cups for dry ingredients and measuring spoons for small amounts less than 1/4 cup.

Stir dry ingredients and spoon into dry measuring cups and level with a flat-edged utensil. Sift only if the recipe specifies to pre-sift before measuring.

Avoid measuring ingredients over the mixing bowl. Crack eggs in a separate small bowl to avoid getting eggshell in the mixing bowl. Also, remember to wash hands after cracking eggs to prevent cross contamination.

Show children how to preheat the oven, and to make sure the oven racks are in the right place for the pans and recipe. Allow 10 minutes for the oven to preheat. Place pans in the oven so they do not touch each other or the oven sides. Do not place pans on racks directly below or above another pan. Keep clean, dry oven mitts or pads close by and have cooling racks ready.

Clean up during preparation and while the product bakes make this task easier. Never place knives in sudsy water with other dishes or utensils. Place knives on the counter to wash separately from other dishes. Provide separate towels for hands and dishes.

Baking can be a fun and enjoyable experience for the entire family. For more baking tips contact Nebraska Extension in Buffalo County, 1400 East 34th Street, Kearney or call (308) 236-1235.