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The pandemic has brought challenges for our lives. One big one is home schooling children. A great way to incorporate STEM is through cooking. Science, technology, engineering and math are all elements of cooking in the kitchen. In addition, you can reinforce healthy lifestyles when cooking. Finally, cooking is a great way to include everyone in the family.

Begin by practicing skills such as measuring. How do you measure dry ingredients, how do you measure liquids? Discuss the ‘whys’ of adding things such as flour, baking soda and salt to recipes. This digs into the heart of science. Substitutions can also be a part of your discussions.

Kitchen safety is a subject that is important to include in the beginning of your cooking experiences. Teach your children the importance of safety items such as the proper use of a knife. Also, how to wash the knife when you are finished using it. The importance of washing hands is also a must, you can add that you should always be mindful of washing your hands and keeping your hands away from your face. A big part of your success in the kitchen with your child is to look at age appropriate tasks. If you have a younger child, you may consider the use of a plastic knife and cutting that is simple versus a difficult cutting task. You also will want to talk about appropriate use of the kitchen, it is important to have mom and dad’s permission to cook in the kitchen.

Pick recipes that are family favorites and those that are easy to do. Meal preparation and meal planning is a great way to include everyone in the meal process. Go over the importance of the food groups from Choose MyPlate. There are some great family resources found here:

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/browse-by-audience/view-all-audiences/families>. Be sure to look at the rest of the site as well. You will find ideas for physical activity and healthy eating.

While the pandemic has thrown us into a state of uncertainty, there are some positives. Cooking with your child can be a lasting memory as well as an opportunity to learn a life-long skill. What are you waiting for? Get cooking! For more information, visit [www.food.unl.edu](http://www.food.unl.edu) I am also available at [raae.aspen@unl.edu](mailto:raae.aspen@unl.edu)