

Sharing food

Rationale:

Preparing a meal, snack or drinks for family or friends is a fun way for your child to learn to share. Sharing will teach your child about compromise, taking turns and negotiating. Through sharing, he will learn that if he gives a little to others, he can get some of what he wants as well. Your child needs to know how to share so he can make and keep friends and play cooperatively. Sharing can be a challenge, especially at first. Your child will need lots of practice and encouragement.

Age range information

3-6 years

What you need

Choose a simple meal or snack to make with your child. He could also prepare a jug of water or juice and some cups for extra sharing practice!

Good dishes to prepare and share are:

- **Fruit salad.** Choose soft fruits that are easy for your child to cut with a safe knife, like bananas, strawberries and watermelon. Help your child by peeling the fruit first.
- **Cake.** This is a good choice for a special occasion like a birthday. Mixing and measuring the ingredients is fun and helps your child's numeracy skills.
- **Meals.** Your child might enjoy helping you serve up lunch or dinner – for example, he could help you spoon rice into bowls. This can be a good opportunity for talking about who needs bigger or smaller serves.
- **Finger food.** Preparing food does not have to take a long time. It can be as simple as arranging some cheese crackers and fruit on a plate.

Keep your child safe by supervising him around heat sources and sharp objects while cooking. Be aware of your child's abilities and help him if needed.

How to do it

- Involve your child in choosing what to prepare for his friends or family. When you are choosing, think about how much he will be able to do, and how much time you have to prepare the food.
- Prepare the meal or snack with your child. Prompt him with reminders that you are making the food to share – for example, 'There are five of us. Do you think that's enough strawberries for everyone?' or 'Siti doesn't like too much rice. Can you remember if Rashid likes watermelon?'

- Have your child count the number of people and help him to divide food fairly among plates or bowls. If you are serving at the table, remind your child of any family rules you have – for example, serve the oldest person or the birthday person first, and serve yourself last.
- For finger food or plates of food such as cookies that you are not dividing up, your child could walk around to each person in turn and offer them the plate.
- Your child could also pour everybody a glass of water or some other cool drink.
- Encourage your child to think about what is fair – for example, ‘Jun Jie, there’s only one piece of cake left, but Kimberly and Kumar both want it. What should we do?’

Adapting for children of different ages

Keep dishes very simple for your younger child. This allows him to remain involved and engaged in the preparation. If your child is still learning to share, he may think the dish is ‘his’ because he made it. You can gently remind him of how he made it to share, and how you talked together about making sure there was going to be enough for everyone.

Your older child has a greater attention span and more hand-eye coordination, so he can probably manage more complicated recipes. He might even help you prepare the evening meal.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

Recommended Reads

- [Pig the Winner](#)
- [Lorenzo, the pizza-loving lobster](#)
- [Duck & Goose](#)

Engage your child with simple activities at home! Check out some of these things you can do together:

- [Make Your Own Sandwich](#)