

Four Reasons to Get Your Teen in the Kitchen



LIVE WELL UTAH

4 REASONS TO GET YOUR TEEN IN THE KITCHEN

Not all teenagers want to help out in the kitchen. But encouraging them to do so is a worthy goal because of the many benefits.

Why get your teens in the kitchen?

Promotes conversation – When you cook with your children, you can model good communication. Studies have shown that the more teens communicate with their parents on a daily basis, the less likely they are to participate in risky behaviors.

They'll be more likely to eat It – Do you have picky eaters? Teens will be more likely to try new things if they are able to help prepare the meals they are eating. They will also be getting a more balanced diet when meals are prepared in the home.

Promotes confidence in the kitchen – As teens grow into adulthood, the task of feeding themselves becomes their own. We need to prepare our kids with skills for the future to help make the transition into adulthood more successful. And the likelihood of them having to feed a family of their own one day is pretty high!

Reinforces science and math – What a great way to “trick” kids into doing math and science. They have so much fun in the kitchen, many times they forget they are learning new skills and applying many math and science concepts. Help your teens develop a love of cooking and at the same time, they will be making connections to other aspects of their learning.

USU Extension's [Youth Can Cook](#) Program

Do you have a teen looking for more cooking experience? Here are five reasons they should join the Youth Can Cook program.

1. Be part of a group!

Come and make friends with other teens who don't attend your school, who view the world differently than you do, and are

excited to learn! Youth Can Cook brings together teens from all over the county, giving them a chance to learn and grow in different and distinct ways.

2. Master Food Preserver Course – kitchen skills

Do you have a favorite salsa your grandma makes every fall? Or have you ever broken out a bottle of canned peaches in the middle of winter and had flashbacks to summer time? Food preservation gives us the ability to enjoy our favorite foods all year round! Teens will learn food preservation techniques from community Master Food Preservers. These skills will later be used as part of their Youth Can Cook paid apprenticeship as they assist in future food preserver courses.

3. Food Safety Managers Certification

Jobs available to teens are likely to involve food, and working in a food establishment requires a food handler's permit. As a part of the Youth Can Cook program, teens are guided through the Food Safety Managers course (ServSafe equivalent). Youth will participate in hands-on activities that help solidify the concepts learned. This is an \$80 course that is free to program participants.

4. Job, life, and relationship skills

In a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the data collected showed that teamwork/collaboration, oral and written communications, and critical thinking/problem solving were all identified as "absolutely essential" to be career ready.

Teens will leave the program with a fresh resume, interviewing and communicating skills, and the ability to navigate relationships in the job sector.

5. Paid apprenticeship & job reference

Teens will apprentice community educators to get a feel for what it's like to work in the professional world. They will be given responsibilities and tasks to demonstrate the skills they learned throughout the program. The apprenticeship lasts 50 hours, and teens are paid \$9.50 an hour – more than \$2 over minimum wage.

Learn more about the Youth Can Cook program [here](#).

Information for this article was submitted by Ashlee Christiansen, Youth Can Cook program coordinator, Washington County, and Katie Kapp, Youth Can Cook program coordinator, Salt Lake County