

Brought to you by the NCSE Occupational Therapy Team

Baking is a fun activity for all the family and can support your child's development. Baking can tap into a child's motivation and promote the development of **learning, play, life skills, motor skills and social skills.**

By engaging your child and family in baking activities the following skills can be developed.

- **Fine Motor Skills:** Getting your child to stir, mix the ingredients, knead the dough and decorate cupcakes can develop a child's hands strength and bilateral integration (using two hands together).
- **Hand Eye Coordination Skills:** Adding and pouring ingredients into the bowl, decorating cakes and cupcakes and placing them onto the tray can help develop visual skills.
- **Develops reading and maths skills:** Involving your child in reading the recipe, measuring ingredients and calculating the correct amounts can develop literacy and maths skills.
- **Sensory Processing Skills:** Breaking the eggs, mixing the batter and kneading the dough is a strong sensory experience as it offers opportunities to explore different textures, smells, tastes, colours which can be calming and regulating for a child. Be mindful of children with sensory processing difficulties. Some will have sensory needs around certain smells and textures. Additional information can be found [here](#).
- **Develops life skills, planning, problem solving and independence living skills:** By role modelling this activity, encouraging your child's engagement and asking them 'what is next' promotes planning, sequencing, organisation and problem solving skills.
- **Develops confidence and social skills:** By repeating this task and mastering some baking tasks can developing your child's life skills increased their self-esteem and confidence. Baking can encourage sibling and family interaction and verbal communication and listening skills. By asking the child to read out loud the recipe, talking through the steps involved and completed promotes communication.
- **Healthy Eating:** Baking and cooking can teach your child to form positive relationships with fresh healthy food. Young people can become more aware of ingredients required to make bread, scones or soups etc. More information on a balance diet and healthy eating can be found on the [HSE website](#).
- **Provides fun bonding time for parents and the family:** Baking is a great way to involve all of the family and connect with your child. Tasks can be allocated to meet

skills e.g. older kids can measure ingredients and the younger children can mix food items. This can promote positive connections and team working for all.



Think about your child's skill level and if the recipe should include pictures, numbers, simple words etc. so that it is a 'just right challenge' for your child to follow along. Remember to keep asking your child 'what is next' so that they are fully involved in the baking activity.

Baking ideas

- Most recipes provide a visual demonstration which can be watched online prior or during the activity.

Activity: Baking scones <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/classic-scones-jam-clotted-cream>



Other baking ideas

- Cupcakes: Your child can try different ways of decorating them every time <https://www.delish.com/cooking/q4151/cupcake-recipes-for-kids/?slide=7>
- Easy cornflake tart: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easy-cornflake-tart>
- Banana and blueberry muffins: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/banana-blueberry-muffins>
- Fruity sponge cake: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/fruity-sponge-cake>
- Lemon cheese cake: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/lemon-cheesecake>
- Other ideas: <https://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/baking-with-kids.html>