



COOKING BREAKFAST

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ROUTINE:

Cooking is a great opportunity to support STEM learning! Talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words as you prepare breakfast together.

Next time you make a morning meal, tell your child you want their help thinking through all the **steps**.

"I wonder if we can remember all the steps to make our breakfast. Let's think about what we need to do **first, next, and last!**"

As you get ready to cook breakfast, ask your child what they think **needs to happen first**. Give your child wait time to respond. Talk through the steps together, like gathering the ingredients, mixing the batter, pouring it onto the griddle, cooking until ready, and then adding toppings like syrup or fruit. Ask your child to help you put the **steps in order** and think about **why the order matters**.

Cooking breakfast is a perfect example of computational thinking! Cooking breakfast works best when we follow the **recipe steps in the right order**. Ask your child: "What do you think would happen if we poured the batter before the griddle was hot? What if we forgot to add eggs to the batter?"

STEM LEARNING AREA:

Computational Thinking: Concepts involved in programming computers and coding.

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested daily routine. These are only suggested activity adaptations. Consider consulting your child's care team first.



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.



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ADAPTATIONS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENT

- If possible, limit background noise and distractions so your child can be more engaged in the cooking activity
- Place materials within reach in a contained space for easier access
- Place an anti-slip stabilizing mat below the plates and bowls so they do not move
- Using adjustable height table or adjustable chair if your child needs sit down or rest frequently



Adaptations are simple changes you can make to your child's space, toys, or activities to help them stay engaged and learn STEM ideas and words during daily routines.

MATERIALS

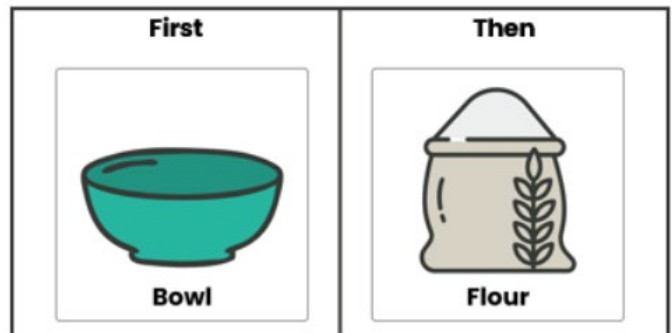
- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- For easier grasping, adapt the utensils by building up the handles or creating grip straps using household items (masking tape, pool noodles)

INTERACTIONS OR INSTRUCTION

- Provide hand-over-hand support to help your child explore ingredients and utensils better
- Narrate or sign your child's actions as they interact and experiment with the utensils and ingredients ("Oh, you're scooping with the tablespoon!")
- Adjust the number of steps as needed.
- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Use pictures or icons to signal next steps or each step of the sequence
- Communicate with your child at eye level
- Speak or sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts (to try new foods) with words, facial expression, or body language

Quick Tip:

Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues, such as touch, object, movement, or visual.

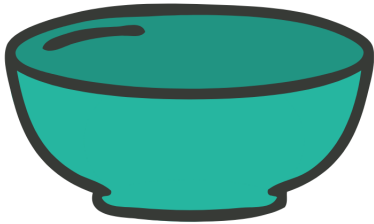




COOKING BREAKFAST

VISUAL CUES FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

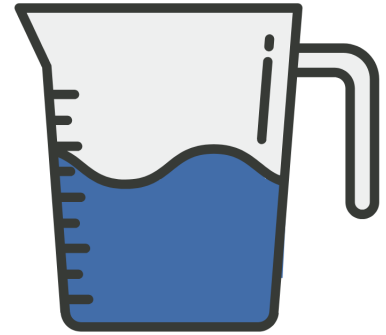
USE TO PROMPT



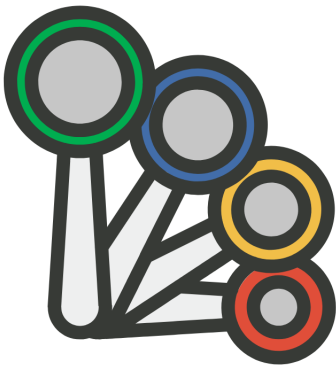
Bowl



Mix



Measuring cup



Measuring spoons



Need more visual cues?

Visit [STEMIE's Visual Cue Library](#) or check out STEMIE's tips for creating and using visual supports with [A Guide to Visual Supports](#).



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VISUAL CUES FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

ONIGIRI (JAPANESE RICE BALLS)

MATERIALS

- 1 cup short grain rice
- ¼ tsp of salt
- Water
- Optional: 2-3 tbsp of canned tuna (or alternative filling)
- Optional: 2-3 strips of nori (seaweed)

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook rice **Adult Supervision required**
2. Let cooked rice cool a bit
3. Wet hands
4. Add salt to rice
5. Shape rice into a ball or triangle
6. Add filling if desired
7. Wrap with seaweed is desired
8. Enjoy!



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VISUAL CUES FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

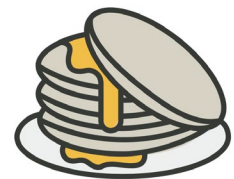
PANCAKES

MATERIALS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg, beaten (or non-egg substitute such as 1 mashed banana or ¼ cup applesauce)
- 1 cup milk half (or non-dairy substitute such as almond milk, coconut milk, or oat milk)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix dry ingredients (flour, baking powder, sugar, salt) in one bowl
2. Place the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl and mix well.
3. Make a crater or hole in the center of the mix.
4. Pour in milk (or non-dairy substitute), egg (or non-egg substitute), and oil in the crater hole. Mix until smooth with no lumps.
5. Spray griddle or frying pan with cooking oil.
6. Heat griddle or frying pan to medium high. **Adult Supervision required**
7. Scoop ¼ cup of batter out of the large bowl.
8. Pour batter into griddle or frying pan. Flip pancake when you see bubbles popping through the batter. Bring both sides to a light golden brown. **Adult Supervision required**
9. Add any extras (sprinkles, frosting, butter, peanut butter, syrup, whipped cream)
10. Enjoy!





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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

VOLUME MEASURER

Description: Help your child **measure volume** by predicting **how much** of each ingredient is needed to **fill** a measuring cup while **following the steps** of a favorite breakfast recipe, like pancakes or waffles.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to recognize patterns in their daily routines. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as math skills.

Talk about the importance of **accurate measurements** when Making Breakfast. "Accurate measurements of flour, sugar, and butter help our cookies turn out just right. **Too much** or **too little** of an ingredient can **change** the way our dessert **looks and tastes!**"

Ask, "**How many** tablespoons of sugar do you think will **fill** this measuring cup? Is the cup **half full** or **almost full?**" (16 tablespoons = 1 cup)

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Have a conversation about what ingredients to have in or on pancakes or waffles, then go to a grocery and shop for those ingredients together
- Check out our other Daily Routine Explorations about Cooking or Mealtime on **STEMIE Learning Trajectories** (<https://stemielearningtrajectories.fpg.unc.edu/>):
 - Apples
 - Sandwiches
 - Desserts
- Check out these books about pancakes:
 - *Pancakes for Breakfast* by Tomie dePaola
 - *Pancakes, Pancakes!* by Eric Carle
 - *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* by Laura Numeroff

