

Now You're Cooking!

(NAPSA)—At a time when fast food is frequently on the menu for family dinners, Barbara Anderson, Ed. D., encourages parents to cook with their children.

Anderson, vice president of education for KinderCare Learn-



Photo Credit: KinderCare Learning Centers

ing Centers, which operates 1,230 early childhood education and child care centers nationwide, says: “Cooking with your children encourages participation in household activities and teaches basic skills. Even preschoolers will begin to learn math as they measure ingredients. And cooking gives you an opportunity to talk about good nutrition. Children should understand the relationship between food choices and such diseases as obesity, diabetes and hyperactivity.”

Anderson suggests starting with simple favorites like pudding mixes, where all that's needed is measuring milk and stirring. With adult supervision, children can assemble their favorite sandwich, microwave soup or hot cereal, toss salads or spread peanut butter or soft cheese on celery stalks. Most children enjoy using a blender to create smoothies with milk or yogurt and their favorite fruit.

“Be sure to emphasize the importance of careful hand washing,” says Anderson. And, of course, setting the table and helping clear after meals are traditional roles for young family members as they learn to do their share. Helping plan the menu, shop for groceries and participate in preparation may make fussy eaters more enthusiastic about mealtimes, as well.