skills on the hill pediatric therapy

Involve Kids in Meal Prep & Cooking

The therapist trick for raising adventurous eaters

Kids who help make food are far more likely to eat it. Cooking together builds curiosity, lowers mealtime pressure, and sneaks in fine motor, language, and sensory skills all at once. Here's how, by age.

NOTICE	TRY	BUILD	CONNECT	GROW

Why it works

Touching, smelling, and playing with food is low-pressure exposure - the same principle feeding therapists use. Familiar = safe = more likely to try.

Toddlers (1-3)

Wash veggies, tear lettuce, stir, sprinkle, mash banana

Dump pre-measured ingredients; carry unbreakable items

Preschool (3-5)

Spread with a butter knife, peel bananas and eggs, whisk

Roll dough, scoop, snap green beans, set the table

School age (5+)

Measure, crack eggs, use a kid-safe knife

Follow a simple recipe, read steps aloud, help plan a meal

Skills hiding in the kitchen

Fine motor (stirring, pouring), language (naming, sequencing)

Helpful idea

Early math (counting, measuring), sensory tolerance (textures, smells)

Keep it pressure-free

The goal is participation and exposure, not eating. Let them play - tasting is a bonus, never a demand.

GROUP 5 - PT & Gross Motor

Parent tip: Start small. Pick one idea that fits your family, practice it consistently, and build from there.