

# PATCH 'Ohana Network



PATCH - Supporting Hawaii's Child Care Needs

## Everyday Science: In the Kitchen

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The kitchen provides your child with an opportunity to experience science in action in a variety of ways. Before you turn your kitchen into a laboratory, remember that young chefs and scientists must always be supervised by an adult and hands should be frequently washed with soap and water.

Here are some ideas on how your kitchen can be used to introduce your child to science.

**Infant:** Create a safe place where your infant can watch you cook. As you prepare a meal use running commentary to describe what you are doing. For example, say: "This bread is soft in the middle, but crusty on the outside. Look at all the holes. I wonder if this is why it is soft." Your child can participate in the investigation by playing with the soft part of the bread. Say, "Squish the bread in your hands. How does it feel? How does it smell?" Although your child cannot talk and report on observations made, hearing the running commentary and interacting with food provides a language rich experience that your child can build upon.



**Toddler:** Snack time is a great way to introduce a child to important scientific skills such as sorting, collecting data and reporting. For example, feed your child a snack mix, like trail mix. Have your child sort it into ingredients. Role model the process by saying, "I am going to put all of the pretzels into one pile, raisins in another, and cereal in another. Can you separate the trail mix ingredients?" After you are both

done sorting, you can talk with each other about the activity. Say, "I have 4 raisins. How many do you have?" This every day activity is a wonderful way to introduce your little one to science in a fun, non-threatening way.



**Preschooler:** Play with ice cubes to engage your child in science. Put an ice cube in a clear plastic container and leave it on the kitchen counter. Ask your child, "What do you think will happen to the ice?" Let your child explain and then say, "You just made a prediction or a guess. Let's check back in a half hour to see if your prediction is correct."

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Every half hour, check on the ice and talk with your child about what is happening. Expand on this activity by putting three similar sized ice cubes in three different clear containers. Put one container in the fridge, another on the kitchen counter and the third outside. Every hour, check with your child on the containers and talk about what you observe. Are all three ice cubes still the same size? Is one melting faster than the others? If so, why does your child think this is happening? What does your child notice about the container? The simple act of watching ice melt allows a child to experience how changing one element (e.g. temperature) affects an activity (such as how fast ice melts).



of a plant, and we taste how they change the flavor of foods. One of the benefits of starting an herb garden with your child is that it is relatively affordable, fairly easy to care for, and the herbs can be used in your cooking. Your child will delight in growing green onion to put on top of their saimin or will be

amazed at how adding a few basil leaves to a red pasta sauce changes the flavor of their spaghetti. Starting a simple herb garden provides your child with an opportunity to care for a living thing and helps your child use their senses in scientific investigation. It provides an opportunity for science to intersect with cooking in an up close and personal way.

**Kindergartener:** Growing herbs stimulates our senses – we see bright colors, we smell aromatic fragrances, we feel textures of the different parts

These simple activities are a great way to introduce your child to science. The best part is that you and your child will have fun creating meals that fill tummies and memories that fill the soul!




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