

Cooking With Kids

Keeping Kids Safe In The Kitchen

(NAPSA)—According to a recent survey, an estimated 88 percent of American children say they sometimes fix their own meals and 48 percent make their own meals “most of the time.” Of those surveyed, 92 percent responded that they “like or don’t mind” preparing their own meals, because they get to choose the foods they enjoy.

However, as an increasing number of children and teens head into—and spend time in—the kitchen, it leaves many adults concerned about safety.

Fortunately, families may be able to learn a thing or two about kitchen safety from someone children can relate to: a chef their own age.

At age 11, Justin Miller of Baden, PA, was named “The World’s Youngest Chef” by the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Apart from his regular fifth-grade studies, Miller attends Johnson & Wales Culinary School, where he learns not only how to sauté and flambé but also about safety in the kitchen and proper use of utensils.

If you have a budding young chef, or want to feel confident that you’ve prepared your kids to safely manage their way around the kitchen, Miller offers these tips for your children:

- **ASK FOR HELP:** Encourage your children to ask for help when they need it. Explain that an adult needs to be nearby whenever they are in the kitchen.

- **CREATE THEIR OWN SPACE:** Designate a drawer or cupboard in your kitchen as “kid-friendly” with supplies like microwaveable bowls, plates, plastic utensils, etc. Make these items easy to reach and use. Depending on your child’s age and maturity level, establish a list of items that are “off-limits” unless an adult is at home.

- **Cleanliness is key.** Encourage your kids to wash their



Safety is a key ingredient for kids who enjoy cooking up fun in the kitchen.

hands before preparing meals and snacks. Explain the importance of frequent washing to avoid cross-contamination.

- **EXPLORE AND ENJOY:** Stock your kitchen and pantry with foods that are fun and easy to prepare like new **Ragú® Express™**. It requires just ½ cup of water and 3½ minutes in the microwave. “Made with 100 percent natural **Ragú®** sauce and no artificial flavors or preservatives, it is a great alternative to traditional snacks,” said Tina Ruggiero, M.S., R.D. Also, start a folder or binder of your kid’s favorite recipes for the times when they feel “there’s nothing to eat in the house!”

- **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT:** For kids that are old enough, show them how to remove something hot from the microwave or stove. Always use a potholder and explain that steam can be just as dangerous as an open flame.

- **KNOW WHOM TO CALL:** Create a list of emergency phone numbers (fire, poison control, paramedics) and be sure everyone knows where it is posted. Better yet, have them programmed into the speed dial of your phone.

For more information and tips, visit www.RaguExpress.com.