

Spotlight



KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Did you know September 13 is National Kids Take Over the Kitchen Day? Use this opportunity to teach your kids valuable life skills while spending quality time together. The following tips can help make it a great experience.

Expect mistakes — and messes. Learning a new skill requires practice, and cooking is no exception. Be ready for a few spilled ingredients and a burnt cookie or two.

Engage in all stages. Children will benefit from being included in the entire process. In addition to cooking, let them choose the recipe, shop for ingredients and clean up when finished.

Incorporate academics. Cooking provides an excellent opportunity to practice math and reading skills by measuring ingredients and following written instructions.

Make it fun. Preparing a meal can be a great way to spend time together as a family. Pick a favorite recipe, put on some music and enjoy the time together.

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YOUR GUIDE TO SMART GOALS

For students and educators, fall is the time to set goals for the new academic year. In fact, workers in all careers may benefit from a review of their annual priorities. Using SMART goals can be an effective tool to provide clarity, focus and motivation.

SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. By incorporating these five principles into your goal-setting process, you can transform vague aspirations into concrete targets. Each element plays a role in defining your objectives, ensuring they're both attainable and meaningful.

SPECIFIC

Be clear and concise when setting a goal. Determine what will be accomplished, who is responsible and the steps involved.

MEASURABLE

Track progress with a quantifiable goal. This includes monitoring actionable items that will help you reach your targets. Assessing your progress can help you stay focused and builds excitement as you get closer to completion.

ACHIEVABLE

Challenge your abilities, but make sure you're setting a reasonable goal. Evaluate your skills, resources and time constraints to determine if your objective is attainable.

RELEVANT

Make sure the goal matters to you. It should be worthwhile and contribute to your personal or professional growth. It's also important to consider your lifestyle, then determine if the time is right to pursue the goal.

TIMELY

Set a deadline. Having a target date helps you stay focused and can keep other things from taking priority over your goal.

By incorporating SMART goals, you can transform abstract ideas into tangible objectives, helping to ensure more successful results.



PLAN A CELEBRATION ON A BUDGET

Contrary to popular belief, you can throw a great celebration without breaking the bank. Follow these suggestions to host an affordable, unforgettable party.

HOST AT HOME

Celebrating at your house can create a cozy atmosphere for guests and saves money you would have otherwise spent on renting a venue. With the right decorations, you can set the mood for any occasion.

ASK FOR HELP

Ask guests to bring a side dish or dessert to help keep expenses down while adding variety to your menu.

INVITE VIA EMAIL

Create personalized party invitations with a free online graphic editor and email them to your guests. Not only will you save on paper and postage, but you'll likely get more RSVPs in a timely manner.

BE CRAFTY

Handmade decorations are more personal and less expensive than the store-bought variety. You can find templates, tutorials and patterns for various celebrations online.

INDULGE IN THE UNEXPECTED

Sticking to a budget may leave you with extra money to spend. Consider splurging on fresh flowers for the centerpiece or unique party favors for your guests.

BACK TO SCHOOL TRENDS

Everyone wants their children to feel confident and self-assured as they return to school this fall. Consider these back-to-school trends to help ease the transition.

Animal-themed backpacks are perfect for preschoolers and elementary-aged children. Foxes, butterflies and dinosaurs are popular with this younger set.

The **athleisure** craze is still going strong. These casual pieces let teens show off their personalities while remaining comfortable in class.

Backpack accessories such as **patches, pom-poms, keychains, and colorful tassels** are a great way for kids to show off their unique interests.

Stacking multiple bracelets is a fun way for young people to express themselves. Varying the sizes, colors and metals makes the maximum impact.





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BROCCOLI CHEESE BITES



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. chopped broccoli florets
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup Italian breadcrumbs
- Salt, pepper and garlic salt, to taste
- 1½ cups shredded Cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 375° F. Boil chopped broccoli in salted water for 1-2 minutes or until tender. Drain.
- Combine broccoli, Italian breadcrumbs, cheese, eggs, and seasonings in large bowl. Form spoon-sized amounts into small bites and place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
- Bake 20-25 minutes, depending on size of bites. Turn after 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for a few minutes. Serve with your favorite dip.

