



## Episode 15: Teaching Kids to Cook Real Food

Katie: Katie, welcome back. Thanks for being here.

Katie Kimball: Hey Katie. Thanks so much. It's good to talk to you again.

Katie: You too. In the past two episodes we've talked about taking baby steps to eating real food and some of your best tips for implementing things slowly but seeing that change from them and also real food shopping tips and tricks, especially on a budget. This is the episode I've been so excitedly waiting for because I think it's something that you are really, really good at, which is teaching kids to cook real food. In fact, when we've gotten to spend time in real life I've seen you baby-wearing your youngest and teaching a whole group of kids how to do something in the kitchen at the same time. Completely patiently. I feel like you're a great role model on this topic and I can't wait to dive in.

Katie Kimball: That's good that I looked patient. I don't know if that's always true, but I'm glad it came across that way.

Katie: You have a course that helps teach kids to cook real food. And I would love if you would just talk about why you created it and why you feel it's so important for kids to learn how to cook.

Katie Kimball: Yeah, the Kids Cook Real Food eCourse grew out of necessity in my own life. My oldest son was doing a how-to speech for his fourth grade. It was kind of an end of year thing that they were doing in fourth grade. And I nudged him little bit. Planted the seed in his mind that maybe he could do something with food. I mentioned, you love making guacamole and you're very good at it. You can do it yourself, that that would be kind of cool. I didn't pressure him too, hard, but I planted that seed. And so he decided that's what he would do.

And I got the chance to teach at the very first part about cutting the avocado and whacking out the pit, I had always done. I decided, we had to teach him that part for the how-to speech. As I was watching him practice, I was having my nice mom moment and this is so nice. And I love that he's doing this food thing, because I'm the food lady. And, gosh, he's been doing guacamole for so long. Because he'd been able to make guacamole, other than the chef's knife part since about first grade. And then I had a bad moment where it kind of hit me, that I hadn't actually taught him anything else in the kitchen since he was really good at guacamole in first grade. I was like, "Oh my gosh, what have I been doing? What am I missing?"

I kind of let life get away from me. There are more kids coming and it was harder to get just one child in the kitchen by them self to teach a new skill. When he was little, he was the only one and he did everything with me. And I was like, "Oh my gosh. I'm not practicing what I preach. These kids are going to grow up, and they're going to know how to eat a vegetable, but they're not going to know how to cut it, therefore fail. Because as an adult, they're not going to be able to cut the veggies and they won't eat them. Oh, my gosh, what am I doing?"

I decided I needed a huge overhaul and I just had to kind of go all in. There was no baby stepping about this one because clearly, my baby steps were not working. I hadn't done anything in three years. I decided to go all out and do a whole curriculum where I would teach all three of my oldest kids all the basic kind of cooking skills that I felt were appropriate for their age group, which at the time was four, seven and ten. I knew that I would do it if I had some accountability.

I set up accountability in two ways. One, was that we invited a friend for each of the kids to work with. We ended up with six kids at once in my kitchen. Little bit a stress there, but I worked through it. I just had to say, everyday, "This is your job, you have to do this well and if you're cranky they're going to hate it and they're not going to come back." I really worked hard at my attitude being positive. That created accountability because if the other kids are coming over, and it's in the other parents' calendars for cooking class, I'm stuck, I have to do it whether I feel like it that day or not.

Then, the other accountability was I thought, well, if I share this with my audience in some way that will pressure me to do it, period, and do it well. It grew from being what I thought would be a little project, recording myself in my kitchen teaching these classes, to a massive, massive undertaking with a professional film crew and working in someone else's gorgeous kitchen, way bigger and more beautiful than mine, which was fantastic. The set looks awesome. And having all these kids learning this. Literally, it's a whole curriculum with eight weeks times three age levels, so, 24 lessons and some of the lessons have a couple skills. It ends up being about 30 skills taught and quite a number of recipes to go with them.

Again, it started like, I need this and in order for me to do it well I'm going to share it with others. Then it blossomed into this massive, massive, huge project. We're really proud of it. The fun thing is watching the members go through it. Parents are telling me stories about kids trying foods they've never tried before because they get the positive peer pressure of seeing my kids and our neighbors on screen eating it. The same age children. That makes such an impact on our members. We just heard a story the other day about a little three year old who did the spreading lesson.

Spreading with a butter knife is a great skill for age two to five. She makes her own peanut butter sandwiches every day now. She won't let anyone else do it. The mom was just like, "This is so cool. Not only am I impressed that she can do this at her age, but I love it because I'm kind of getting a break because she's insisting on doing it herself and it's actually helpful as opposed to some other things that kids insist on doing themselves and it's not always that helpful. It's been really awesome. One of the girls, my daughter's friend, who did the filming with us, told her mom, "I'm looking forward to summer because we'll do cooking classes again." I know. I was so touched. Her mom was like, "Oh, honey, I think you already did that. I don't think you're having any more." I'm like, "Oh, we have to do some more."

We won't do it every week this summer but we're totally going to do some more cooking classes and use their skills, polish them up, expand them. We invite the friends again because then I'll actually do it. It's been awesome in a lot of ways for me to have my kids learn to cook and practice what I preach. I know that it's so important for them to have this life skill. If you don't know how to buy the right food, prepare the right food, and cook the right food, the chances of you eating healthy foods as an adult are so low. I feel like I'm setting them up for success in life skills, in general, and then currently, interacting with food definitely helps them to widen their palate and eat a wider variety of things. My kids were pretty good at eating vegetables before. Still, working with food just makes such a difference.

Katie: I feel, as a mom, that's one of those things that's sometimes really hard to prioritize because we can do it so much faster ourselves. When it comes to cooking, it's just an easier process if you don't involve the kids when they're learning. But then, like you said, once you have older ones they can actually do a lot of it and then it becomes really, really helpful. The part that I loved is because you've now made this course, I feel it's the best of both worlds.

My kids are learning but I'm not having to figure out these lessons and plan it and learn how to do it and how to teach it correctly. They love it, because in their mind, they're watching TV. They don't watch TV very much and they love it. It's actually because they know you guys. They think it's the coolest thing in the world. They really are wonderful lessons and they're not too, too, long. The kids- their attention span is great. They watch the whole time and then they have this new skill, they actually know how to do correctly. It's actually helpful for me and I can delegate that part of meal preparation now. That's been incredible.

We often underestimate our kids. I read articles and studies about how, in Western cultures, we tend to protect our kids from everything, even if it's not necessarily dangerous. Maybe we just perceive it as dangerous? I think kitchen knives are one of those things that we think, oh, they could cut their finger off or they could get hurt. We don't really let them have that experience. There's a lot of research on the psychological side of that. And that of using tools, especially sharp tools actually develops a part of their brain. Why do you think things like knife skills, are not only safe if they're done correctly but are important for children to learn?

Katie Kimball: I love that you found that research. I just have to say. It makes my heart so happy. It is intuitive to let our kids do things that adults do. They have to learn at some point. But, in our culture it's become counter intuitive to let them do it authentically. We want them to play with the wooden knife and the wooden food that Velcros together and learn to cut in that way. I can totally see how it would form their brain because I feel like we do live in this culture where we tell children, good job, and give them a ribbon for everything.

Building authentic self esteem is very difficult in that kind of culture. That's one thing, is that using something that an adult would use and doing an actual adult skill, like cutting. Whether it's a butter knife for my four year old, or then a paring knife for my seven year old, and a chef's knife for my ten year old, at all three ages they can tell that they're doing something real. And they've made something that they can eat, that they can serve to others and because it's real, it's very easy to authentically build them up. And build their self esteem without saying, oh, I love your picture. Good coloring.

I feel like we do too much lip service with self esteem and we never really give them chances to deserve or earn self esteem. That's one thing that I love seeing. When they can really do something that's real that they can see and eat themselves, feed other people, they can totally tell that they're doing something that matters. It becomes very easy, as parents, to say, you did a really good job and have it authentically have meaning. As opposed to, oh, nice job. I love your coloring. Way to go. Which, even kids can feel that eventually falls flat.

I feel like the confidence that kids can gain working with real tools and sharp tools and things that they know are dangerous can probably extrapolate into the rest of life, as well. Where they will be, hopefully, more likely to take positive risks. Risks that will have rewards as far as being successful in business or being successful in school academics. And just having that real authentic confidence. Of course the other reason that we have to teach our kids to use knives is vegetables. When I think about the percentage of time I spend doing various tasks in the kitchen, a huge, massive percentage is me standing at the cutting board with the knife.

I'm cutting vegetables for eating raw. I'm cutting vegetables for putting in my soups and my casseroles. I'm cutting vegetables for some sort of side veggie. I'm cutting fruit because there's just no way. Unless you have a huge budget and you can pay for someone else to cut it up for you in the store, and then there's always the question of how fresh is it? And how many nutrients has it lost since it's been cut?

Cutting your own vegetables is really the only way to eat fresh, real food. You have to know how to use a knife. If you know how to use a knife, not only will you be safer, but you'll feel more confident and be able to tackle that. Whereas, I hear from adults all the time that they don't feel comfortable or confident using a knife. They don't like it, therefore they're much less likely to buy that whole vegetable. They're like, oh, I don't want to cut that up. I don't want to figure that out. I'm excited to be able to teach kids, really young, not to be afraid of sharp knives and to have the skills to do it safely. It definitely pushes parents out of their comfort zone, which I love, as well.

Katie: Especially when you're, like you said, doing age appropriate knife skills. You can let the really little ones that you're building those foundations for cooking so well, because they're using that from such a young age. When they switch to the paring knife and then the chef's knife it doesn't seem dangerous or scary at all because they've been doing the exact same thing since they were two. They're just- they've been doing it with a butter knife where they've been already developing that skill. I think it also really capitalizes on that desire that kids have, especially in that two to five range, to help out in the kitchen.

It's one of those things that I have trouble- I have to make a conscious effort with my kids to let them do that. I love cooking and also, it's just faster sometimes to cook myself. I do know, from experience, the times that I've let them, for instance, unload the dishwasher when they're three and they're probably more likely to actually break a dish than help, it helps teach that skill. Now when- my oldest is almost ten he can completely unload the dishwasher by himself, load it. He can cook meals. Those things really do pay off as they get older.

Katie Kimball: They do. It's a huge delayed gratification. It's something Americans are not always that good at, but it's incredibly important skills. I don't like inviting them into the kitchen either. I'm way faster and I'm way quieter. That can be my quiet, alone time. I have to force myself to do it, because I know it's worth it. I know it's worth it. Yeah.

Katie: I'm going to step on a soapbox here for a minute. It drives me absolutely crazy is in restaurants, and even stores, there's specialized kids menus and quote unquote kids foods that are not actually food at all. They're complete junk and they're usually things like chicken nuggets and pizza and mac and cheese and those are the only options that they give kids to eat. Certainly, I'm not saying there's not a place for these things, having healthy versions or homemade versions at times but it drives me nuts that those are the only things that are really offered to kids in most restaurants.

I think our kids could absolutely do better. My mom is French, for instance, so knowing her background and her culture, even in French restaurants in the US, those are not the things that are on kid's menus. Kids get smaller versions of adult meals or roasted chicken or soups or all these different, amazingly flavorful foods, but then around here we give our kids chicken nuggets and pizza. It drives me nuts. What are some of the biggest changes that you notice from having your kids help prepare real food? You mentioned a little bit about they are more likely to try it. What other benefits have you seen in that area?

Katie Kimball: I can talk about that. But make room on your soapbox, because that drives me crazy, as well. I'm always really shocked and pleased when I see something other than chicken nuggets, mac and cheese and pizza and hamburgers on a kids menu. I'm like, oh, this restaurant is worth its chops here. They've got some actual food. It's a self-fulfilling cycle that we assume kids will only eat this stuff so we only feed them this stuff and therefore everyone thinks that this is kid food and that's what we serve kids. It's just never going to end unless we jump in the middle and say, kids can do better, absolutely.

Benefits of helping kids prepare the food is first of all, obviously, they're smelling the spices and the herbs. One of the lessons in the course is to pull down all your spices and categorize them and your herbs and have the kids do a smell fest. We just sniff 'em all and they decide if they smell pleasant or unpleasant to them. I don't let kids get away with saying, I don't like this or this is yucky. We just call it pleasant or unpleasant. If they don't really like something they're allowed to say, it's not my favorite. I think that's an important tool for parents to have in their toolbox. It also helps with hospitality if you're visiting other people. You can at least be pretty assured that your kids aren't going to go, ew, gross or yucky about their food. It's a good habit to start right from age two when they can talk.

Again, learning about different spices and so many layers of flavor that we can create is super important. It's not going to happen as effectively unless the kids are working with the food and touching and smelling and trying things. Hey, I'm doin' some veggies. Who wants to choose an herb to put on there? Let's get 'em out and smell 'em. It's fun for the kids. It gives them agency. Anytime you're giving a child a choice, they're more invested in the whole process. The choice of, here's three herbs that will all taste great on this broccoli that I'm sauteing, you choose it. They feel important, they feel valued. Their opinion is validated and you bet they're more likely to try that.

I think as far as other benefits that I've noticed, or changes from getting the kids in the kitchen is, at least at the older levels, they understand how much work it takes. That's been an interesting and unexpected result that I see that my kids will waste food. They're very aware of wasting food. Oh, you have two bites left? Don't throw that away. That took way too, much work. As moms, we tend to feel under appreciated quite often. It's very nice to have my two oldest kids more aware of the amount of work that I do for them. Not that it's all about me. But, it also creates a sense of preservation and not wasting and not throwing things away. I like that. That was a really unexpected benefit of getting them in the kitchen. That they realize, oh my goodness, this is work. It's worth it, but it's work.

We eat a ton more vegetables when they're all helping because there's more hands on deck to cut them, too. And lastly, I think, just taking pride in their own work. It's so nice to be able to see them proud of something. Again, something that's authentic, that's a little bit more than just coloring well or cutting something out. I try to spotlight my kids when we have company or when we're taking a dish to pass. I make sure that it's something that they can participate in. Then I also make sure that I tell the people who are eating it which child did which part. Oh, the look on their face. They just beam. It's wonderful to be able to give them that public pat on the back and to show how responsible and mature they are and the skills that they have. That's really cool.

A couple weeks ago Paul had to make dinner. It was his night to make dinner and I got him started after lunch. It must have been a day off school or something. My husband and I were going somewhere that evening and the grandparents were going to be over. He had to finish everything up and serve the meal without me being even in the house. When I asked him how it went the next day, he had a funny grin. It was a mixture between sheepishness and pride and shock and awe. He said, "You know, I was in charge of everything. It was like I did the whole dinner, Mom."

Katie: Nice.

Katie Kimball: He's like, "I was kind of nervous but it all worked out. It was kind of neat." You could see him grow an inch taller by how he felt about having that much responsibility. Oh, my heart just melted. It was beautiful.

Katie: Oh, I love that. People listening may be thinking that you're just talkin' about older kids when you talk about kids helping in the kitchen. But you have great ways to let kids of all ages help which, I found when we were working through your course. And it was wonderful because when I let the big kids help, the little kids all want to do something. You found ways to incorporate kids of all ages. Can you share some of the age appropriate skills that you teach to different kids at different ages?

Katie Kimball: I would love to and I'm so glad you mentioned the little kids. As much as I like seeing what the big kids can do, the little kid lessons are my favorite. Oh, they're my favorite to teach because they're just so excited and so much fun and there's so much less risk, as far as, both for the food and for the fingers, right? When you're workin' with chef knives, I'm a little nervous and I want them to be super safe so there's that whole atmosphere of this is a dangerous thing. And when you're cooking there's potential for error. If you mess it up, you hate to mess up your food and have the kid feel bad about it and have to throw away food. There's just a lot more risk with the big kids.

With the little kids it's like, oh my gosh. We're cutting bananas. If it's an inch long versus a regular looking slice who cares, it's still a banana. Or peeling some- there's just so much less risk so they have so much fun. I think this is where my teaching background comes in is that I knew what would be age appropriate. A lot of the age two to five stuff are skills that can extrapolate onto the preschool skills that they need. Like small motor control and bilateral hand- anything you do with two hands at once. The two hands are doing different things. That's an actual physical skill that you need to build in preschool age.



So, to finally answer your question, at the preschool age, age two to five we focus on things like carefully carrying a plate, flat. It gives them a skill that they can use every single day. Carrying their plate to the table. Carrying it back to the dishwasher. Then you can build that responsibility of doing a chore. They know how to do it well because you've taught them. We carry things carefully. We cut with butter knives all sorts of soft stuff. Bananas and melon that has the rind already taken off. We do spreading with a knife. I'm teaching them not to dip the entire knife into the peanut butter or butter, whatever. What part of the knife to use. How to hold it. How to make sure that it's evenly spread across your food. Again, that's something I talked about. The peanut butter sandwich. It's a skill that starts to finish. They can actually make something like a peanut butter sandwich or buttering their toast or making ants on a log or spreading frosting on a cookie for a treat. Or whatever it may be. It's something they can do.

I also do peeling at that age. Which does add a little bit of an element of danger. We have some fun ways of keeping the fingers out of the way in a way that's a little bit light hearted and fun and silly. I try to inject humor a lot into my teaching to make sure that the kids are engaged and that the parents have this funny humorous way to redirect them and keep them safe. Rather than being like, oh, don't do that. Don't touch that. Don't do that. We do a lot of don't dos all day. I try to get a lot of fun phrases that parents can use. Also, at the little kid level we practice pouring. Careful pouring with little pitchers like a creamer pitcher is perfect.

You don't have to go out and buy things. Just a creamer pitcher is great. You can teach kids to pour, all sorts of stuff. Maple syrup on pancakes, or milk on their cereal or they can pour their own juice into a cup. Again, that's that kind of a great skill at that age because they have to have some control to stop and not overflow whatever they're pouring into. It's another skill that goes into their preschool world and the things that they're supposed to be learning. Then we do stuff at that age, like sorting beans and rinsing them off and measuring.

Measuring's a big one. I know a lot of parents bake with their kids starting at a very early age, which is so awesome. It's really hard to know how much they can do. We talked a little bit about raising expectations and one thing I notice with parents is that we bake with our kids. We let them maybe scoop the spice or the salt and dump it in, or maybe we don't let them scoop it because we notice that they can never get it flat. It's always a mis-measured portion, so we scoop it, we measure it and we let them pour it in and they feel involved. Then we keep doing that. We keep doing that.

At age six and seven and eight suddenly we might step back and go, oh, my gosh. I'm still baking with my kid and letting them dump stuff into a bowl but they're six and seven and eight. They're in elementary school. They can read now. They can do all sorts of things that they couldn't do when they were three and four. It's time to up the game.

We do a lot of measuring, as far as how to get things really flat. I have a fun way of talking about measuring spoons and cups. We make 'em a family. We call 'em daddy, mommy, kid and baby. In that way, even kids who don't recognize their numerals yet or have no idea what a fraction is, like a half teaspoon. If I said John, my four year old, "Can you get a half teaspoon for mommy." He's like, "Nope." Can't do it. But if I say, "Can you get the mommy? Or half teaspoon's a kid. I say "Get the kid. Get the teaspoon that's the kid." He can get it out of the drawer. He can choose the right one. If he has the salt there he knows how to measure the salt completely flat. That's so many steps that most four year olds can't do and it's because we brought it down to this really kid- friendly level and kid-friendly language. That's something that's really fun. Those are kind of the skills we do at the little kid level and then at every age you can up your game.

Once kids are in early elementary school and they're readers, you do a little more work on teaching 'em how to measure well. How to measure flat. Then we teach the skill of reading a recipe. Reading a recipe is actually a skill. Even a lot of adults, they'll make a dish, they'll make a recipe and they mess it up. They're like, what in the world? This is a bad recipe. When often, it's because they didn't read the recipe correctly. They didn't get everything out correctly or they didn't soften the butter, or they didn't cut things right or whatever.

There's a lot of strategy to reading and following a recipe well and making sure that everything gets prepared and measured and in the bowl in the proper order and whatever. We do a lot with reading a recipe and by age six or seven I expect kids to be able to follow a recipe and make pancakes or muffins all by themselves. We've built all the other foundations that they'll need for that skill and we also do introduce sharp knives at that level. Not the big chef knife but the paring knife and the all- purpose utility knife.

We use long, straight, somewhat soft fruits and vegetables. That's important. You don't want to give a child something hard, like a carrot or something round like an onion or a pepper for their first time. It's going to set them up for failure. It's going to be rolling away or it's going to be too, solid for their strength to cut through. It's really important to match the food you're using with the child's ability. We're really careful to use things that are easy to cut. That aren't going to roll away. And that they can do- even a cucumber. A cucumber's about as hard as- solid wise as you want to get for that age. Because then it becomes unsafe if they're trying to power through a carrot it's too risky for the knife to go sideways. That's really important.

Also, at that age, early elementary, we get them at the stove. We teach stove safety. Then they can do things like cooking rice and flipping pancakes and browning ground beef. Then, in my upper level kids, once they're- once you have all those skills in place and your child's mature enough, the upper level is a huge range. I would say starting at about eight, but some kids might not be ready 'til ten or eleven or twelve, depending on their personality and their amount of self control.

At that level then we do the big chef's knife. We do a ton of cutting. Half of the class at the advanced level is just learning that knife and cutting. Then we do a little bit more advanced stuff at the stove, as well. We do the sauteing, and steaming vegetables. We do oven safety. I'm not comfortable with kids who are too, short or too, weak getting in the oven. I think that's too risky so I wait until at least eight to teach how to put things in and out of the oven. Now you can finish your muffin recipe without needing the adult at all. Paul hates that. He's like, "Oh, you going to make me get stuff out of the oven again?" I'm like, "Yeah, buddy. You got to practice the skill until you feel confident." But he's so- he's good at it. He's super safe but he hates it every time. I'm like, "Well, sorry, you still have to do this so that you get better at it."

By eight or so, eight to ten, they're able to make entire meals. They have all of those skills that they've built up over the years. If you have an eight year old or a ten year old and you haven't taught them any skills, that doesn't mean that you're behind by any means. Oh, my goodness. You just start at the beginning. You have to make sure that they have each foundational skill before you teach the whole thing. You wouldn't throw a ten year old with no experience and say, here, here's a muffin recipe, make it or whatever. There's so many steps. That's what I've tried to do for parents is really break it down so you don't have to do the thinking. I've done all the thinking already. Lots and lots of thinking.

Katie: I was surprised how helpful it was. My kids have helped in the kitchen, to some degree, pretty much their whole lives. But, right now we have a two month old baby. Because my older two and sometimes the older three have all these skills, they can prepare a meal completely from scratch. We've incorporated this at breakfast a lot. That seems to be the time in the morning when the baby wants to nurse and the two year old's melting down, or whatever it is. There's always stuff in the morning that I'm trying to do.

Rather than resorting to easy breakfast ideas that maybe aren't as nutritious my older kids are making quiche or making whatever the breakfast is that day. Omelettes, whatever it is because they know how to do that now. It's awesome to be able to write that down the night before and they know where the ingredients are and when they wake up they go make breakfast. It's incredibly helpful. They're actually helping me a ton. I would be much more stressed in the morning if they weren't able to do that. They love it. Like you said, they know they're contributing, they know they're doing something helpful and they're getting to do it on their own. Which, like you said, with your oldest, that's a huge feeling of accomplishment for them.

Katie Kimball: That is so cool. I kind of envy the homeschool lifestyle for that reason. The breakfasts. I can't have my kids make breakfast on school days because they'd totally miss the bus.

Katie: It reverses because since we homeschool, we tend to have more things at night. They'll sometimes have their jujitsu class at night or if it's baseball season, there's a baseball game at night. We tend to be more busy at night sometimes so breakfast will become our family meal when we have to make that switch. I know some mom's may be hearing this and if they like their kitchen being really clean, like I kind of do, they may be envisioning that kitchen out of the cartoon, [inaudible 00:31:12] Idea, where it's covered in flour and there's footsteps of ingredients all over the floor and stuff smeared on the windows. Does this happen when you let your kids cook or what's the secret for keeping the kitchen clean?

Katie Kimball: I make huge messes in the kitchen which means my standards are a little low. But, one thing that we don't have happen is broken eggs all over the counter and things just being treated irresponsibly. My kids are not super great at cleaning up just because that hasn't been the focus but we're getting there. We're starting to learn that part. We teach care and caution. And so, especially, I think a lot of moms get really worried about the egg thing. Like, ah, I'd love to have my kids crack eggs but, uh, the mess. I just can't handle the mess and the waste of eggs on the counter.

We're so targeted and careful about how we teach that. Right now, my John, he's almost five, and he's just on the cusp of learning that skill independently. For the last two years of his life he's had this hand-on-hand guided practice that we do. Where his hand is on top of mine when I crack eggs anytime we're working together. He kind of knows, by that practice how much pressure to put when you crack the egg and I tell him to put his thumbs on my thumbnails, you know the part where you push into the egg and pull apart? He's had all sorts of practice with that without being in charge of the egg so there's no risk of it making a mess.

The first time that he gets to practice crackin' them on his own, it's very unlikely, I think, that we're going to end up with a whole egg on the counter. I know, my girl, my goodness, when she was five she could crack a dozen eggs, no problem, no shells because we taught it so specifically and carefully. They will make some messes. I'm not going to say that kids won't have total messes but I think there's that sense of pride and responsibility in their work that when they know they're doing something real they're not- I don't know- my kids would never smear stuff on windows or actually be naughty about it.

Yes, they're going to spill a little more than an adult but, in the long run, it's so worth it. Unless you're the type of person who just would never have kids because they make a mess, it's kind of what you sign up for. They're going to be maybe a little bit messier but if you just teach things in a careful way, the messes won't be exorbitant.

Katie: Definitely. That's been our experience, too. The few messes that do happen inadvertently, they really truly haven't been that bad in our kitchen. You build in so many safeguards and process. You build in a process with each of those steps. I feel like you really do kind of protect against that, even inadvertently, in the course.

Katie Kimball: I talk about breaking things down into the smallest possible chunk you can. For adults, sometimes it seems ridiculous because we're adults. Because we know how to do these things so for us, it's one step. I'm going to carry my plate to the dishwasher. That's one thing. When you're teaching it to a child who knows nothing about the world, or knows nothing about what they're doing, carrying a plate to the dishwasher is like four steps, or six steps. Because we break it down so small, in such minute pieces, it definitely creates an atmosphere of care and being careful and taking things seriously.

Katie: Absolutely. As to kind of wrap up, are there any other advantages that you've noticed from teaching your kids how to cook and then letting them cook? Or any encouragement that you would offer for parents in starting that process?

Katie Kimball: Absolutely. It comes down to that responsibility. When I think about what I want from my kids in the long term. I want them to grow up to be responsible adults. To be caring and loving. To be service oriented. I want them to be independent and successful in life, right? We all want that for our kids. Those are life goals and I think most of them can have their roots in the kitchen, if you do it right. Obviously, responsibility, seeing a meal from start to finish, and doing all those parts. It totally fosters responsibility and confidence. Absolutely can apply to all areas of life outside of food.

Then, there's also that element of service where you're doing a lot of work, and it's not all for you. Even with your little, little kids and three, four and five year olds are psychologically egotistical and self-centered. But, when they're preparing food and serving food for the whole family, it gives them a very unique and rare opportunity to be the servant. To do something for someone else, instead of everything always being done for them. I see so much value in that, in raising humans. I'm going to raise humans who know how to live life and that's all kind of starting with what we do in the kitchen.

Katie: I love that. I'll definitely make sure to include a link to your course in the show notes because it's open this week and it's been an amazing resource for our family and I'd encourage everybody to check it out. You even have some amazing short demo videos that they can just watch. I believe that the knife skills is one of 'em? That is one of my favorites so I'll make sure that link's in the show notes and I would really encourage people to check that out, as well.

Katie Kimball: Good. I love hearing that your kids love that. It's so building up, for me. And yes, the knife skills is one of my favorites, too. You can totally see what we do and how we keep kids safe and how we make it kid friendly and fun, but yet, safe and serious and responsible.

Katie: Absolutely and hopefully, this has encouraged a lot of parents to be open to the idea of letting their children help more in the kitchen. You've shared some great wisdom and some tips and tricks. And, like I said, I'll make sure all those links are included so that anyone listening, you can check those out at [inaudible 00:37:19] .com/podcast and you'll be joining us again for the next episode with some natural parenting tips so, please join us again next week for that and Katie, thanks for being here.

Katie Kimball: See ya next week.