

You, Me, & Something Yummy:

Holiday Recipes for Quality Time

The kitchen is one of the best places to build brains through conversation! These simple recipes turn cooking time into talk time, creating cozy memories and brain-building moments all at once. No fancy ingredients or complicated steps — just you, your little one, and something delicious to make together.



Snowball Energy Bites

What You'll Need:

- 1 cup oats
- ½ cup honey or maple syrup
- ½ cup nut or seed butter (peanut, almond, or sunflower)
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips or dried fruit
- ½ cup shredded coconut (for rolling)



Why do you think we're putting this in the fridge? ... Yes! To make it cold and easier to roll!



Yum! Looks like you took a BIG bite.



Let's Make It Together:

1. **Mix everything except coconut** in a big bowl.

Talking Tip #6: Tune in and respond to what they look at, do, and say.

"You're stirring so fast! Can you stir slowly now? Fast again?"

2. **Refrigerate** the mixture for 15-20 minutes (makes rolling easier). Now's a great time to have a conversation with your child!

Talking Tip #7: Wait for their response.

"Why do you think we're putting this in the fridge? ... Yes! To make it cold and easier to roll!"

3. **Roll into balls** about 1 inch in size. *Children can help roll even if balls aren't perfect. Irregular shapes taste just as good!*

Talking Tip #8: Imitate them, and add words.

"You rolled a ball! I'm going to roll one too. Round and round and round!"

4. **Roll in coconut** to coat (these are "snowballs," after all!).

Talking Tip #11: Repeat and add to what they say and do.
Child: "White!"

You: "Yes, white like snow! The coconut makes our energy bites look like little snowballs."

5. **Refrigerate** until firm, then enjoy!

Talking Tip #9: Make faces, use gestures.

"Yum! Looks like you took a BIG bite." *Show "big" with your hands and use a surprised expression.*

Banana-rama Holiday Muffins



What You'll Need:

- 3 ripe bananas
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup melted butter or oil
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- Muffin tin and liners

Let's Make It Together:

1. Mash bananas in a large bowl.

Talking Tip #9: Make faces, use gestures.
Make a "squishing" face while they mash!

2. Mix in egg, butter, sugar, and vanilla.

Talking Tip #6: Tune in and respond to what they look at, do, and say.
"You're stirring! I hear the spoon going round and round in the bowl!"

3. Add baking soda and salt, then stir.

Talking Tip #11: Repeat and add to what they say and do.
Child: "Mix!" You: "Yes, we're mixing! We're mixing all the ingredients together to make muffin batter."

4. Gently fold in flour until just combined.

Talking Tip #1: Talk about what you're doing and thinking.
"I'm adding the flour slowly. See how the batter is changing color? It's getting lighter!"



You're stirring!
I hear the spoon
going round and
round.



You really filled that
one up! That's going to
be a HUGE muffin!

5. Scoop batter into lined muffin tin.

Talking Tip #12: Follow their lead, do what interests them.
If they want to fill one cup completely, let them! "You really filled that one up! That's going to be a HUGE muffin!"

6. Bake at 350°F for 20-25 minutes (adult handles the oven). Now's a good time to talk about what's going on in the oven!

Talking Tip #7: Wait for their response.
"What do you think will happen to the muffins in the oven?
... Let's watch!"

7. Cool and enjoy!

Talking Tip #5: Touch, hug, hold.
"Give me a high five! We made muffins together!"



Silly Sprinkle Sugar Cookies



What You'll Need:

- 1 package sugar cookie dough (or your favorite from-scratch recipe)
- Cookie cutters (snowflakes, stars, circles, hearts)
- Frosting
- Sprinkles, colored sugar, or other toppings

Let's Make It Together:

1. Roll out the dough on a clean, floured surface.

Talking Tip #1: Talk about what you're doing and thinking.
"I'm rolling the dough flat. Watch it get thinner and thinner! Can you help me roll?"

2. Cut out shapes using cookie cutters.

Talking Tip #3: Name things they're interested in.
"You picked the star! Let's press it down ... one, two, three, push! What shape do you want to try next?"
For younger children: Let them press the cutters while you do the detailed work of removing excess dough.

3. Bake according to package directions (adult job!). While cookies bake, talk about what's happening.

Talking Tip #2: Comment on what they're doing or looking at.
"You're peeking into the oven! The cookies are getting bigger and turning golden brown."

4. Let cookies cool (this is hard, we know!).

Talking Tip #7: Wait for their response.
"How do the cookies feel now? ... What do they smell like?"

5. Decorate! Spread frosting and add toppings.

Talking Tip #14: Be silly! Relax and have fun!
"Should we make a cookie with a funny face? What if we give it 10 eyes!"



You picked the star! Let's press it down ... one, two, three, push! What shape do you want to try next?



How do the cookies feel now?
... What do they smell like?

Want more ways to boost conversational turns?

Download the full 14 Talking Tips and other tip sheets at [LENA.org/resources](https://lena.org/resources).