

# MAKING A RECIPE

## Following Directions

- Baking and cooking are great activities for practicing following directions with your child. There are many components involved which can make cooking a language-rich activity, from food and quantity vocabulary, to learning about sequencing steps into the correct order, to learning what happens if you don't follow directions properly, to just making memories with your family. Making food is also a great time to practice fine-motor skills like stirring, rolling dough, opening packages, pouring, or even cracking an egg!

## Planning

- Let your child get in on the first step to making food: planning! Take time to do some research by looking through cookbooks from your local library, searching online for recipes, or asking friends or family for their favorites. Let your child have a say in what you choose to make – maybe they pick the recipe on their own, or maybe you give them a choice of a few recipes and let them make the final call.
- Once you and your child have decided what you will be making, check your house for ingredients and make a shopping list together. If your child is able to read and write, put them in charge of writing out the list. If you are making food with younger children, think about making them a checklist with pictures. You can do this by drawing out your shopping list or by searching images on the internet. We have attached Narwhal's Shopping List template here for you to use, along with some blank recipe cards you can print and use for your favorite recipes.

## Shopping

- Grocery stores are an excellent place to practice following directions. Here are some examples of different types of directions you might give your child while you are shopping:
  - Directions containing attributes/describing words – Give your child directions which contain words such as colors, shapes, size concepts (e.g., big, small, short, tall), or other attributes (e.g., fresh, prickly, shiny, etc.) to teach them about different attributes. For example, you might say, "Help me find the longest cucumber". This is also a great way to teach them life-skills such as how to pick the freshest produce or how much various foods cost. Grocery stores are also perfect for comparing/contrasting

different foods [e.g., “We got lemons and bananas, and they are both the same color – yellow!”] or talk about which categories different foods belong in [“First we bought the vegetables on our list, and now we need to buy some dairy products.”]

- Directions containing location words – Examples of words you might use to teach your child about preposition concepts include words such as “high”, “low”, “top”, “bottom”, “near”, “far”, “over”, “under”, “beside”, “behind”, etc. For example, you might ask them, “Can you please get the jar of pickles that is *beside* the jar of olives?” or say “Let’s get some apples from the basket that is *behind* us.”
- Directions with multiple steps, or which use temporal words such as “first/then”, “before/after”, or “when”. For example, you might say, “Let’s pick up ice cream *after* we get our other ingredients so that it doesn’t melt!”



## Time to Cook!

- Once you have all your ingredients, it is time to make the food! Think about which steps in the recipe your child can help with, and which steps you may need to do yourself.
- Help your child know what to expect and what order things need to be done in. There are a few ways you can do this. For example:
  - Verbally outline the steps [e.g., “First we will measure and mix the dry ingredients. Then we will add the wet ingredients. After we mix it all together, we will be ready to make our pancakes.”] Try to describe what you are doing as you are doing it. Be the narrator for your cooking or baking experience! You might say something like, “We are stirring the batter. We are mixing it all together. It’s turning a different color. Let’s stir

faster!” You could even pretend to be hosting a cooking show and make a little video of the process to share with family or friends.

- Use visuals. For example, some cookbooks contain pictures of each step which you can show your child as you make your food. Another option is drawing out each step or using photos to outline what they should be doing. If your child is old enough, they can also follow written instructions. Visuals or written instructions can help your child to be more independent at following directions.
  - If you are making a familiar recipe that you are likely to make again, think about taking photos of your child as they complete each step. Then, combine them into a photo album on your phone or tablet that your child can refer to the next time you make this recipe. You can also look back on these photos after you finish and talk about what you did. Try to use sequence words in your description (e.g., “first... then... next... last”) to help your children learn these concepts.



## Now the fun part... Eating!!

- Family meals or snacks are a great time for conversation. Whether you talk about how your food turned out, your week, how friends or family are doing, or even just the weather, never underestimate the importance of communication!
- Remember that communication involves both sharing and listening. Try not to ask your child too many questions, especially close-ended questions as these typically have simple answers that do not require much thought or discussion. Instead, try to use comments or open-ended questions which will extend the conversation and require more reasoning or sharing of opinions. Some examples of close-ended questions vs. open-ended questions:
  - Close-ended question: “What color is your cupcake?”  
Comment + Open-ended question: “Your cupcake has pink icing. Does that color remind you of anything?”
  - Close-ended question: “Was it hard to make these cookies?”  
Comment + Open-ended statement: “These cookies took a lot of work to make. I wonder if we should make them again or try a different recipe next time...”
- Have a sharing time about the cooking/baking experience. Does everyone like the food you made? Was it easy to make? Hard to make? Is there anything you would change for next time? Did you make any mistakes? Did you learn anything? What should you make next time? Who else would enjoy eating this food?

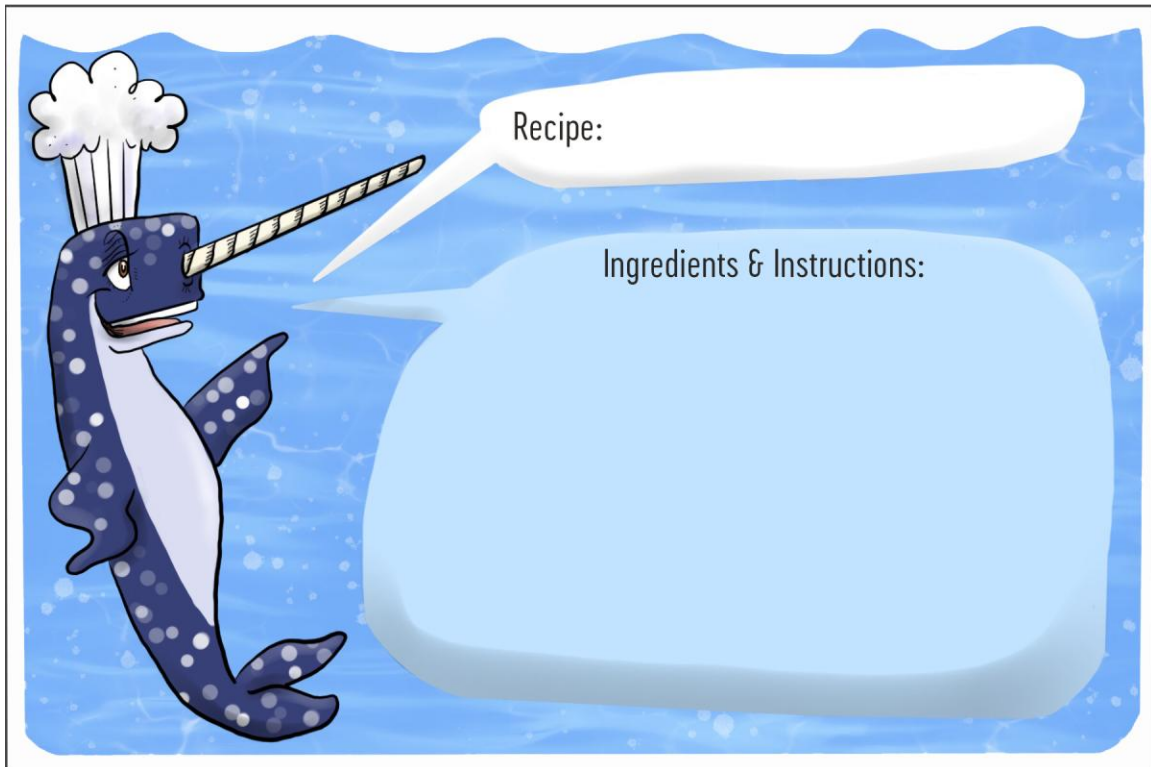
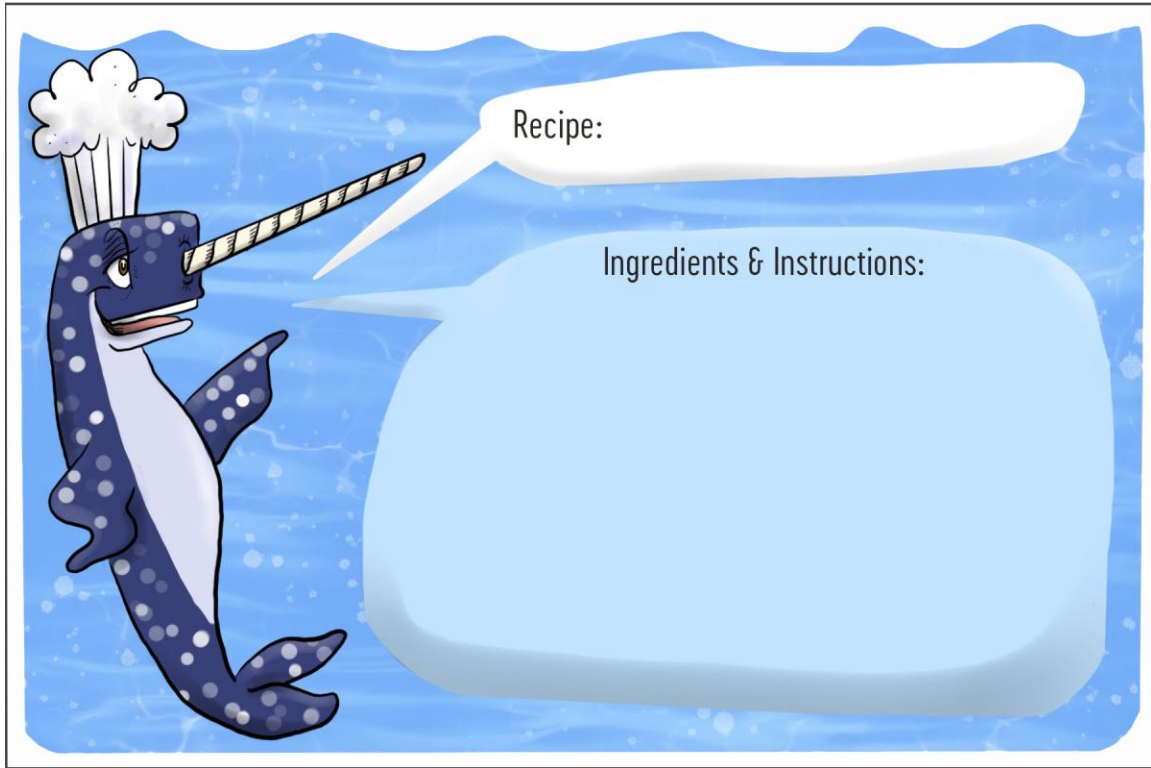


### Teamwork

- Part of making food is cleaning up. It is probably not anyone’s favorite part of making food, but it is an important part of belonging to a family. Depending on your child’s age, think about a developmentally appropriate job you can give them during clean up. Maybe they can put some dishes into the dishwasher or clear their own dishes off the table. Maybe they can help until the dishes are finished. Think about what your family’s expectations are, and make them part of the activity.

Print Your Own

# RECIPE CARDS!



Print Your Own

# SHOPPING LIST!

*Shopping List*

(don't forget the pickles!)

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*Shopping List*

(don't forget the pickles!)

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