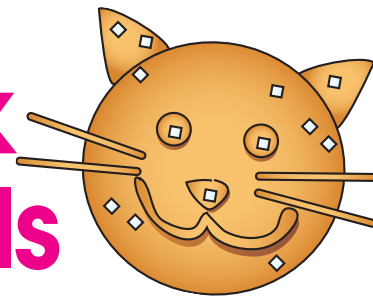




## Sculpt & Cook Pretzel Animals



| BY ROBIN DEROSA LUNDGREN |

**F**ood and fun come together when you work with your child to make pretzel animals. This simple recipe gives kids a chance to measure and mix up a batch of delicious pretzel dough. When the dough is ready, your kids can use their creativity to mold the dough into the shapes of different animals.

Have your child experiment rolling balls and ropes, as well as creating different shapes such as circles and triangles that they can press together to create animals. Dough rolled into a rope can be a worm. To make a cat, your child can roll a ball of dough and press it flat, adding small triangles as ears. Cookie cutters can also be used to cut out thick animal shapes.

Kids will also enjoy shaping their pretzel dough into letters and numbers. Ask them to write their name or age with dough shapes. When all the dough has been used, bake up their pretzel shapes and let them eat them while they are still warm.

### What You Need...

- 1 package of yeast
- 1 1/2 cups of warm water (about 110°F)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 4 cups of flour
- Additional flour to be used during kneading
- Cooking spray or oil
- 1 egg
- Additional coarse salt to sprinkle on top

### What to Do...

1. Preheat your oven to 425° F.
2. In a big bowl, have your child mix together yeast, water, sugar, and salt.
3. Have your child stir in the flour a cup at a time. Your child will be

able to mix the flour initially, but as more is added, he will probably need an adult to help.

4. Once the flour is mixed in, sprinkle a cutting board or table with flour. Have your child take the dough out of the bowl and knead it on the board or table until smooth, about 5-10 minutes. Add more flour as needed if it gets too sticky.
5. Have your child shape the dough into animal shapes, letters or numbers.
6. Place the pretzel shapes on a lightly greased cookie sheet.
7. Have your child crack the egg into a small bowl. Show your child how to beat the egg with a whisk.
8. Let your child brush their pretzel shapes with the beaten egg.
9. Have your child sprinkle the pretzel shapes with coarse salt.
10. Bake pretzels in the oven for 15 minutes or until brown.

*\*For preschool children, providing a visual will be helpful for making shapes, letters and numbers. Make a template for your preschool child by taking a piece of paper and drawing a large triangle, square, rectangle and circle. You may also want to write your child's name or numbers. Place a piece of wax paper over the template. Use this template for your child to match shapes, letters and numbers.*

### This Helps Develop...

Cooking is not only fun, but also a great way to learn!

**Cognitive skills - the mental process of knowing by developing awareness, perception and reasoning.**

Overall, this is a super way to enhance cognitive skills through practicing how to follow the directions of a recipe, measure accurate amounts of ingredients and create and match shapes.

**Fine motor skills - the use of small muscle movements in the hands that occur in coordination with eyes.**

Children strengthen the muscles involved in fine motor development when kneading and rolling the pretzel dough and forming it into different shapes. Early fine motor skill development builds the foundation for later pencil and paper development.

**Language - the expressive ability to communicate ideas and needs, and the receptive ability to understand what is said or written.**

Throughout the activity, language skills are enhanced by the natural verbal interaction of discussing what they are doing. Encourage your child to talk with you about the activity. What does the dough feel like? How does the yeast smell? What animal or shape is that?

**Social emotional development - involves a child's feelings of self worth and confidence.**

In this activity a child's social emotional skills are enhanced by the sheer delight of cooking up a fun and delicious snack with the help of their parents. Cooking together is a wonderful way to share time with your child. ❖

*This monthly family activity series, "Hands-on-Kids!" is brought to you by a partnership between the Children's Museum of Northern Virginia (CMNOVA) and FAMILY Magazine. For more activities you can do with your children to spark their love of learning, visit the CMNOVA web site, [www.cmnova.org](http://www.cmnova.org). On their web site you will also find information about the Children's Museum of Northern Virginia and how you can become involved. CMNOVA is committed to building a place where our children can freely explore and develop a lifelong love of learning. Robin DeRosa Lundgren, a CMNOVA volunteer, is Vice President of Aquarian Entertainment and creator of the kids' cooking show "Culinary Kids".*