

RAINBOW STAGES OF MEALTIME PARTICIPATION

Color “Vibe”	Job Description	Learning Style	Preparation Activities	Clean-up Activities
Red “Sensory”	OBSERVER... Let them watch what you do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching • Experiencing 	Baby backpack or high chair to watch	Baby backpack or high chair to watch
Yellow “Movement”	PARTICIPANT OBSERVER... Let them try doing the simplest of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching • Experiencing • Helping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming foods • Helping with groceries • Pour previously measured ingredients in a bowl • Stir ingredients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping with dishes • Sorting and putting away utensils
Blue “Construction”	SWING COOKS... Fill in as needed all over the kitchen. They may help with small tasks in many areas of the kitchen, but are not in charge of anything in particular. This makes them the ultimate helper!	Learn best... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In context • Short clear directions • Lots of demonstration • Plenty of supervision • Practice, practice, practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing fruits and vegetables • Cutting soft fruits and vegetables with table knife • Spreading jams, butter, or soft cheese on items • Greasing pans • Gathering ingredients and equipment • Measuring ingredients • Using a slap chopper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing table and counters • Setting and clearing the table • Rinsing dishes • Sweeping (though not usually done well)

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Typical Age	Mealtime Behaviors	Outdoor Play & Movement	Social Games with Others	Creative “Pretend” Play
Indigo “Invention”	LINE COOKS ... Begin to take charge of specific duties associated with that task, doing more complete things, rather than only helping.	Learns best... With assistance to do things (less and less as they master the skill).	Follows directions for recipes Takes charge of specific side dishes (e.g. salads, bread basket, simple desserts). Enjoys cooking classes	Washing dishes Loading & unloading dishwasher Setting the table Fancy napkin folding
Violet “Conformity”	SOUS CHEFS... Second in command to the Head Chef – in charge of inventory and cleanliness of the kitchen. Should already have adequate practice with easy desserts, breakfast items, simple snacks and lunches. Now we add menu planning & shopping.	Learns best... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain focus on specific food areas to get a variety of experience and practice. • Let them learn by problem-solving and making mistakes. • Let them know mistakes are part of the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts final touches on a meal if a parent is absent • Makes lunches for school • Plans menus • Makes shopping lists • Helps with canning & fermenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and set table for special occasions. • Maintains inventory. • Keeps kitchen counters and cabinets in order.
Magenta “Relationship”	HEAD CHEFS... Can follow just about any moderately skilled recipe. Focus on teaching main dishes, specifically those with meat, doing advanced knife work, putting together a whole meal, menu planning and giving plenty of opportunities for your Head Chef to practice running the kitchen.	Learns best... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By teaching others. • When collaborating with others • When in charge of specific meals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts meals together when a parent is busy. • Once comfortable prepares meals for family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes up a cleaning schedule • Carries out regular cleaning schedule • Teaches or assists younger children with clean-up.