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WITH KIDS

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COOKING WITH KIDS

KELLEY L. MOORE CREATES A COOKING PARTY WITH CHEF SCOTT STAPLES, HIS DAUGHTER ZOË AND A FEW HUNGRY FRIENDS

IN A BUSY AND BUSY LIVES, sitting down dinner with the whole family is sometimes a challenge. Especially for someone like Scott Staples, chef/owner of Restaurant Zoë (named after his 7-year-old daughter) in Belltown, whose new restaurant, Quinn's (a gastropub on 1st Avenue named after his 4-year-old son), is set to open in September. Time is tight, but he's managed to make cooking and eating with his wife Heather, and his two kids a priority. "Being in the kitchen is great time with my kids. When they come home, they are with me in the kitchen all the time," he says. "They fight over what they get to do."

A kid's cooking party is a great way to teach cooking skills and help kids learn that cooking can be fun. When Staples gathered Zoë and her pals at a friend's home on Bainbridge Island to cook in their beautiful waterfront kitchen, he put together a menu that would go

over with this crowd. He believes that kids' food can be healthy, delicious and sophisticated, too, and that they will eat a lot of different foods if they are exposed to them in various forms. For instance, at the moment, Staples is teaching Zoë to fry, scramble and poach eggs. "I'm learning to cook



eggs all different ways!" Zoë says. He hopes the lessons will give her the confidence to explore a range of foods she might not try otherwise.

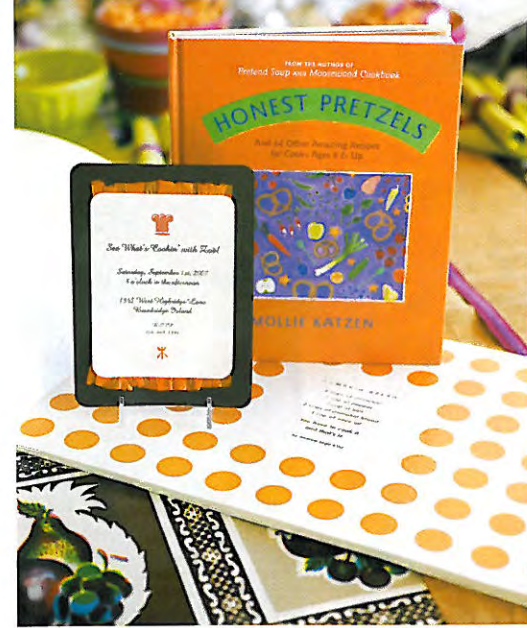
Staples is just following the example set by his mother: "When I was a kid, my mother taught my brothers and I about three to five things we could make or do in the kitchen—do the dishes, make a certain dish, set the table. By the time we were 10, we were cooking dinner and cleaning up most nights of the week." To this, Staples adds his own advice. "Enjoy the mess! It's gonna be messy, so just go with the flow!"

Our party's simple menu included kid favorites with a healthy, sophisticated twist. We started out with grissini (kids love to say that!)—little crispy breadsticks that kids love to crunch—and tiny meatball sliders that are bite-size even for small mouths; these savory treats would be a great pass-around appetizer at your next grown-up party. Next, the kids got their hands dirty



Top to bottom: Each girl received her own white chef's hat with her initial on a custom pin created by Suite 7 Creative. Place cards are nestled in a cotton napkin rolled up with a striped ribbon. Chef Scott Staples and daughter Zoë love to work together in the kitchen; here, they prepare the crispy tuile cups for the ice cream and blueberries. Opposite page, top to bottom: Kelley and the girls (left to right), Maya Orville, Zoë Staples, Hannah Olson and Karsen Bontrager, set a colorful table with spill-proof vintage-inspired oilcloth fabric cut to tablecloth-size. Flamboyant but simple to prepare, these crispy tuile crowns hold a scoop of vanilla ice cream, fresh blueberries and are covered with a drizzle of chocolate.

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY TOM BARWICK
STYLE EDITOR
KELLEY L. MOORE



with potato gnocchi—think of it as upscale mac and cheese—which Staples serves with a yummy parmigiana cream sauce with crispy sage leaves sizzled in brown butter and parmigiana crisps on the side.

As the kids dove into their projects, I asked Zoë about her cooking skills. “I’ve been cooking since I was 2,” she said with the confidence of someone who has a chef for a father. She already shows an adroit hand in the kitchen, stirring a bowl of chocolate sauce for the dessert like a pro. Staples suggests letting kids do age-appropriate activities like mixing, tossing salads and all the girls’ favorite activity at this party: drizzling chocolate over the crispy tuile—a thin pastry cookie draped over a

cup while still warm to form and harden into a cup shape. Served with vanilla ice cream and succulent fresh blueberries, it’s a sort of wacky, deconstructed ice cream cone that the girls loved.

With a little grown-up ingenuity and childlike creativity, you can help your kids eat healthy, avoid the junk-food dinner trap and engage with you in the kitchen with fun, age-appropriate activities. Who knows? They may be cooking dinner for you soon. +

Kelley L. Moore is an entertaining and lifestyle expert for Northwest Home + Garden and Seattle magazine. She appears regularly on KING- and KONG-TV.

the goods

Clockwise from upper left: Hannah cuts the pastry dough into star shapes for the crispy tuile crown cups. ✱ These kid-friendly, bite-sized meatball sliders are held together by a whimsical chef party pick. ✱ Send adult guests home with a treat, too. Kelley suggests Mollie Katzen’s *Honest Pretzels* cookbook and disposable paper placemats with children’s recipes in the middle. A custom-made invitation from Suite 7 Creative ensures no one will want to miss the party. ✱ Send young guests home with a useful and fun collection of Chef’n collapsible measuring cups and spoons in a colorful flower pot, including a Matchbook Garden matchbook with cooking herb seeds such as oregano and basil glued to the matches that can be buried and grown in the pot; a felt chef finger-puppet oversees the party. ✱ Left to right: Hannah, Zoë, Karsen and Maya gather in the shade to show off their aprons.