



in the loop

Kids will love this taste of cooking

By Mary McConnell

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PARENTS of little fussy eaters fear not – help is at hand. Expanding the palates of children – and adults – is Nicole Freeman, who runs her Kids' Kitchen business from her home in Whetstone.

Nicole helps children explore a range of different foods by exposing them to all sorts of ingredients in fun and inventive ways.

"I have always loved cooking and my little one was a very fussy eater," says the mum-of-two.

"He was never a big eater. So I would play games to convince him to eat, games which I now play with the kids in my cooking classes.

"For example, see if we can eat something without using our hands or if we can make mashed carrots into different shapes, or how many raisins can you pick up with a toothpick. And I get them to smell ingredients first.

"Every week we focus on a different ingredient and if they try it they get a certificate. For example, we did seeds last week and we were using sunflower seeds and poppy seeds in bread. Making it fun and turning it

into a competition helps make them open to new tastes."

Nicole teaches pre-school children during the week and school-age kids during holidays and weekends.

She even has classes for teenagers and adults, as well as doing birthday parties for youngsters.

And she says she can always accommodate children with allergies.

"My daughter has a nut allergy so I am used to dealing with children with allergies, we can work around it," she says. "Last week I was

doing a party and one of the children was allergic to gluten so everything we did was gluten-free."

Nicole says she tries to mix up what she cooks with the

children – ensuring she makes a range of sweet and savoury food.

"We showed the pre-school children how to make fresh pesto and then we were doing little savoury pastries," she says.

"With Easter coming up this week we've been making hot cross cookies. Last week we made soda bread.

"With things like vegetables we try to make it as fun as possible so the children won't be put off.

"I mixed beetroot into chocolate cake and we were doing beetroot



ANNE-MARIE SANDERSON

Taste for cooking: Children and parents taking part in a session at The Kids' Kitchen, above and left

printing, which the children loved. We mix songs and games into it as much as possible."

And it's not just the children who seem to be huge fans of The Kids' Kitchen, with mums looking forward to them each week, too.

Tracy Hardy and her two-year-old daughter Autumn have been coming to Nicole's classes for the past six months.

"It's so much fun, it's so relaxed," she says. "It's a delight coming here every week. It's inspiring for what

she will eat. Because of the peer group they will try things. I'll see what is being cooked here and I will go and try it."

And both of Michelle Mitchell's children enjoying learning about food at The Kids' Kitchen.

"My three-year-old Ellie loves it. She loves getting dirty," she says. "It is very informal, Nicole is brilliant."

"My son Noah comes here as well. He is five and he loves it. The first time he came here he ate three bowls of tuna bake and it was the

first time that he had eaten it. I think the boys love it just as much as the girls. Quite a few of Noah's friends come here too. It is all very inventive and everything Nicole cooks is very healthy.

"It is a very homely vibe, like we are cooking in a friend's kitchen and they all wash up so they get well trained."

For more information about The Kids' Kitchen, visit thekidskitchen.net, call Nicole on 07976 268 520 or email nicole@thekidskitchen.net