

Kelley sets a colorful table with spill-proof vintage-inspired oilcloth fabric cut into a tablecloth, and sends guests home with a useful and fun collection of Chef'n collapsible measuring cups and spoons in a flower pot, including a Matchbook Garden matchbook of herbs that can be grown in the pot. Felt chef finger puppets oversee the party.



COOKING WITH KIDS

IN OUR BUSTLING AND BUSY LIVES, sitting down for 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 second restaurant, Quinn's (a gastropub on Capitol Hill named after his 4-year-old son), is set to open this month. 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 I'm home, they are with me in the kitchen all the time," he says. "They fight over what they each get to do."

A kids' cooking party is a great way to teach cooking skills and help kids learn that cooking can be fun. When Staples gathered Zoë and three of her pals at a friend's home on Bainbridge

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

PHOTOGRAPHS
 BY TOM BARWICK



Left and above: Chef Scott Staples and Maya cut out star-shaped dough for the tuile crowns. Pretty but simple to prepare, these crispy tuile crowns are covered with a drizzle of chocolate sauce and hold a scoop of vanilla ice cream and fresh blueberries. Below left: Potato gnocchi with parmesan cream and sage sizzled in brown butter is a sophisticated but still kid-friendly alternative to macaroni and cheese; kids can roll out the balls in their hands, drop them in the pot and watch them float to the top when they are done.



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 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



Clockwise from top left: Each girl received a 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. Each bite-sized meatball slider is held together by a whimsical chef party pick. Parmesan crisps with cherry tomatoes and fresh basil are a fun way to eat your vegetables. Maya, Zoë, Karsen and Hannah gather in the shade to show off their Kim aprons.



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 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. **S**

>> For more information, see *Find It* on page 72.



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Right: Hannah drizzles chocolate over the tuile crowns at a worktable set up for the kids in the kitchen, set with oilcloth placemats and dish towels for quick clean-up. Bottom: Send adult guests home with a treat, too. Kelley suggests Mollie Katzen's *Honest Pretzels* cookbook and disposable paper placemats with fun recipes for kids printed on them. A custom-made invitation from Suite 7 Creative ensures no one will want to miss the party. Below: Another way to serve gnocchi—with fresh tomato and corn salad and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar.



Find it

Page 66: Vintage-inspired plastic multi-colored oilcloth fabric cut into a tablecloth, at Esther's Fabrics, \$8.50 per yard (Bainbridge Island, 285 Winslow Way E; 206.842.2261; esthersfabrics.com). Vance Kiteira orange hemp table runner, \$31, at Tableau (Ballard, 2220 NW Market St.; 206.782.5846; tableaugifts.com). Xochi Liso lemon mint cotton placemat, \$5, at Port Madison Home (Bainbridge Island, 240 Winslow Way E; 206.842.3410; portmadisonhome.com). Suite 7 Creative custom white chef hats with monogrammed pin, pricing information available upon request at chelsea@suite7creative.com (206.669.1801; suite7creative.com). Life is a Bowl of Cherries sculpture made from mixing beaters, cookware and found objects by Sally Prangley, \$375, at A is for Artists Gallery (Bainbridge Island; 123 B June Drive; 206.842.2434). Bright green Biscuit latte bowls, \$4, at Anthropologie (multiple locations including University Village, 2520 NE University Village; 206.985.2101; anthropologie.com). Xochi Liso lemon mint cotton napkin, \$4.50, at Port Madison Home. BIA square orange plates, \$13, at Tableau. Home Solano Sand stainless steel flatware, \$32, at Target (multiple locations including Northgate, 302 Northgate Way; 206.494.0897; target.com). Scheurich striped flower pot, \$12.95, at Swanson's Nursery (multiple locations including Ballard, 9701 15th Ave. NW; 206.782.2543; swansonsnursery.com). Mrs. Green's chef finger puppet, \$5.50, at Trophy Cupcakes (Wallingford, 1815 N 45th St.; 206.632.7020; trophycupcakes.com). Chef'n collapsible silicone measuring cups, \$19.99, and spoons, \$4.99, in gray and lime, orange, cherry and eggplant, both at Sur La Table (multiple locations including Kirkland, 90 Central Way; 425.827.1311; surlatable.com). Mixed herb Matchstick Garden matchbook, \$2.50, at Tottini (South Lake Union, 259 Yale Ave. N; 206.254.0400; tottini.com). Umbra pink Bandit photo bracelet, \$8, at Tottini. Cosmo cube ottoman, \$199-\$239, at Port Madison Home. Page 68: Kim Things cotton twill laminated kids aprons, \$28-\$34, at Venue (Ballard, 2408 22nd Ave. NW; 206.789.3335; venueballard.com). Villeroy & Bosch Marchesi pasta dish, \$135.56 for six, at Bargreen Ellingson (3627 First Ave. S; 206.682.1472; bargreen.com). Page 70: Purple Leonardo tumbler, \$13.95, at Port Madison Home. Party Partners chef Party Picks, 12 for \$3, at Trophy Cupcakes. BIA Cordon Bleu white plate, \$14.50, at Bargreen Ellingson. Page 72: Purple plastic oilcloth fabric cut in to placemats, at Esther's Fabrics. Green frog, orange dog and pink mouse Hot Heads hot pads, \$10.95, at the Berry Patch (278 Winslow Way E, Bainbridge Island, 206.842.3593), holding Lamont cotton dish towels, \$10.95, at The Berry Patch. Handmade invitation by Suite 7 Creative. Disposable paper placemats with recipes for children, \$20, at Tottini. *Honest Pretzels* by Mollie Katzen, \$19.95, at Queen Anne Avenue Books (Queen Anne, 1811 Queen Anne Ave.; 206.283.5624; queenannebooks.com).