A Shared Vision
Partners in Pediatric Blindness & Visual Impairment

Sugar Cookies

Making these cookies will become a holiday tradition in your family

We like this recipe because you don't have to chill the cookie dough before you cut out the shapes. Who wants to wait for the dough to chill when you can enjoy freshly baked cookies right away? With each step, we provide sensory suggestions for you to try with your child. You can follow one or all the suggestions – touch, taste, see, smell, and hear.

This recipe makes about four dozen cookies. You can freeze baked cookies for up to six months. Let cookies cool completely, stack them with parchment paper in between each layer of cookies and store the cookies in a freezer-safe container or resealable plastic bag. Lay the cookies out to thaw completely before icing them.

You can also freeze raw cookie dough for up to six months if you don't want to make a whole batch. Wrap the cookie dough tightly in plastic wrap and then place it in a freezer-safe resealable plastic bag to freeze. Let the dough defrost in the refrigerator overnight before rolling it out and cutting the dough into shapes to bake.



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Utensils

- Electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and bowl
- Measuring cups
- Spatula
- Teaspoon
- Rolling pin
- Cookie cutters
- Baking sheets.

Ingredients

Cookies:

- 1 cup (16 tablespoons) unsalted COLD butter, sliced into tablespoon portions before mixing
- 2 cups white granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons half and half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (or you can use almond or peppermint extract)
- 3 large eggs
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

Icing:

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- ¼ cup half and half

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
1. Gather the ingredients and utensils.	 What do the utensils feel like? Are their textures rough or smooth? Does the mixing bowl feel warm or cold?  What happens when you bang the utensils together or against the bowl?  Cookie cutters come in many different shapes and colors. Simple shapes like a star, a tree, or a gingerbread man are easier for small hands to work with.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 ° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper for easy clean-up.	 This is a good time to talk about how the oven starts off feeling cold, but then it gets very HOT when you turn it on.  Does the parchment paper make a sound when you cut a piece off the roll and lay it on the baking sheet?  Talk about how the baking sheets are shiny before you cover them with parchment paper.
3. In the bowl of the mixer, beat the cold butter and sugar until the mixture is thick and creamy.	 Listen for the sounds the mixer makes and talk about what you are doing.  Little hands can get hurt if they accidentally touch the mixer while it's running so just let your child observe how you add ingredients to the bowl and mix the dough.  What color is the butter and sugar? How can you create visual contrast? A light color in a metal bowl is easier to see than in a glass bowl.

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
4. Beat in the half and half and vanilla extract and then the eggs, one at a time, until mixture is well combined. On low speed, gradually add the flour, a cup at a time, the baking powder, and salt. Mix on low until a thick dough forms.	 Let your child watch you add the ingredients and mix the dough.  Talk about how the consistency of the dough is changing. Use action words like “stir,” “scoop,” “dump,” and “mix” to label what you and your child are doing. As you add the flour, count the cups out loud, one at a time.
5. Sprinkle a generous amount of flour on your work surface to prevent the dough from sticking. With a floured rolling pin, roll out a section of the dough to ¼-inch thickness.	 Let your child touch the flour on your work surface with their hands or feet. Trace some shapes. What does the flour feel like? Is it soft and silky? What does the dough feel like? Is it sticky?  Smoosh the dough. Poke it. Smash it and listen to the sound it makes. The rolling pin might also make a sound when you roll the dough.  What does the dough smell like? Vanilla? Or if you used peppermint extract, what else smells like mint during the holidays? (Candy canes!)  Using hand under hand, encourage your child to put their hands over yours as you push the rolling pin back and forth over the dough.
6. Cut cookies into desired shapes. Repeat with remaining dough until you’ve used it all or decide to freeze some for later.	 Using hand under hand, encourage your child to put their hands over yours as you cut out the shapes of dough.  Talk about what shapes you’re using. If you’re making Christmas tree cookies, do you have a Christmas tree in your home? Describe how you decorated it and whose presents will go underneath it.

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7. Place cookies about an inch apart on the prepared baking sheets. If you are not going to frost the cookies, you can decorate them with sugar sprinkles or a mixture of cinnamon and sugar. Bake for about 7-9 minutes, or until cookies are just set and starting to turn light brown around the edges. Remove from the oven and let cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.	 With the lid on tight, a 2.25-ounce plastic bottle of sugar sprinkles is the perfect size for small hands to explore.  What color are the sprinkles?  If you're using cinnamon and sugar on your cookies, talk about the other spicy smells you associate with the holidays.  What do you hear when you shake the sprinkles? When you set the timer on your oven, talk about how long it will take for the cookies to bake and listen for the "beep" when the cookies are done.
8. Now you can eat your cookies!	 Do they taste like sugar, spice, and everything nice?

Icing

If you choose to frost your cookies, make the icing.

- Whisk 3 cups powdered sugar and ¼ cup half and half in a medium bowl until smooth and spreadable.
- Spread a thin layer of icing on one cookie at a time and immediately decorate with colored cookie icing from a tube (Betty Crocker brand), sprinkles or mini candies before the icing sets.
- Repeat with remaining cookies.

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