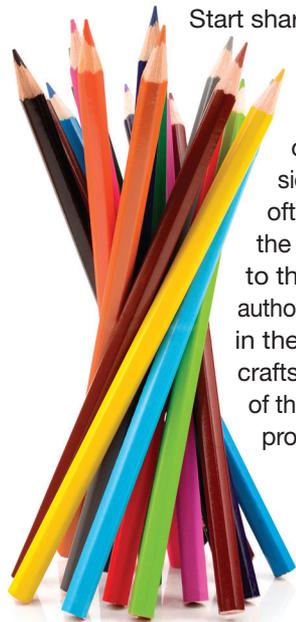


LITTLE ARTIST = FUTURE SCIENTIST?



Start sharpening those colored pencils: In a recent study, Michigan State University researchers found that, as kids, successful STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) professionals took part in arts and crafts more often than the average child—and that the most entrepreneurial were exposed to the broadest array of arts, says co-author Eileen Roraback, Ph.D. “Participants in the study self-reported that arts and crafts developed skills and creative ways of thinking that are critical to professional problem-solving abilities,” she explains.

—Marisa Iallorardo

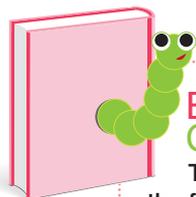


I overheard my daughter talking with friends about dieting. I don't want her doing anything drastic or unhealthy, or to have bad feelings about her body. How should I approach the situation?

It's not uncommon for girls to start having these conversations with each other around age 10 or 11—they're hearing about dieting and weight loss from moms and older sisters, seeing it on TV, and might even be hearing about it from a coach. You have to address the topic in a supportive, non-critical way: Explain the importance of eating enough so that the brain and body

have plenty of energy for activities, and point out that while she may want to limit junk food in favor of healthy choices like fruits and veggies, the goal should not be to cut out calories. Keep in mind that restricting is often how eating disorders start, and they tend to come on very quickly. So be vigilant—if you think your daughter has an eating disorder, talk to your pediatrician about getting her help.

—Susan Bartell is a psychologist specializing in family-life balance, and author of *The Top 50 Questions Kids Ask*

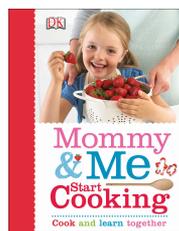


BOOKWORMS COOKBOOKS FOR KIDS

These delightful books tempt the taste buds and bring the family together in the heart of the home: the kitchen.

COOL KIDS COOK: FRESH & FIT by Kid Chef Eliana and Dianne de Las Casas (Contributor) (\$15, Pelican Publishing)

Get schooled in the art of cooking by Kid Chef Eliana de Las Casas, host of her own radio cooking show and author of numerous cookbooks. But don't expect typical teen fare—Eliana's recipes are original and inspired by her family's Cajun, Filipino, Cuban, and Honduran heritage, like Blackened Chicken Tacos and Creole Pasta Primavera.



MOMMY & ME START COOKING by DK

(\$16) It's a kid's rite of passage to put on an oversized apron, pull up a step stool, and help make cookie dough or add vegetables to a soup. This cookbook features gorgeous step-by-step photos of simple recipes that make it easy for kids to be the executive chef, with an adult assisting. While mom stirs the hot pot on the stove, kids can read about where chocolate comes from, the anatomy of an egg, or how potatoes grow.

THE OFFICIAL DC SUPER HERO COOKBOOK by Matthew Mead (\$19, Downton Bookworks)

Kryptonite Krunch granola, anyone? Or is the Up, Up, and Away Yogurt Parfait more your speed? Eat like a man of steel or woman of wonder with these great, healthy recipes inspired by popular DC Comics superheroes. And, yes, there is a hero sandwich recipe—with a side of Joker Juice.



—Mary Talalay

Smarter Screen Time

Does your little one play with your iPad? Turns out 38 percent of babies and 1-year-olds have used smartphones or tablets today compared to just 10 percent in 2011, according to a Common Sense Media study. While you may not be able to limit screen use completely, you can make the most of your child's usage. “Focus on choosing age-appropriate content and being aware of how your child is interacting with the content,” says Caroline Knorr, the parenting editor at Common Sense Media. She suggests looking for games that draw kids in and challenge them to experiment—“It's a good sign when games require concentration and the use of imagination.” For more, visit commonsensemedia.org.

—Samantha Mellone