



housewares

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Tools for Young Cooks

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By Andrea Lillo

NEW YORK – Youth may be wasted on the young, but some hope cookware and kitchenware will have a different result as several manufacturers see children’s cookware and bakeware as a category ripe with opportunity.

As people have become attached to cooking shows over the past 10 years and more sophisticated about cooking at home, naturally some parents want to share their kitchen skills with their kids. Beyond bonding, cooking with children yields many benefits, including teaching them time and measurement and achieving a sense of responsibility, sources said.

Some retailers are already jumping on board. Williams-Sonoma initially launched its wsKids Web site in 2006. WsKids’ products include a number of exclusive items, including personalized spatula sets, kitchen timers, tongs and spatulas with princess, airplane and other designs. More than products, however, the new site is informational as well, offering tips, videos and recipes.

For the upcoming International Home & Housewares Show, Fiesta Products will introduce its Head Chefs line of gadgets for children. The company was founded three years ago, offering silicone rolling pins (for adults) that included a child’s rolling pin and set with a mat and pin. But the new line is the company’s “first foray in children’s tools,” said Greg Dua, co-owner.

Head Chefs will initially consist of five tools with a few possible sets, added Ed Bloom, co-owner. Though the housewares industry has been “disappointing,” the children’s category is an area that is “gaining momentum,” he said.

The benefits of cooking with children is numerous, he added. “It makes sense from a lot of different angles,” even from the retailers’ point of view. “These are their future customers. It helps build their brand.”

For Fiesta’s new line, Bloom added that the company wanted to offer something different than what was in the market. As a lot of similar products are “toys or junk — they are not real, or just a smaller size of an adult-sized tool,” he said, the challenge was to “make the tools fun and attractive but not lose functionality ... Kids gravitate to what they have fun with.”

Available in five colors, the Head Chef tools include a spoon, a silicone basting brush, spatula/scrapper, whisk, and measuring tool. They will also have soft silicone bodies, silicone heads, suction cup feet, and bendable arms and legs with the ability to stand on their own.

Though the line is still being finalized, Bloom said he hopes to keep the price of the individual tools at \$9.99 or less.

Though it started its company with a pizza baking kit in 1977, Sassafra has since transformed its line to accommodate what it sees as the growing kids' category. "Kids' baking is taking off," said Chris Grzych, sales facilitator, and 75 percent to 80 percent of its products are for children.

One of its first children's products was a Fairy Princess baking kit, and now the line has expanded into textiles, kitchen timers, an ice cream maker and other sets, and even backpacks, home decor and musical instruments. At the Housewares Show, product additions will include silicone baking and kitchen textiles sets. LC Premiums also sees opportunity in kids' baking tools, and will introduce its new 5-in-1 Tasty Baker at the Housewares Show. The product allows kids and parents to make pancakes, waffles, muffins, breads, cakes and brownies in seven fun shapes, including a dog, a birthday cake, a smiley face, and a train. It also recently introduced the Pop Art Toaster Creativity Coloring Kit, allowing kids to color on the toast with edible flavored food coloring markers, and includes six interchangeable image plates.

Though cookware manufacturer Fissler doesn't make children's products per se, it will use two young chefs to demonstrate the ease of its product line at the Housewares Show.