**Activity**

Allow your child to help make part of her meal, such as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. You can ask her to perform a two-step direction to get started by saying, "Please get two pieces of bread out of the bag and put them on your plate." As you make the sandwich, focus on action words like scoop, spread, and cut. Ask her if she wants her sandwich cut into two pieces or four. Ask her to count the pieces you're cutting as you go along and also all together when you're finished. After the sandwich is made, see if she can remember one of the steps you took to make it. When helping to set the table at this age, encourage her to perform two or more steps in a sequence (e.g., "Get 4 forks and 4 napkins. Give every person a napkin and then put a fork on each napkin.").

**Crosswalk to Healthy Beginnings**

This activity supports development in relation to the following *Healthy Beginnings* indicators:

* Personal/Social A1;
* Language A1, A3, B1, C1, & D4;
* Cognitive A1, A2, & B2; and
* Physical A2 & C1.

**Possible Intervention Strategies & Supports**

* If your child has difficulty with the fine motor (i.e., small hand muscle) skills needed for eating, it's important that she be fed in a well-supported, seated position such as chair with arms, booster seat, and/or seat belt. Her feet should also be supported on the chair or with a small stool or phone book.
* Putting a non-slip mat under her bowl or plate can be very helpful. Textured shelf liners can work very well for this.
* If your child has difficulty understanding or processing spoken language, use very specific and focused “teaching” paired with visual supports to help her link words with people, objects, and events. For instance, create a picture “recipe book” to use instead of just telling her the steps for making your snack together. You can find a lot of free pictures online to print or even draw them yourself. Add simple sentences under each picture to describe the steps in the recipe. Read each direction and ask her to repeat after you. Ask her point to various pictures, being sure to focus on names of objects and actions (e.g., “Where’s the bread?” and “Show me spreading.”).

**Tips**

If you're worried about giving your child a dull, child-sized knife, peanut butter and jelly can be easily spread with a spoon. If your child is allergic to nuts, she might enjoy jelly with cream cheese or just a simple jelly sandwich! Children this age should be able to follow at least two steps in a sequence. If you think your child can do more, feel free to challenge her by adding one more step in the table setting or food preparation sequence. When giving her directions, be sure that she can not only hear your words, but see your mouth move as well. This will help ensure a clear path of communication.