



TRANSCRIPT

# Episode 25: Involving Your Kids in Meal Time & Prep Routines with Katie Kimball

KATIE KIMBALL *from* KIDS COOK REAL FOOD

## WELCOME

**Tasha:** Welcome to the Get Organized HQ podcast. I'm your host, Tasha Lorentz. Every week, we share practical strategies for less stress and more peace as we dive into all topics, life and home organization. I'm so glad you're here for this week's episode.

## MEET KATIE KIMBALL

Today on the Get Organized HQ podcast, I am welcoming Katie Kimble, who is the CEO of Kitchen Stewardship, also the founder of Kids Cook Real Food.

So she has years and years of experience educating and speaking on kids and helping them learn life skills in the kitchen, and also helping you and I as adults have some of those skills, even if it's not something we grew up being taught and if we're still on that journey of wanting to cook healthier meals for our family.

So she has resources for the adults, resources for the kids, and this is something she has shared about for many years now.

And so today I got to sit down with Katie and kind of ask her about her process, her tips and tricks, what's working for her and for her family as she's teaching her own four children these life skills of something as simple as washing grapes, something as complex as cooking an entire dinner for the family. So listen in.

## WHAT IS KATIE'S DAILY ROUTINE?

Well, Katie, thanks so much for sitting down with us. I know that you have shared so much over the years about mealtime routines and helping kids who may be picky eaters and helping them be involved in the kitchen and all of that.

So I typically ask people to go through their daily routine, but for this episode, I wanted to ask you if you could kind of more so talk us through, like your daily routine as it relates to your area of expertise. Right?

So just what are the things that you find yourself incorporating in your day to day? Where did this start? Like, what were the very first things that you kind of started changing to implement your current day mealtime routines?

## BABY STEPS

**Katie:** Yeah, the word routine and I don't always get along real well, so that's why it's not called Katie Gets Organized. That's not my blog. So as soon as you say routine, I'm like, oh, no, I don't have routines. But I have. I do have some structure. Like I have more of maybe a weekly routine or habits that I can handle.

But you asked how I got started, and I will say that I am such a baby steps girl. And, and I had a hunch, like when I started writing, I'm like,

maybe other people need baby steps too. Like, I don't know, are other moms overwhelmed?

This was like pre social media, so I didn't realize that the whole world is incredibly overwhelmed, especially if they think about making big changes.

## MAKE A DECISION FIRST

So for me, I needed first to make a decision. I was going to make a choice or, like, change. I had to think about it for a couple days. It was like, my brain has to get into the right place.

And I do think other people are kind of like this too. And research, like, now, 15 years later, I'm like, oh, there's actually research that supports that your brain has to be primed, and then I can, like, make the change.

## ONE AT A TIME

But it has to be one at a time. So when I first started writing online, I sent out Monday Missions, and I would actually like the Wednesday before. I'd be like, all right, this is the coming Monday mission. Like, here are some supplies you might need in your house. Here's how you might want to get your brain ready. And then on Monday would be like, with the one baby step.

And I think what's so powerful about that is a baby step, one thing feels doable. But then at the end of a year, that's 52 new routines and habits. Like, that's incredibly impactful. And now that I've been doing this for 15 years, like, I've almost run out of changes.

I mean, not really. There's always improvement. But my first change was just switching out margarine for butter.

## CHANGING THE PURCHASE

So I think that's a really good way to think about something. Like, if you want to make healthy changes in your life, what's something where you don't actually have to change the routine, just the purchase, you know, so maybe it's buying something organic that you didn't used to buy organic, or like, switching out a fat for a healthier fat that you can use in the same way.

Switching, like, I'm a big sunscreen person, natural sunscreen. So, like, just switching out your conventional sunscreen for a more natural sunscreen, where you're not changing what you do, you're just changing the item that you're using. So that's a huge way to get a little bit of momentum, I think.

## A LITTLE MEAL PLANNING

For meal time hacks and making sure that the family has some good meal routines. For me, you got to do a little bit of meal planning. Even if, you know, if you can't do a week, if you can't do a month or something like that, making sure that by lunchtime, you know what's for dinner. Like, that's like the bare bare minimum.

Ideally, you've got three to seven days planned out, because then you can start to do some connected meal planning where you're making sure you use everything you buy, which is really good for your budget, which is really good for your stress. You know, just ensuring that you have some different variety and different balance.

## SHOPPING ROUTINE

So for us in our household, I amazingly, I don't actually have a grocery shopping routine. I

Katie Kimball

don't have a day that I shop on because I don't leave the house anymore.

So I can, if I dial back to when I had little ones, you know, we had a playgroup we always went to on Friday mornings. I always hit the grocery store on the way home. And that was lockstep. You know, I knew that I would get groceries once a week. We would never run out of food. That's a good feeling. And, and it was, it was just built in.

Now it's like, oh, mom, we're out of cucumbers. Okay, I'm going to make that instacart order. Because for me, at this point in my life, I'd rather pay an extra \$20 to not have to leave my house.

But everyone has to make those decisions for themselves, right? Where it's faster for me, it's easier for me to save time and just reload my Aldi cart.

## ROUTINES DON'T MEAN MULTIPLE STEPS

**Tasha:** Right? Yeah, yeah. What you said about not being a routines person, I think a lot of people can resonate with that. But it's funny because as I hear you talk, I'm like, oh, you totally have routines, right.

I think that we get this idea in our head that to have a routine, it has to have like multiple steps, right?

Like, it has to be like a morning routine where like you get up and you make your coffee and then you have your quiet time and then you do your yoga and your stretching and then you do a 30 minute workout and then you like get your kids up and make them a bread, you know, like, it has to have all of these steps.

## A ROUTINE IS A RHYTHM

But like a routine is just, it's a rhythm. It's something you keep coming back to. It's something that works for you that you can fall back on and say, like, like you were saying your kids had playgroup on Fridays. That is when you went to the grocery store. I mean, that is a routine.

Is it simple? Yeah. Probably the best routines are because that is the type of routine that's going to work.

And I think when it comes to meal planning, when it comes to meal time and all of that, if we overcomplicate it and think that it has to have all of these different components or, oh, I saw on TikTok that someone had this meal planning routine and they're buying all of their groceries for the entire month at once.

And like, doesn't that sound great? And they say that it's wonderful for their budget and it probably is, but it might be too complicated for this season of life for your family.

And so, I don't know, I just wanted to kind of pull that back in because you totally have routines, right. And I just think so many people can resonate with that and be like, oh, I can't do routines. It's like you probably have more routines than you even think that you have and are giving yourself credit for.

## HABIT STACKING

**Katie:** Yeah, they're just not daily routines. It's more of that, like, habit stacking. Like, I buy a lot of food in bulk and so I have my, my grocery list. Like I have my grocery list in my purse, which is, it's still on paper. I'm a child of the 80s and 90s.

Katie Kimball

So my kids know, like, if they take the second to last jar of pickles, they better let me know or they're going to run out of pickles. I have a pickle addict, 13 year old. Like, he would be very sad if we ran out of pickles. So I put it on the Aldi side of my piece of paper and my Costco side.

But for like the bulk stuff where I'm not going weekly or monthly, I literally, like, I'm looking at a couple empty containers because I have a random space to the right of my desk. I literally just set the empty container over there.

And eventually I get enough for free shipping and I make my bulk order. Like, is that a good routine? I don't know, but it works. We don't usually run out of food, right?

### IT JUST NEEDS TO BE FUNCTIONAL

**Tasha:** Yeah, absolutely. It doesn't have to be like a routine that you can put into like a pretty system, you know, like, it just has to be functional.

And if it's making things easier, then that is the goal. I think the sign of a good routine is that it has become relatively effortless. Like, this is just what you do. And I think so many routines are not daily routines.

I mean, it's interesting. We've talked so much about habits over the years and habits are great. But it's funny because there's a limited number of things I can come up with that I actually want to do every single day of my life.

I mean, even when it comes to something like meal planning. To be perfectly honest, I would like to go out somewhere again in the future of my life. Like, I don't actually want to eat at home every single day.

### CONSISTENCY

So I think that we can kind of discredit ourselves. Like, oh, you know, like I'm not doing it every day, so it doesn't really count.

Well, like consistency, is it something that you keep falling back on? And so that's the sign of a really good routine.

### BRINGING KIDS INTO THE PROCESS

So what are some ways that you found to bring kids or maybe for those listening, it could be grandkids. How can you bring them in to these processes?

Teach them life skills also just kind of help them work through like responsibility and picky eating and like just there's a lot of components there. So what are the ways that you can kind of fold them into the process?

**Katie:** I think a lot of parents and social media in some ways is not necessarily helping with this and neither are the screens in our kids hands. A lot of parents think that their kids aren't as capable as they really are.

### WE NEED TO RAISE THE BAR

So one of my delights as a parent educator and as someone who pulls together a lot of different voices, encouraging parents is to say, you know what parents, your kids are incredible. They're so capable and they do need us to raise the bar.

Like they're not going to step up to a bar that's very low. They don't care. But if we can raise that bar and challenge them and tell them that we do believe in them and, and we have expectations for them, they will absolutely rise

Katie Kimball

to those expectations.

So whether that's picky eating. Oh well, your taste buds just aren't grown up yet. You have a lot of learning to do, right? That growth mindset.

## BEING PART OF A TEAM

When it comes to chores. It's, you know, we're all part of this family team and it's really important that we work together so that everyone is cooking and everyone is putting away the dishes.

I know. Oh gosh, the dishwasher. My kids do not like unloading it. I don't. It's not even that hard. They massive meltdowns. And I just say, you know, we could just leave all the dishes here, but then we'd have to stop having dinner and snacks and lunch and breakfast.

So it might be better to do a little teamwork, you know, just to raise it. Just to show them that they can be responsible contributors to not only family life, but then ultimately society.

## THE ROLE OF GRANDMAS

When it comes to getting kids in the kitchen. I mean, I think grandmas have an incredible role in this paradigm. I don't know if I know anyone in our generation who didn't bake with their grandmas.

Don't you think it was like cookies at grandma's house or making pie. I know my grandma would make pies and I would get all the, the little pieces of pie crust from the edges and get to make little strips and little hearts and, you know, put them on a cookie sheet and do my own thing.

## A NEW PARDIGM

And I think that the new paradigm instead of cookies and pie at grandma's can be like carrots and homemade ranch at Grandma's and how to use the chef's knife.

Like, why not? I think a lot of us moms are running around crazy with chickens with our heads cut off and we're like, I can't, I can't slow down enough to teach my 4 year old to use a paring knife or my 8 year old to use a chef's knife.

But grandma's. Ooh. You know, like, it's such a beautiful opportunity to just take that time with your grandkids and teach them genuine skills.

## OPPORTUNITY TO SLOW DOWN

Yes, you can still bake the cookies, but I, I just really think that grandmas can reinvent this idea of it doesn't have to be just like Mrs. Claus and the cookies at grandma's, but it can be like, what if we gardened with grandma and, or went to a farmer's market or, you know, some of those like slow, slow down, slow food type things.

I think grandmas are just perfect for that. And, and then it raises the bar, you know. What did you do at grandma's? Oh, I learned to use a paring knife and sliced strawberries for half an hour.

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Whoa. Like, right? It's so, it's so impressive. And raising the bar, teaching kids genuine, authentic skills authentically raises their self esteem.

Katie Kimball

And I don't know of any mom, dad, grandma or grandpa who doesn't want to see their kids. And grandkids have this deep innate sense of confidence and know that, that they're capable, you know, believe that they can do hard things.

And so for them to believe they could do hard things, we have to give them hard things to do and give them the skills to accomplish those hard things.

### GRANDMA'S SPECIAL ABILITY

**Tasha:** Yeah. And I think that grandmas also have that special ability to like, I mean, like, let's be honest, like, kind of trick kids into doing things that they don't even realize that they're doing things because like, if a mom comes and is like, hey, like, learn to use this knife and cut up these strawberries, like, it feels like a chore, it feels like a task.

And there's a time and place for being like you were saying, unloading the dishwasher. It's gotta happen people. Like, sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do. And I think it's a life skill to learn to do things that you don't want to do. Like, absolutely.

### MAKING IT FUN

But not every skill has to be learned by some sort of like, okay, like, I'm going to drag myself to do it. And so grandmas have that, like, really unique ability to like, this is totally fun. This is absolutely what we do because we're doing it with grandma.

And like, whoa, I've never gotten to use a knife at home. You know, like, mommy didn't let me do this. It's like, oh, well, she will now. And you'll wish that you didn't know how.

But I don't know. I just think, like, take advantage. If you are listening to this and you are the one in the role as grandma, like, take advantage of that special ability. Like, make it fun.

Like, don't let them know, you know, that you're teaching them life skills. Just make this exciting. And like, oh, wow, like, let me show you this thing. And like, they're gonna pick up on that and learn things like, without even realizing that they're learning, which is sometimes the best way to learn.

**Katie:** Oh, gosh, a hundred percent. And they'll love it. I mean, they'll want to go back to Grandma's. A trip to the farmer's market and all the beautiful colors, and you can pick out something you've never seen before. Like, that seems like a game, but it's a picky eating antidote as well.

### WHEN THE PARENTS STRUGGLE

**Tasha:** Yeah. And also, can you speak to those? Maybe there's some listening and they're like, oh, like, I don't have special skills. You know, like, there may be some who are like, I'm not even that good at cooking myself. Like, how am I supposed to be teaching, like, the next generation any of this?

What would you say to someone who's feeling like that?

**Katie:** Honestly, that's why I ended up creating Kids Cook Real Food, our cooking class, because I kept hearing from people in my generation and say, oh, like, I'm trying to get healthy. I'm trying to serve my kids more vegetables. But it's so hard because I, my mom never taught me to cook.

Katie Kimball

It's. It's like a refrain over and over. And so I realized that if we're not confident in the kitchen, we're certainly not passing those skills on to our kids.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

So for me, I love to create an environment where we're all lifelong learners and the moms and dads or grandmas don't have to know how to do everything. They just have to be open and vulnerable enough to say, let's learn this together.

You know, let's turn on a little video. Whether that's YouTube or whether that's kids cook real food in our classes or life skills now, like, you can, you know, turn on a little video, watch it together. We can learn together.

I think kids think it's hilarious when parents make mistakes or act like they don't know how to do something. And, and it's good for them. It's good for them to see us learning. So that's the encouragement.

## MAKE IT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

And we don't have to do, like, hard things. It's not like we have to go make homemade pasta or homemade bread or something on our first try. It's like, let's buy some grapes and wash them. You know, if you've got a three, four, five, six year old, like, just washing produce is an incredible exposure.

And as long as we can keep our patience, which grandmas have tenfold more than moms, too, I think it, it becomes. It's a positive experience. Every positive experience that a child has doing, you know, a certain thing.

So in this case, being brought into the kitchen

and being included in the process of meal prep will train them that this is where they belong and that this is where they want to come back and do more.

## YES, AND

On the flip side, sometimes, especially busy moms, our tendency is to say, oh, honey, it's okay, like, I've got this. You go play. Go outside side, go play your game, whatever. And that's just training their brain that they don't belong in the kitchen. So we want to be cautious of the inviting and the saying yes.

If it's stressful before dinner, here's my hot tip for busy families. Don't say yes right before dinner because if you're stressed, it'll probably end up being a negative experience. I like to say yes, and. Mom, can I help? Yes, and if we're going to plan tomorrow after snack to learn a new skill.

So if you teach a new skill when the children are fed happy, there's no time pressure to get dinner on the table, then they can practice that skill when there is time pressure to get dinner on the table and you have actual helpers instead of people just slowing you down, does that make sense where you're like, teaching is separate from practice?

## THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

**Tasha:** Yes, absolutely. That, like, in that moment of, like, I mean, crisis might be a strong word, but sometimes it feels like we're bordering on the moment of crisis if these people don't get fed, like, things are going to go down. That may not be the moment to teach. And I think that is important to accept as well.

Katie Kimball

You know, as moms or grandmas, we want to always be saying yes. Like, yes. Like, I want these kids to learn these skills, and they're eager to learn, and, like, how could I say no? But, like, it might not be the environment that is the most conducive to learning right now.

## FORMAL LEARNING ISN'T 24/7

I mean, while it is, like, what you said about being lifelong learners and all of that, like, all of those things are important, but, like, I think about school, you know, like, that type of learning is not happening 24/7.

It's happening some of the time. It has its time in place, and then it has the time and place where it's like, okay, we're not in school. Like, even if you have a kid who loves school, it's like, you can't sleep there, buddy. You know, like, you have to come home.

And there's different things that we're doing. And so the same thing here, like, if it's a time where not, like, the answer is tomorrow, right? Like, let's schedule it, that's okay. Because everything has its time and its place.

## LET THEM SEE US TRYING NEW THINGS

And, man, what you said about learning together and kids seeing us as the adults not knowing what we're doing, I think is so important. Because if we want kids to be okay with being beginners, if we want them to not be bothered that they're not good at something the first time, like, how better to teach them that than for us to not be bothered when we aren't good at doing something the first time?

**Katie:** Yeah, for sure. I. I've taken a couple big leaps of faith. I don't know, leaps of scary things in the last year. I was in a musical last summer

with my kids for, like, the first time in 25 years. And I tried standup comedy a couple months ago.

So that is, like, the scariest thing ever, because you get instant feedback. Either you're funny or you're not. And you know it while you're still on stage. Like, oh, no, I might be bombing right now. It was super scary.

But I hope that it was a good example for my kids. Just seeing mom be, like, just overly terrified. I'm doing this, but tackling it and doing it anyway.

**Tasha:** And so now I have to know, how did it go? Did they laugh?

**Katie:** I did get some laughs. Yeah.

**Tasha:** Okay, good, good. Are you ever going to do it again?

**Katie:** I would. Yeah.

**Tasha:** Okay. That's super cool.

## TEACHING TO WORK THROUGH FRUSTRATION

Yeah. But anything like that, whether it's a kitchen, skills to end up comedy, some new hobby, like, I can just think in my own life of kids in my life who they get a new toy or they're building something, like they're working on something and it's not working. And just the frustration of, like, oh, like, I cannot get this.

And how we can model either that frustration in the adult form or we can model, wow, this really is not working out fantastic. And that's okay because I'm a beginner at this. And here's how we work through, through all of that.

Katie Kimball

It's funny, like, just how many things you're teaching when you're doing something, like teaching how to wash grapes, like you mentioned, for sure.

## MEAL PLANNING CONSISTENCY

So can you circle back to meal planning specifically? So for people who may struggle with meal planning, which may include me, what are just some of the things that you found that work that are not overwhelming and that help you become consistent in that?

**Katie:** Yeah, I think understanding your own personality is really, really key. So some people love, like, Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, you know, Pasta Thursday. I don't know what they actually are, but, you know, they'll have, like, a routine where they kind of have the same thing every week.

And then for others, that's total kryptonite. Like, oh, I'd be so bored, and I'd feel so constrained.

## VARIETY & GO-TOS

So I know, like, for me, I do need variety, but I also have got to have some, like, things to come home to. So we do, like, in our family, we do have tacos once a week because we all love them, and that's okay.

I think if you can plan a whole week, it's wonderful because you can look and go, all right, where's my chicken? Where's my beef? Where's my pork? Where's my meatless? You know, and get that balance. That's really helpful to have that global view.

## CONNECTED MEAL PLANNING

I mentioned connected meal planning. That's what I call it when, you know you're going to make a recipe and maybe it uses half the box of spinach, or maybe you need, you know, a pound of ground beef crumbled and browned, but then two days later, you could use a pound of ground beef crumbled and brown.

So what if you browned the ground beef, you know, two pounds in one day, and then you're saving, like, Tuesday Katie is saving Thursday Katy, some work, and it's ready. So that kind of thing, I think, helps really reduce food waste. And it causes, for me at least it causes this like fun momentum.

Sometimes I'll sit down to meal plan and I'll accidentally go for a week and a half or two weeks because I'm thinking like, oh, I'm making you know, rice at this meal. But if I made twice the rice two days later, I can make this fun dish that I have, you know, in my repertoire that uses cooked rice, you know.

And then it just, it like snowballs and it, that for me makes it easier because it feels like a game, it feels like a puzzle. Like what's the next thing that I could potentially click onto this for.

## WHEN YOU DON'T LIKE PLANNING AHEAD

For those who if that sounds like your kryptonite and you're like I hate planning ahead, like Tuesday Katie has no idea what Thursday Katie wants to eat. Thursday Katie wants to figure that out herself.

Then I think having your, your sort of list of go to's just ready so that you can sort of deal the cards out willy nilly as you want. But if you can

Katie Kimball

make sure that as the grocery shopper those items are always stocked, you know, like when at least you need to maybe take meat out to thaw.

So for me like they're my oh crap meals. When I haven't meal planned. I know that I always have some like pre-made burgers in the freezer. I always have some like decent ingredient sausage. Butcher box right now has released some meatballs that are amazing in the freezer. So like that makes spaghetti night super easy. You don't have to thaw anything.

So I want to have a list of like two to five meals where it's like oh gosh, it's 4:30, right? I've totally dropped the ball because I don't like the feeling of maybe giving in to take out or going out.

## REDUCING STRESS

Like if I want to go out, I want to know it's coming, I want to be relaxed about it. And if I'm going to spend that much money, it needs to be in the plan so that I don't feel like I'm stealing from my budget. Like I've budgeted for this, I've. And I can look forward to it.

You know what I'm saying? As opposed to stress, stress, stress, stress. Oh my goodness, I don't know what's for dinner. Blah. We should, we just have to go out, right? And then you just like all the feelings are really negative.

So I think even, even with just a little if it's a week planning, if it's when the morning, when you wake up, you plan for that day, if you can walk into the kitchen and know what you're making, your stress levels cut at least by 50%. I firmly believe that's. That's just me.

## MAKING FUTURE MEALS EASIER

Let's see one more, one more fun hack. I know we're might be heading into summer, but for me, I like making big batches of homemade broth, chicken broth, because it's so cheap, it saves the budget, uses hardly any of my time. It's like five minutes here, five minutes there, if you've ever made, like, chicken bones into broth.

And then I have all this broth in my fridge, so it's like, well, I guess we're making soup. I guess I'm making chicken rice. I guess we're making chili. And it, like, again, it's like this snowball momentum where it's easier when the first step has been taken.

Like, writer's block. You know, they say if you have that, like, white paper in front of you, no one can get started. But if you at least have a few sentences, you can keep going.

And I feel like meal planning is the same way. If you at least have a plan or an idea or your meat is thawed or your broth is there going, use me, use me. You know, it just makes the things so much easier.

## KEEPING A RECORD OF MEALS THAT WORKED

**Tasha:** Yeah. And I think having some record of meals that worked for your family. So, like, people ate them is typically, you know, a good sign. It wasn't completely overwhelming for you to make.

I have found, like, in my experience, even a recipe that will become a go to, like, the first time you ever make something, it's always, like, just a little bit more difficult, even if it's gonna turn into an easy recipe.

Katie Kimball

## SEASONAL MEALS

But I found for us, like, my family really cycles through meals. Like, I'm just not gonna make chili in July. Like, I mean, it just not. It does not sound good. But, like, late November, like, chili over a baked potato is, like, really nice. Right.

But sometimes when I'm transitioning seasons, you know, it's starting to cool off in the fall, or it's warming up in summer, it's like, what. What do I make when it's hot outside? I really don't remember. I know we ate something last summer.

## CREATING A DEDICATED PINTEREST BOARD

And so whether that be, like, physical recipe cards or a recipe book where you're writing them down, I get a lot of my recipes off of Pinterest, and I made a separate board that if I have made something and it actually worked, and I'm like, I want to find this again, I move it.

So it doesn't get to live on the, like, probably 3,000 pins of random things that I might maybe try someday, probably not. Like, it doesn't get lost there. I don't have to search for it. Like, there's probably like 25 things total that I'm like, oh, I actually made this. It was actually worth going back and saying, yeah, like, I want to find that recipe again.

So however you do that, that's another thing I think can be helpful because I know I forget for sure what actually works for our family.

## FOLDERS FOR PAPER RECIPES

**Katie:** Totally. And I'm a paper girl. Cause, like, if I were to do that on Pinterest, I would either go to my laptop or I'd pick up my phone,

and five minutes later I'd be like, I wonder if I picked up my phone. Why is this in my hand?

And I would have totally forgotten to move the recipe. Right? So for me, like, if I even think a recipe might make it, I'm going to print it.

And my non-routine routine is literally, I have two manila folders. One is called Meals I want to try, and one is called Standbys. It's the same thing as your Pinterest board. I'll write on the recipe, like, you know, February 2025, six out of six liked it, stuff like that, so that I can remember again. But then I move it into the standbys folder.

**Tasha:** I know that's always. Laura is always shocked. She's like, you make recipes off your phone? And I'm like, yeah, Like, I just pull up the recipe and it's right there. And she's like, I have to print it. Like, everyone...

**Katie:** Know thyself. Yeah, you gotta know.

## TRIAL AND ERROR

**Tasha:** And it's like you were saying even about, like, meal planning. Are you the person who wants to do meatless Mondays, taco Tuesdays, Pasta Wednesdays, you know? Or are you the person who does not want to do that? And that sounds way too constricting.

Like, it's a little bit of trial and error and maybe something as simple as assigning a category to each day. Or maybe it's, maybe it's even broader than that. Like, maybe you're like, we are having an Italian dish on Mondays.

We are having, like, Spanish or Mexican on Tuesdays. And it doesn't have to be tacos. It could be enchiladas. It could be a taco soup, you know, something like that.

Katie Kimball

## TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

But just trying those little tweaks. And honestly, if you're in a spot where it's not really clicking right now, like, meal planning or dinner time is really stressful or like there's something that's not working, there's probably not a lot of harm in trying something different, right?

Try printing out the recipe. Does that make it easier? Like if you've never done that, maybe it makes it easier to actually get dinner made. Try one week of meal planning a different way. And if it doesn't work, well, if it wasn't working the other way either, we're not really behind, right?

## WHEN KIDS PREPARE THE MEALS

**Katie:** No, exactly. Well, and I'm at a very fortunate place, you know, I mean, I do teach kids to cook. My older three or my kids are 10, 13, 16 and 19 right now. So the older three all make one meal a week.

So that's like our routine is Saturday, Sunday and Monday, currently the three kids make the meals. So I don't have to meal plan those days. Although I do need to still remind them because they're, they're teens, their brains aren't fully formed yet. And the 10 year old just started a couple months ago being the sous chef with the 13 year old. So he's learning along.

It's incredible, it's absolutely incredible to have three nights off. So even though it, like if you've, if your kids don't know how to cook or maybe they're really young or even, you know, if you are the grandma, you can support your daughter, daughter in law.

## THE INVESTMENT PAYS OFF

Yes, it is work to teach kids to cook, but

holy cow, the investment really, really pays off because I'm like, yesterday my 13 year old walked in from school and it was Easter weekend as we filmed this and we had forgotten to talk about what he was going to make on Monday.

My husband and I, during the day when he was at school, we were like, oh man, like he's not gonna be able to turn something around. Like he'll be too stressed out that we hadn't, you know, planned it out with him.

He walked in, he's like, am I cooking today? I said, kinda. He's like, I'm thinking about breakfast for dinner. I was amazed, like 8th grade boy, he had came home with this plan in his head and so I helped him, like what he needed. He ended up making bacon and sausage and pancakes, but a new recipe that he hadn't tried before. It was incredible.

And for me to be able to just do a little bit of help, like 10 minutes of helping him sort things out and talk it through, I came back here and got an hour of work done. Yeah, glorious.

## MORE ENJOYABLE WHEN YOU DON'T COOK IT

**Tasha:** Yeah. And I mean, to be honest, I'm probably a lot more forgiving of not having my very favorite food if I didn't cook it.

**Katie:** Oh, amen.

**Tasha:** So sometimes I might be like, oh, I don't know if I feel like pancakes, but if someone else is putting pancakes in front of me, you know, maybe we can make that work.

Katie Kimball

## THE COOK GETS TO DECIDE

**Katie:** And it works both ways too. You know, how many times does the mom or dad make the meal and the kids are like, oh, I don't like this. Why are you doing this to me? You're ruining my life.

You know, which is, it's great to say, you know, when you're the cook, you get to make the choices. And you can make foods that you really like. Right. So that's a massive benefit to shared responsibility.

Helps them build a better relationship with food. Helps them have that authentic confidence there. There aren't very many downsides. Teaching kids to cook.

## MAKING THE KITCHEN FLOW BETTER

**Tasha:** Yeah. So is there anything you've set up in your kitchen that you would say is, like, a specific way that you've either organized it or just something you found makes things flow better?

Because a kitchen organized for, like, teens to be cooking might be a little bit different than how I would set up my kitchen.

## GET ON THEIR LEVEL

**Katie:** Yes, definitely. Back when I had little ones, I. It's. I think it's really important to think about that. Like, get down on your knees and think about what the perspective of a four or five or six year old is.

What can they see, what can they reach? So we want to have at least their tools, their plates, their cups, their bowls in a low cabinet, if possible.

We want to see what we can do to empower them to do something like unload the dishwasher. That's a great skill for little ones. And then as they grow, we want to think about work zones that work for multiple people to be in the kitchen.

## LITTLE ONES AT THE TABLE

So when the kids are pretty little, I actually prefer to have them working at the kitchen table, partly because they're out of the adult's elbow room, which can be a real friction point for moms. Like, oh, I just feel like I don't have any space in my own kitchen anymore. So send them to the kitchen table.

It's also the right height for them. So if you think about where the counter hits an adult about belly button level, imagine if the counter was up, like by your necklace, and you're trying to cut with the chef's knife. Like, that's really uncomfortable.

So it's great for elementary age kids to work at the table. They have their own space. It's the right height for them and which means you want to have multiple cutting boards, you want to have multiple peelers, multiple knives of different sizes.

## TOOLS FOR THEIR SIZE

I mean, kids can very safely use a sharp knife with proper training if it's the right size for their hands. So you can get as short as a five inch chef's knife. It's really small, but it's very effective from everything from apples to onions. And so you want to make sure that you stock things that fit your kids hands.

We actually did a kitchen remodel. We added a separate sink so that if someone is working

Katie Kimball

near one sink, someone can be washing produce at the other sink. That's like kind of a stretch goal. That's not something everyone can do.

But just thinking, like, how can we have different people working in different areas of the kitchen and planning that ahead a little bit can make a really big difference. But for the little ones we want to make, we do want some things to be down low so that they have that independence.

## BUYING THE GROCERIES

**Tasha:** Yeah, for sure. So when it comes to your kids these days who are like cooking meals, are you still doing all the grocery shopping for that? So, like, do they come to you and say, like, here's what I'm making. Like, how does that process look?

**Katie:** I do still do all the hunting and gathering, as I call it, especially when I get home from Costco. I'll open the room, be like, mom has hunted and gathered. Everyone needs to unload the van. There's too much stuff.

I keep an incredibly well stocked freezer and pantry, so I can't even think of the last time a kid had to say, can you get this for the meal? It's like, well, you better make sure that we do have everything for your recipe. But we, we generally have what we need.

## PASSING THE RESPONSIBILITY ON

I know my daughter has been talking. She's 16 and she's incredibly mature. She's been saying recently, yeah, you know, like, if you weren't around, I would totally be able to grocery shop. I know exactly what you buy. Like, I could totally

take that over.

I think it's. That's something I need to continue to pass on. I'll take kids with me sometimes so that they can see. Just a couple weeks ago, my two little boys came to Costco with me and they were blown away by how much food costs.

They're like, mom, this is so expensive. Like, this is food these days. That's why sometimes I say, you know, we can't eat the whole bag of chips at one meal. So it's good. I think it's good for kids to have some sense of what things cost, some sense of how to do things.

But also it's good to remember that they are still kids. You know, and I want to do a gradual release of responsibility where it's not all on them right at the same time.

**Tasha:** For sure. Yeah. So are there any tips or anything that you feel like we missed talking through all this? Any areas we didn't cover?

## KEEP IT REALLY POSITIVE

**Katie:** Oh, goodness. I think keeping really positive. We talked a little bit about positive experiences. But I do want to say, like, once your kids are helping, whether that's a five year old measuring a teaspoon of salt that goes into your soup, or, you know, a 13 year old, a 16 year old taking over a whole meal, thanking them for their contribution is massively important.

And it creates that positive loop where they're going to then feel good about their effort and want to do it again. So that's very much part of the Kimball family culture where we thank the person who made the meal, we do family prayer together at the end of the day. And. And somehow it has worked.

Katie Kimball

The parenting has worked where my kids naturally, you know, thank you, God, for the meal that Paul made today. It was so good stuff like that. And it just, I mean, that warms my heart as a parent, but I also know that, again, it creates that positive feedback loop for the kids.

## LESS STRESS & MORE PEACE

**Tasha:** Yeah, I love that. So the last question I always ask on this podcast is, what is one thing that's bringing you less stress and more peace right now?

## WRITING EVERYTHING DOWN

**Katie:** For me, leaving. It's like Hansel and Gretel leaving a little cookie crumb trail for myself is what's helpful. In other words, when I think of something, I have to, like, either write it down right away when my house is covered in post its mom notes, or I'll put it in my calendar.

So, like, if we run out of something and I don't have it, I need to, like, prepare it the next week. It's like it's going in the calendar so that we always have what we need. Yeah, that's stressful because it's very peaceful to be like, oh, are we out of pickles? No, we're not out of pickles. We have enough.

**Tasha:** Just getting all that out of your brain, right? So you're not having to hold it all, like cupped water that's like leaking out and you cannot quite get all of it.

**Katie:** Yes, my brain does feel leaky sometimes. So just like, I like to hack the system of the digital calendar with little reminders.

## WHERE TO FIND KATIE

**Tasha:** For sure. So thank you so much for just

sharing all these tips with us. Where is the best place for people to go if they want to hear more tips from you or get more resources for helping their kids or grandkids to cook?

**Katie:** For sure. Well, I'm at [kidscookrealfood.com](https://kidscookrealfood.com) and at Katie Kimball Kids Cook on Instagram.

I also have a podcast where like you, I like love to pull together different people and lots of different experts to help out.

For those who are starting on the healthy living journey at [kitchens.stewardship.com](https://kitchens.stewardship.com) is where you can find those old fashioned Monday missions. With that one baby step a week, I took the top 10 and put them in an email course.

**Tasha:** Awesome. All right, well, we will link those in the show notes. Thank you so much for sitting down with us today.

**Katie:** You bet.

**Tasha:** Well, thanks so much for tuning in to this episode of the Get Organized HQ podcast. I hope that you took something away that is helpful that you maybe are going to try with your kids or grandkids at home. And I can't wait to see you right back here next week.