



## Lunch Suggestions

### Protein:

(chopped) chicken, steak, pork, fish, tofu, yogurt (Greek), cottage cheese, eggs, nuts (no peanut products)

### Dairy:

yogurt (child-sized portion), cream cheese, cottage cheese, cheese slices/sticks, milk

### Veggies\*:

carrots, jicama, bell pepper (red/orange/yellow), peas, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers

*Slice/dice/peel veggies for safe consumption*

### Fruit:

apple, pear, banana, melon, grapes\*, mango, berries, oranges/tangerines (no seeds; small). *Grapes should be halved when possible to avoid choking hazards.*

### Grains:

quinoa, couscous, barley, rice, pasta, bread/bagels

### Snacks/Crackers:

nuts, dried fruit, crackers, granola bars (avoid chocolate or excess sugars), rice cakes

### Picky fruit/veggie eater?

~Serve fruits and veggies that are in season.

~Try serving frozen veggies (they are generally sweeter because they are flash frozen soon after picking!)

~Don't give up! Continue to offer a variety and soon they'll find things they like.

~Start a garden! Really...we're serious.

## Food Safety:

Children each lunch each day at 11:30am. To avoid any potential food safety issues, please make sure items that need to:

**Keep warm** are sent in a heated thermos (fill thermos with hot/boiling water & seal/let sit for 2-5 minutes) then empty and add hot lunch.

**Keep cool** are sent with an ice pack or pre-frozen (yogurt) so they thaw by lunch.

## What to avoid

Please *do not* pack the following items: candy, cookies, cake, pudding/jello, juice  
Why? Because they will choose to eat these sweet treats first and avoid what might be the healthier choices.

Additional foods on the list to avoid:

~Peanuts/peanut butter (we have an active food allergy in school this year)

~Hot dogs

~Foods that must be heated or cooked while at school.



## Lunch Time!

Q: "I have a picky eater! What sort of lunch should I pack?"

A: Something they can "pick" at!



## Lunches...oh my!

I can clearly remember my elementary school lunches. We didn't have a cafeteria so my mom packed lunches for my brother, sister and I every night. My mom did her best to make us lunches she thought we would eat, but since we didn't have insulated bags or portable ice packs we often had turkey/roast beef/tuna melt sandwiches, brown fruit and room temp milk or orange juice. Of course we complained, whined and flat out refused to eat some days. My mother couldn't wait until we all entered high school and could officially fend for ourselves!

Today is a whole new ballgame when it comes to packing lunches. Thanks to insulated lunch bags, long lasting cool packs and compartmental reusable containers, it's easier to back healthy options from fresh fruits and veggies to a favorite leftover meal.

I hope this brochure will give you some tips and ideas for a variety of lunch options this year. Some will surely be a hit and others...well can't please every picky eater, but we can try!

Good Luck!

Stacey

## Where to begin?

### First...

Get out a piece of paper, pen/pencil and draw a quick chart with these headings:

**Protein Fruit Veggie Dairy\* Grains Snacks**

Then spend the next five minutes or so brainstorming all of your preschoolers favorite foods in each category, don't be afraid to add a few "sort of likes" because your child's taste buds are always changing. What they didn't like last month, they may like next month! Your goal is to have at least 3 choices in each category. Make sure you have some good protein options; these are great brain foods and help your child sustain their energy over a long period of time.

*\*Dairy if applicable to child's diet*

### Next...

Sit your preschooler down and explain to them how to pack a lunch. *Oops...just kidding.*

Post your new chart on your refrigerator, or cupboard so you have an easy "menu" to review when putting together lunches.

### Finally...

Relax! You're about to become a master kid lunch maker. Really, it's easy.

## Storage & portion size

The storage possibilities are endless! We suggest having at least one insulated thermos and several compartmental containers. You can find reusable plastic or metal containers at most retail shops or online. Please **do not** send your child's lunch in a glass container. You will also want to have a set or two of child-sized utensils (fork and spoon only) and a small water bottle or toddler cup for water or milk.

### A few tips on portion size:

- ~A serving size on food packages is for an adult. Divide that in half, and that is what you should be feeding your child.
- ~A ½ cup is a good cup.
- ~Cupcake papers are great for portion control.
- ~Bite sized is best.

Generally children will stop eating when they are full. Providing opportunities for them to taste/choose from options in multiple food groups will generally serve their nutritional needs. If they bring home an empty\* lunch box, you know your combo was a hit!

\*Children are asked to keep uneaten portions of their lunch. This allows the parent to gage what their child is eating each day.