

# LOVE YOUR LUNCHBOX



Brown bagging it can be fun for kids and easy for parents with simple, easy to prepare items. Be creative with food pairings and provide a varied selection to keep school lunches interesting and enjoyable. Use the template below as a guideline for selecting food groups to ensure that your child is eating a well-balanced lunch.

## Main dishes and Meats:

- Sandwiches, wraps, gyros
- Soups
- Pasta salads
- Tuna salad kits
- Cobb or chef salad
- Smoked salmon pinwheels with cream cheese and herbs
- Stuffed peppers with meat or beans, rice, and veggies
- Soft shell grilled chicken strip tacos or quesadillas
- Leftovers

## Choose from the following:

- 1 serving of lean protein
- 2 servings of fruits and/or vegetables
- 2 servings of whole grains and/or starchy vegetables
- 1 serving of dairy

## Savory Sides and Snacks:

- Celery sticks with PB and a sprinkle of raisins
- Crinkle cut carrots
- PB and whole grain crackers
- Hummus and raw veggies
- Sunchips or Baked Lays
- Freeze dried sugar snap peas
- Salsa and whole grain tortilla chips
- Cottage cheese cup with grape tomatoes, basil, and balsamic vinegar
- Popcorn
- Blanched green veggies with Dijon mustard
- Edamame

Despite what you may think, there are a lot of healthy convenience foods at the grocery store, such as precooked grilled chicken strips, that make meal preparation simple and easy.

If your child **buys lunch from school**, review the components of a meal: entrée (usually a protein), dairy, grains, fruit and veggies. Highlight foods that will cover appetite, **encourage satisfaction**, and **increase focus in the classroom**.

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## Don't Forget the Dairy:

- Yogurt cups or tubes
- Cartons of regular or chocolate milk
- String cheese
- Cottage cheese cups
- Laughing cow spreadable cheese
- Homemade "creamy" dressing- blend cottage cheese and herb packets

## Healthy Condiments, Dippers, and Toppings:

- Individual Wholly Guacamole packets
- Hummus
- Greek or other plain yogurt
- Salsa
- Chopped nuts
- Peanut Butter
- Dried Fruit
- Honey
- Dijon or spicy brown mustard
- Fat free cream cheese and sour cream cups
- Black beans
- Canned or jarred fruits and veggies

## Sweet Sensations:

- Yogurt parfaits- with cereal, dried fruit, and nuts
- Pudding with berries
- Graham crackers with peanut butter
- Whole grain bread with apple or pumpkin butter and cinnamon
- Oatmeal with milk, fruit, and nuts
- Frozen fruit with yogurt and honey
- Trail mix- dried fruit, nuts, dark chocolate
- Strawberry wrap or pinwheels- fresh strawberries, strawberry cream cheese, and granola
- Fresh, frozen, canned, pureed, and dried fruit; or 100% fruit juice

✓ Make a one-dish meal with all of the criteria, or a few sides that add up to your child's nutritional goals.

✓ Prepare ingredients ahead and let your child assemble them to encourage exploration of new food combinations and flavors.

**Nutrition Tip:** Encourage your child to pack his own lunch! Allowing independent lunch packing is one of the best ways to help teach and train your child about nutritious foods.

**Lunch packing can be stressful** for you and your child if you leave it for the morning of. Prepare foods on the weekend, make a list of 'liked' foods, and upgrade to healthier versions to make lunch packing a breeze.