

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Food is fuel for our children, helping them to develop strong bodies and brains. When you pack lunch for your child, please keep this in mind. Your child may prefer Oreos to apples, but foods that are highly processed and high in sugars don't set your child up for success. On the contrary, these foods send them on a sugar high that impedes their ability to concentrate and self-regulate.

In the past, the teachers have found themselves in the role of "lunch monitor" trying to ensure that foods are eaten in proper sequence based on nutritional value, or negotiating for one more bite of a sandwich to be eaten before the pudding is opened. Children often come to rely on this direction. While this may be helpful in the short term, it is contrary to Montessori's principles of freedom with responsibility, and fostering independence.

So, we are asking for your support to encourage healthy eating habits. Right from the start, we will be having classroom discussions about the **benefits of healthy eating**, and about different types of food. At the same time, we ask that you **have a similar conversation at home**, sharing your expectations regarding lunch. We will offer general reminders about making healthy choices and then allow the children the freedom to eat their lunch, after which they will put any leftovers back in their lunchboxes (whenever possible). You will know what is or is not being eaten, can chat about it, and adjust the menu accordingly.

Our goal is to empower children to make the same kinds of thoughtful, independent choices about food as they do about their work. Many of them already do; for others it may take a while, but the results could last a lifetime! By all means, address any special concerns with your child's teacher.

Tips for Success:

- **Limit sugary and processed foods.** No candy or gum, please!
- **Hold the Go-Gurt!** Don't believe the commercials; yogurt in tubes is not the perfect lunch food. It's hard for children to open on their own, and often ends up in a puddle on the table rather than in the tummy. Pack traditional yogurt containers or smoothies instead.
- **Prepare the food at home.** We are happy to heat up foods in the microwave, but please have it ready to go in a pyrex container (no plastic, please!). There is no time for the teachers to make instant pasta or cut up food. Large pieces of fruit or meat should be pre-cut.
- **Send an extra cloth napkin** for the children to use as a placemat. This creates an appealing social atmosphere, reminds children of each other's space, and facilitates clean-up too.

Bon Appetit!

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR “SNACK WEEK”

- Each child/family typically has two weeks out of the school year that they are responsible for bringing snacks for the entire class.
- Please check the class list for the number of children in your child’s class (this number could possibly change slightly throughout the year).
- The children are welcome to have snack in the morning, whenever they choose to. There will be a menu to show them the amounts to take of each item.
- We do have a refrigerator in each classroom.
- You do not need to bring utensils or bowls/plates. If your snack does come in a container from home, we will return it at the end of the day. Please label your items!
- You are welcome to bring snacks daily or for the entire week on Monday. If your child only comes 3 days, please leave snacks for the remaining two days.

Remember to check with your child’s teacher about any allergies; they will vary by class.

We ask you to provide healthy snacks for the children. Listed below are just a few suggestions that are popular with the children, but feel free to be creative!

- Fruit (fresh or dried)
- Vegetables (with or without dip)
- Cheese
- Yogurt/applesauce
- Granola
- Baked breads, muffins, etc.
- Mini bagels
- Whole grain cereals, crackers, etc.
- Snack/trail mixes
- Pita bread with hummus
- Tortilla chips with salsa

Thank you!