LUNCH FROM HOME: Healthy & Local

Healthy food for our preschoolers provides not only good nutrition, but influences lifelong healthy eating behaviors. We parents can help by providing healthy food for our children’s lunches—using local ingredients whenever possible:

- All lunches should include at least one serving of each: protein, fruit, vegetable, & whole grain. Talk to your child’s teacher about lunch ideas, nutrition information, & portion sizes.

- Avoid processed meats, junk food, and sugary treats—no soda or candy!

- When we make healthy food more interesting, our kids are more likely to eat it.

- Local food provides a story to engage children and learning about how food is produced is a great way to encourage picky eaters to try new foods, especially if they or someone they know has grown the food.

- Provide a small amount of no-added-sugar dip for vegetables if your child is a picky eater. Try hummus for a protein-rich dip.

- Involve your child in making their lunch or tell them what you’ve packed—no surprises!

- Garden/cook/learn with your children at home—it’s amazing how a child’s involvement with food can improve their eating behaviors.

It’s important that we start teaching our children to eat healthy and enjoy healthy food at a young age.

— Kelsey Reeder, Durango Preschooler Mama
HEALTHY LUNCH IDEAS:
Foods in **BOLD** are available locally*

- **DIPPING DELIGHT:** Broccoli “trees” & hummus, yogurt with fruit & granola.
- **PICNIC PLATE:** Carrot sticks, apple slices, cheese, & whole-grain crackers
- **SMORGASBORD:** Tuna sandwich, cherry tomatoes & cucumber slices, applesauce
- **SUPER SALAD:** Hard-boiled eggs & apple on salad greens & whole-grain muffin
- **SOUTHWEST SPECIAL:** Bean dip, tortilla chips, carrots, & fresh or dried peach

*Local food sources (grocery stores, etc.) can be found at [www.hcfs.org](http://www.hcfs.org)

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**PORTION SIZES FOR EACH CHILD (AGE 3-5):**

**Vegetables**
1/2 cup veggies = the size of a lightbulb

**Fruits**
1/2 cup fruit = the size of a lightbulb, or half an apple

**Whole Grains**
1/4 cup crackers or 1/2 muffin
1/2-1 slice whole grain bread

**Protein**
1 1/2 oz meat = half a small, lean hamburger
1 1/2 oz cheese = the size of two 9-volt batteries
3/8 cup cooked beans or 3/4 cup yogurt or 1 egg

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**ADDITIONAL ADVICE for HEALTHY LUNCH**

- **Avoid** processed meat, gummy fruit snacks, and chocolate.

- Whole grain foods have ingredients like whole wheat flour or whole grains—**read the ingredients, not just the labels!**

- Pack an **icepack** in your child’s lunch to keep food at safe temperatures.

- For nutrition information, **menu ideas**, & portion sizes: [http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html)

- Talk to **teachers** and other **parents** for ideas and helpful information!

**Thank you for helping keep our kids healthy!**