

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

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

Vegetables

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

Fruits

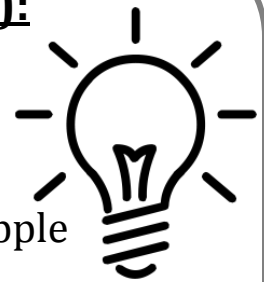
1/2 cup *fruit* = the size of a lightbulb, or half an apple

Whole Grains

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

Protein

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



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

Thank you for helping keep our kids healthy!