



BALANCED SCHOOL DAY MEAL PLANNING

In a balanced school day, children get plenty of playing time, and lots of time to eat well. Benefits seen from this type of school day schedule are fewer behaviour problems, greater ability to concentrate, and improved student learning.



Preparing School Lunches

On The Weekend:

- The weekend is a great time to plan meals and snacks for the week
- Leftovers can be packed and frozen in individual portion sizes
- Batches of breads and muffins can be made ahead of time
- Containers of 'grab and go' snacks can be prepared in advance, including cereal and fruit mix, mini rice cakes, cut up veggies or cheese slices or cubes

The Night Before:

- Plan a lunch that includes at least 3 of the 4 food groups in the main meal and/or snacks
- Split things like sandwiches or pizza in two different containers
- Send the whole sandwich for the morning, and snacks like crackers and cheese, or veggies with dip for the afternoon
- Cold foods like 100% fruit juice and yogurt can be frozen to help them stay cold right up until the second nutrition break
- Include 2 nutritious desserts, like homemade muffins, rice cakes, milk puddings or cut up fruit for a healthy fun surprise
- Containers can be marked #1 and #2 to help children divide their food

In The Morning:

- Pull out last night's packed lunch bag from the fridge, and fill thermos with any hot items and you're ready to go!
- **Start your child's day with a healthy breakfast** and you'll be sure to have them at their best for morning classes

Pack It Safely:

- Pack perishables, like deli meats, tuna salad and milk with a freezer pack, frozen juice box or yogurt tube in an insulated bag.
- Prepare meat sandwiches and other foods to be kept cold the night before so they're well chilled in the morning.
- Make sure foods are steaming hot before they get put into a thermos.
- Clean lunch bags, food containers, water bottles and utensils everyday.
- Use fresh baggies or plastic wrap everyday to avoid bacterial spoilage.

Food For Thought:

Chocolatey granola bars, yogurt covered raisins, cookies and other fun treats are an alright snack once in a while, but make sure they’re balanced with the rest of the day’s food. Few children receive the minimum number of fruit and vegetable servings each day. Try to include a serving at each meal and snack. Easy examples of fruits and veggie servings are:

- Half a cup of 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- A medium sized apple
- Cut up sweet peppers and cucumbers
- A cup of salad
- Orange segments
- 100% fruit and vegetable leathers
- Applesauce
- Raisins

Sample Menu Ideas

Monday

| Break One | Break Two |
|-----------------------|---|
| Oatmeal raisin muffin | Whole grain breadstick wrapped in deli meat |
| Milk | 100% fruit juice |
| Banana | Milk pudding cup |
| | Baby carrots with yogurt-vegetable dip |

Tuesday

| Break One | Break Two |
|----------------------------|--|
| Yogurt | Macaroni and cheese |
| Apple | Cucumber slices and cauliflower pieces |
| Sunflower or pumpkin seeds | Milk |

Wednesday

| Break One | Break Two |
|--|--|
| Half a muesli bagel with cheese pieces | The other half of the bagel with a hard-boiled egg |
| Grapes | Green and red pepper rings |
| 100% fruit juice | Milk |

Thursday

| Break One | Break Two |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Banana bread | Pasta salad with veggies and chicken |
| Berries and orange segments | Applesauce |
| Water | Pretzels |
| | Milk |

Friday

| Break One | Break Two |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Yogurt with berries and homemade granola | Pizza |
| Pear | Fruit salad |
| Milk | Popcorn sprinkled with dill seasoning |

By introducing two ‘mini-meal’ nutrition breaks, the child will be less hungry after school, and more energized throughout the day!