

October Parent Corner

What You Feed Your Child Matters!

Dear Families,

Did you know that the foods your child eats can affect how they learn, grow, and feel each day?

Healthy foods help children's brains grow and develop. They also give children the energy they need to learn, play, listen, and concentrate at school.

Foods like eggs, beans, meat, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains provide important nutrients that help children build strong bodies, bones, and teeth. Eating healthy foods also helps their bodies fight off illnesses.

The good news is that healthy eating habits can start at a young age! Here are some simple ways to help your child make healthy choices.

Tips for Helping Your Child Eat Healthy

- **Offer a variety of foods.** Try to give your child different fruits and vegetables each day.
- **Be patient with picky eaters!** Your child may need to see or try a new food many times before liking it. Don't give up after just one try!
- **Start small.** Offer just a few bites of a new food.
- **Make it fun!** Let your child help wash fruits, prepare snacks, or choose a vegetable at the grocery store.
- **Lead by example.** Children learn by watching us. Let them see you enjoying healthy foods, too!
- **Encourage, don't pressure.** Praise your child for trying something new. Avoid forcing them to eat or getting upset if they refuse a food.
- **Avoid using food as a reward.** Instead, reward your child with extra playtime, stickers, hugs, or special time together.

What Should My Child Eat?

Try to include a variety of foods throughout the day:

- **Fruits and vegetables:** Apples, bananas, berries, carrots, broccoli, and other colorful choices.
- **Protein:** Eggs, chicken, turkey, fish, beans, and nut or seed butters.
- **Whole grains:** Oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, brown rice, and whole-grain pasta.

- **Dairy or alternatives:** Milk, yogurt, and cheese, or fortified alternatives that provide similar nutrients.

Children's needs vary depending on their age, appetite, and activity level. Offer balanced meals and snacks, and let your child learn to recognize when they are hungry or full.

Foods to Limit

Try to limit foods and drinks that contain lots of added sugar or salt, such as:

- Soda and sugary fruit drinks
- Candy and sweets
- Sugary cereals
- Chips and other salty snacks

Too much added sugar can contribute to tooth decay and make it harder for children to get the nutrients they need. Regular meals and healthy snacks can help children maintain steady energy throughout the day.

Don't Forget Water!

Water is a great drink to offer throughout the day. Milk can also provide important nutrients for growing children. Try to make water the usual choice instead of sugary drinks.

Let's Work Together!

Families and teachers are a team! You can help your child learn healthy habits at home, and we will continue encouraging healthy choices at school.

Please help us by sending a healthy snack with your child each day. Some easy ideas include apple slices, bananas, berries, cheese, yogurt, or whole-grain crackers.

Small, healthy choices today can help your child build habits that last a lifetime!

Thank you for helping your child grow, learn, and thrive!

Your Kindergarten Teacher 