

Royal Montessori Academy



Nutritious Foods for School Guide

Quick, Simple examples of choices that align
with our school's nutrition expectations

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Nutritious Foods for School Guide

The Nutritious Foods for School Guide includes examples of choices that align with our school's nutrition expectations. To support a calm, predictable, consistent, and positive eating environment, families are required to send nutritious, balanced foods that support children's energy, growth, and development. It's important to remember that the foods we send with our children can account for up to 1/3 of their daily nutrient intake, so packing a balanced lunch and snack is essential to ensure they receive the nutrients they need. Please choose whole-grain varieties and include whole foods. If you need ideas, clarification, or suggestions, our team is always happy to help!

The 5 Essential Food Groups for School Lunches

Each child's lunch must include a variety of foods from the following five categories. These groups play an important role in supporting children's growth and development.



Dairy

Dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium, vitamin D, and protein, nutrients that are essential for strong bones, teeth, and overall development. These foods also support nerve and muscle function.



Fruit

Fruits provide natural energy, essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They play a crucial role in helping our bodies stay healthy.



Vegetables

Vegetables offer important nutrients such as vitamins A and C, iron, fiber, and antioxidants. They help children feel full and energized and should make up a large part of our daily food intake, being encouraged at every meal.



Grains

Whole grains provide steady energy, fiber, and nutrients that support brain function and concentration. They help children remain satisfied and full throughout the day.



Protein

Protein is essential for building, maintaining, and repairing tissues in our bodies. It supports growth and helps stabilize blood sugar levels, ensuring children maintain energy and feel satisfied between meals. Muscles and organs (such as the heart) are made of protein.

Food Suggestions for Each Group

These are examples, not requirements. Families are encouraged to choose foods that meet their child’s needs while aligning with school guidelines.

Dairy	Fruit	Vegetables	Protein	Grain
Cheese (mozzarella, colby, muenster, etc.)	Apples	Carrots	Turkey (shredded or cubed)	Whole-grain bread
String cheese	Pears	Zucchini slices	Chicken (shredded or cubed)	Brown rice
Cheese rounds	Sliced oranges	Cucumbers	Beef or pork	Quinoa
Cheese cubes	Peeled clementines	Califlower bites	Black bean and corn salad	Whole-grain flatbread
Cottage Cheese	Peaches (fresh or no-sugar-added cup)	Broccoli	Turkey or chicken meatballs	Rice cakes or rolls
Yogurt (plain, Greek, etc.)	Bananas	Spinach (added to pasta or quesadillas)	Cooked fish (tuna, salmon, etc.)	Barley or farro
Yogurt tubes (low-sugar varieties)	Grapes (cut for safety)	Edamame (shelled for safety)	Beans or lentils	Whole-grain pita
Yogurt dip	Watermelon	Roasted sweet potato	Tofu cubes or nuggets	Oat cups (with fruit or cinnamon)
Kefir (plain or lightly sweetened)	Melon cubes	Roasted butternut squash cubes	Plain bean patties or veggie burgers	Pasta
Ricotta	Berries	Cherry tomatoes (cut for safety)	Chickpeas (roasted)	Whole-grain fruit/vegetable muffins
Goat cheese	Applesauce (no added sugar)	Bell peppers	Hummus	Whole-grain crackers
Cream cheese	Applesauce pouches (no added sugar)	Peas or snap peas	Eggs (hard-boiled, scrambled, egg cups)	Tortillas
Lactose-free or soy alternatives	Freeze-dried fruit (strawberries, mangos, ingredients must be fruit only)	Green beans	Seeds (pumpkin, almonds, etc.)	Whole-grain grilled cheese
	Pineapple	Veggie soups	Seed/nut butter	Millet cups
	Kiwi	Guacamole	Chia pudding with yogurt	Granola
	Mango	Seaweed snacks (plain, low-sodium)		Whole-grain mac & cheese
	Fruit pouches (no sugar added)			Mini whole-grain bagels
	Dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cranberries, dates)			Whole-grain waffles/pancakes
	No added sugar fruit cups			

LUNCH IDEAS



Chicken & Roasted Sweet Potatoes

- Protein: Chicken or turkey
- Dairy: Greek yogurt cup
- Vegetable: Roasted sweet potatoes
- Fruit: Berries
- Grain: Brown rice or quinoa



Mini Turkey & Cheese Roll-Up Bento

- Protein: Sliced turkey roll-ups
- Dairy: Cheese cubes or string cheese
- Vegetable: Cucumber + tomatoes
- Fruit: Grapes (halved) or sliced apples
- Grain: Whole-grain crackers



Balanced Sandwich

- Protein: Turkey or chicken lunch meat
- Dairy: Cheese cubes
- Vegetable: Spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes
- Fruit: Blueberries
- Grain: Whole-grain bread



Mini Quesadilla Meal

- Protein: Beans or shredded chicken
- Dairy: Cheese inside the quesadilla
- Vegetable: Corn + guacamole
- Fruit: Strawberries or kiwi
- Grain: Whole-wheat tortilla quesadilla



Meatball & Veggie Plate

- Protein: Mini turkey or beef meatballs
- Dairy: Cottage cheese or cheese stick
- Vegetable: Green beans or broccoli
- Fruit: Blueberries
- Grain: Brown rice or quinoa



Build-your-own Lunch Style Box

- Protein: Hard-boiled egg or chicken
- Dairy: Yogurt tube or cheese cubes
- Vegetable: Snap peas + mini carrots
- Fruit: Banana or orange
- Grain: Whole-grain crackers or muffin



Warm Cozy Soup Meal

- Protein: Chicken noodle soup
- Dairy: Yogurt or cheese cubes
- Vegetable: Carrot sticks
- Fruit: Apple slices
- Grain: Whole-grain roll or bread



Boiled Eggs & Yogurt

- Protein: Boiled eggs
- Dairy: Kefir or yogurt
- Vegetable: Snap peas
- Fruit: Strawberries or cut grapes
- Grain: Whole-grain banana muffin



DIY Mini Pasta Lunch

- Protein: Shredded chicken or chickpeas
- Dairy: Parmesan or mozzarella pearls
- Vegetable: Steamed broccoli or peas
- Fruit: Diced pears or melon
- Grain: Whole-grain pasta spirals



Hummus & Veggie Pita Plate

- Protein: Hummus
- Dairy: Greek yogurt dip or cheese slices
- Vegetable: Peppers, carrots, cucumbers
- Fruit: Apple slices or grapes
- Grain: Whole-wheat pita triangles

Food Suggestions for Snack

These are examples, not requirements. Families are encouraged to choose foods that meet their child’s needs while aligning with school guidelines.

Dairy	Fruit	Vegetables	Protein	Grain
Cheese (mozzarella, colby, muenster, etc.)	Sliced Fruit (apples, pears, oranges)	Sliced Vegetables (cucumbers, bell peppers, carrots)	Chickpeas (roasted)	Rice cakes or rolls
String cheese	Bananas (cut for safety)	Cherry tomatoes (cut for safety)	Hummus	Whole-grain pita
Cheese rounds or cubes	Grapes (cut for safety)	Peas or snap peas	Beef sticks (real meat)	Whole-grain fruit/vegetable muffins
Cottage cheese	Peeled clementines	Guacamole	Black bean and corn salad	Whole-grain crackers
Yogurt cups or tubes (plain, Greek, etc.)	Peaches (fresh or no-sugar-added cup)	Seaweed snacks (plain, low-sodium)	Turkey or chicken meatballs	Granola
Yogurt dip	Watermelon or melon cubes	Green beans	Eggs (hard-boiled, scrambled, egg cups)	Whole-grain pretzels
Kefir (plain or lightly sweetened)	Berries		Seeds (pumpkin, almonds, etc.)	Popcorn
	Applesauce (no added sugar)		Seed/nut butter	
	Fruit bars (100% real fruit)		Chia pudding with yogurt	
	Freeze-dried fruit (strawberries, mangos, ingredients must be fruit only)			
	Dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cranberries, dates)			
	No added sugar fruit cups			

SNACK IDEAS

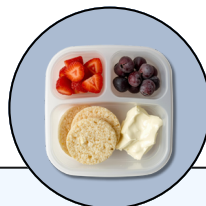
To help families choose quick and nourishing options, here are some combinations:



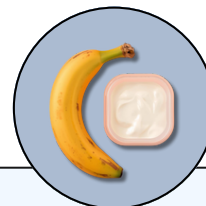
Carrots or cucumbers (any veggie sticks) and hummus



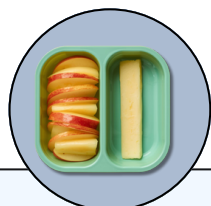
Berries (any type of fruit) and cottage cheese



Rice cakes with yogurt or cottage cheese and berries



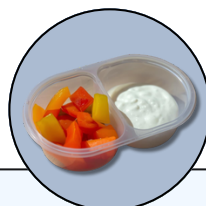
Banana and greek yogurt or cottage cheese



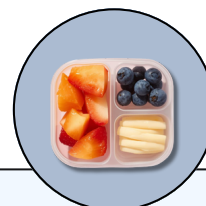
Apple slices and a cheese stick or cubes



Applesauce cup with sliced apples and whole-grain toast strip



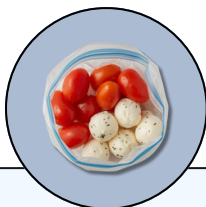
Bell pepper or carrot strips and savory yogurt dip



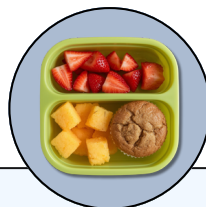
Fresh fruits (strawberries and blueberries) and cheese slices



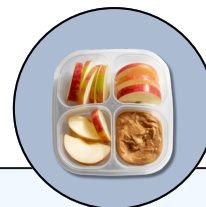
Greek yogurt cup and fresh mixed berries



Cherry tomatoes (sliced) and mini mozzarella balls



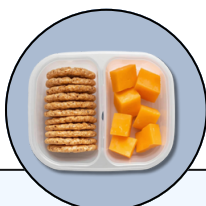
Fresh fruit and a whole-grain mini muffin



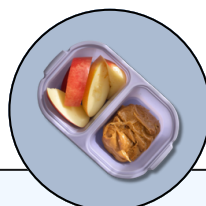
Apple slices and yogurt dip with nut butter on top



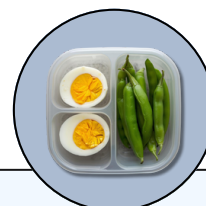
Homemade trail mix (raisins, freeze-dried fruit, pumpkin seeds)



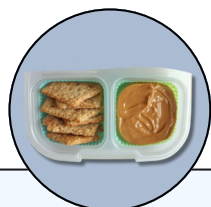
Whole-grain crackers and cheese stick or cubes



Apple slices and sunflower seed butter



Snap peas and hard-boiled egg halves



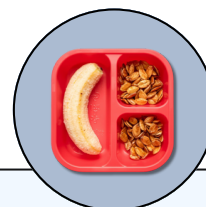
Whole-grain crackers and sunflower seed butter



Greek yogurt cup and whole-grain granola bites



Whole-grain pretzels and plain yogurt dip



Banana and roasted pumpkin seeds or granola bites

Meal Time

Water is the primary beverage permitted during the school day. Please refrain from sending sweetened beverages. We provide milk to each child at lunchtime, along with plates and utensils.

Important Notes

- Children love to dip! Who doesn't? A great way to encourage them to eat their vegetables is to provide hummus or guacamole. You can find single-serve packs at grocery stores!
- Finger foods are enjoyable for children! Consider making a wrap and cutting it into spirals for a child-approved finger food. You can also cut their sandwiches into fun shapes or quarters to make them easier to hold.
- Please send food prepared in a way your child can eat. For example, if your child can eat an apple whole, please pack it whole. If they need it cut up, be sure to do that before putting it in their lunchbox.
- Families are required to use containers that your child can open independently. Twist-off and snap containers are manageable for this age group and provide excellent practice!
- Involve your child in packing their lunch! Children love to know what to expect, hear feedback on what they like and don't, and it's a great way to get them involved in their lunches.

Encouraging Independence in Lunch & Snack Packing

Including children in the lunch and snack packing is an incredible opportunity for children to build independence, make thoughtful choices, and practice practical life skills. To support families in helping children take a more active role in packing their lunches and snacks at home, we've created a simple, optional visual template. Using checklists or picture-based cards of food items allows children to participate confidently in the preparation process. These tools can help children understand what makes up a nutritious, balanced lunch and snack, encourage them to explore foods, and turn packing their lunch and snack into a predictable and FUN daily routine.

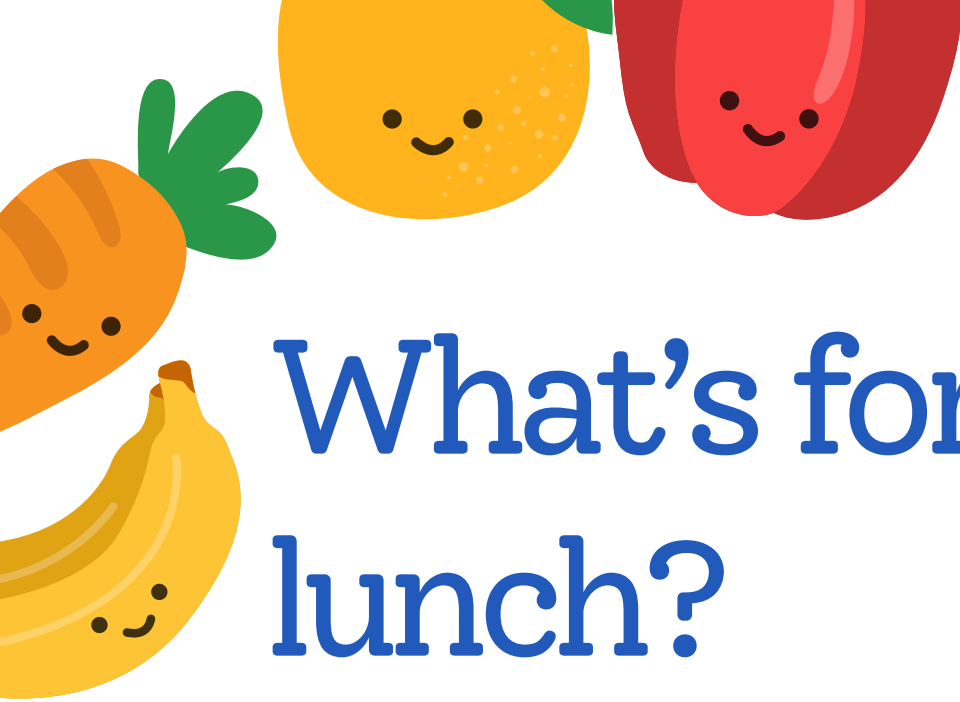
Families can print and laminate the guide, or keep it accessible to use. You can customize it with foods your child already enjoys or even include photos of your child's real lunchbox! For children who are ready, you can also create a small "lunch-packing station" where they can independently choose items that match the food they picked! We wanted to support families, provide these resources to build children's independence, and allow children to be involved in the process!

Check out the following pages for the template and additional information!

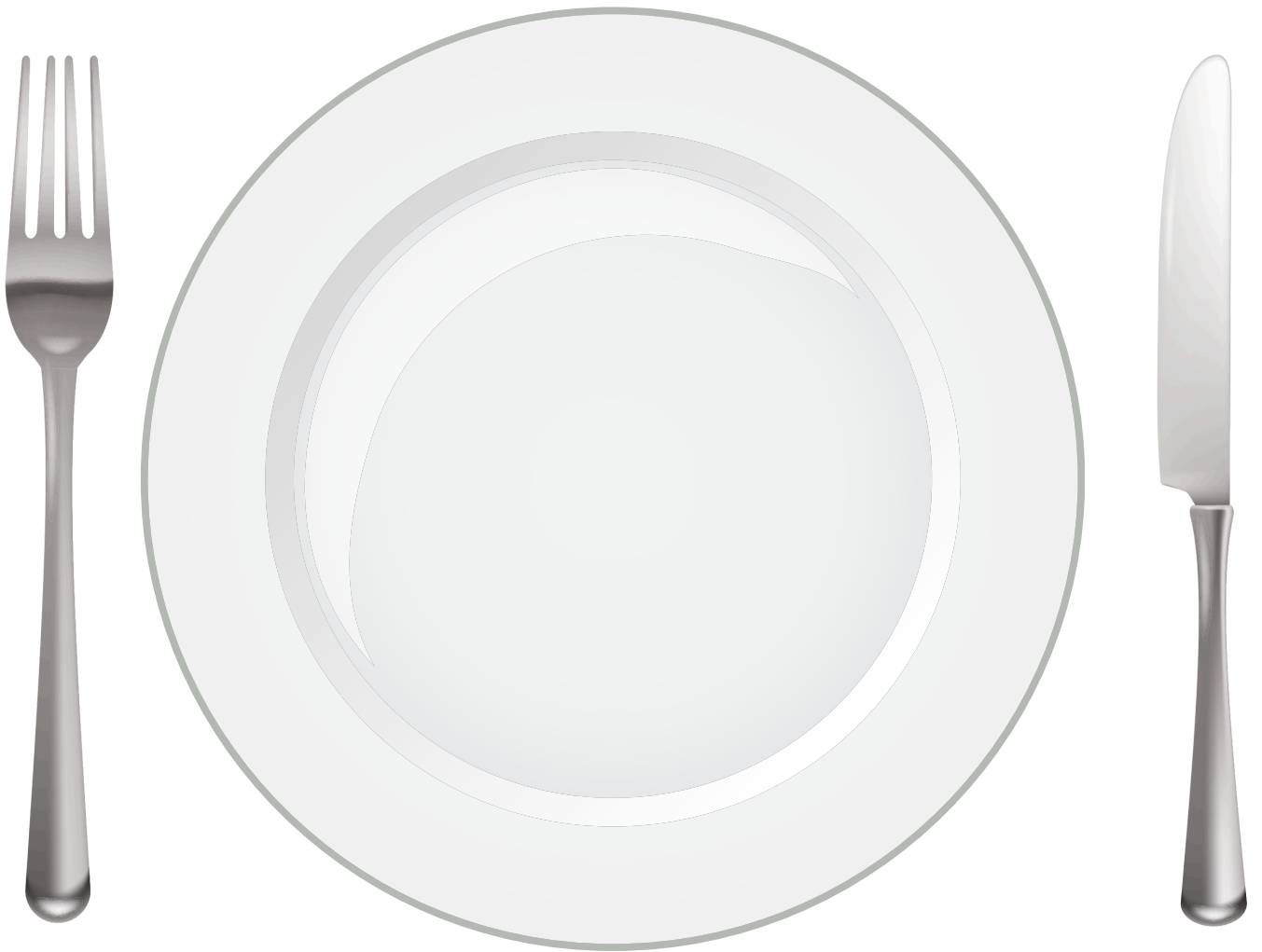


Pack a Balanced Lunch





What's for
lunch?



Ideas for Lunch Item Print-Outs



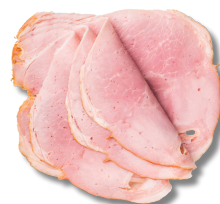
Apple



Banana



Strawberries



Turkey



Snap Peas



Carrots



Bell Peppers



Chicken



Pasta



Pita Chips



Brown Rice



Beans



Cheese Cubes



Yogurt



Cottage Cheese



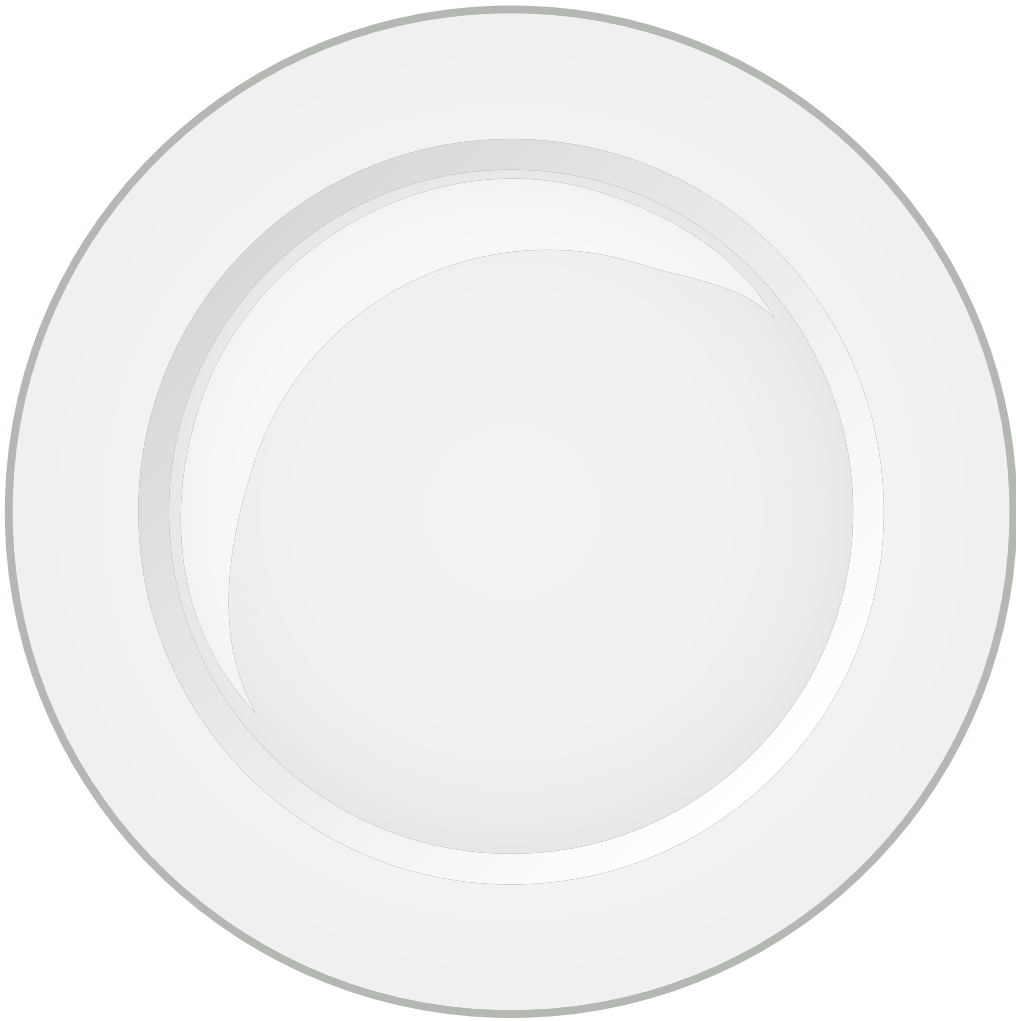
Pack a Balanced Snack

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What's for
snack today?



Ideas for Snack Item Print-Outs



Orange



Banana



Rice Cakes



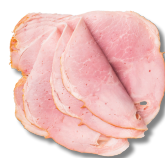
Crackers



Eggs



Blueberries



Turkey



Cucumbers



Yogurt



Carrots



Raspberries



Cheese



Chickpeas



Pineapple



Broccoli



Pretzels



Bell Peppers



Peas



Nut Butter



Beef Jerky