

Central Montessori School

Health First Food Policy

What to Put Inside Of Your Child's Lunchbox

As advocates of children's health and well-being, we understand that children, while at school, need to receive absolutely the very healthiest foods possible to keep body and mind functioning at its most efficient. Central Montessori School has developed a Health First Food Policy, which simply means that we ask parents to send the most nutritious foods they can possibly send to school.

Many parents agree that they want their child to eat the healthiest foods possible but it can be a bit confusing, especially since so many high sugar/ high fat foods are now packaged to look healthy (ex: yogurt, fruit bars, dried fruits, etc.). We try not to use the word "snack" because this implies sugar/salt/fat added foods in single use containers. We encourage parents to pack three "mini" meals and to use only reusable containers.

Our program works most successfully when parents become label readers and keep fatty, salty, and sugary foods at home and all children see other children eating only very healthy foods. Some foods may be prepared in a healthy manner but resemble foods that are not. Graham cracker type cookies, and various crackers and chips can span the range. Because teachers/guides cannot taste the food or read the labels, we ask that these types of foods be served at home and not school...even if they are healthy because we simply cannot know the history, ingredients and preparation of each of these foods.

Please pack lunch boxes with truly low processed, healthy foods, including enough food for three **mini-meal** periods. When all food options are healthy your child can achieve full food autonomy: any food item your child selects at any time of the day is ok.

You may want to use the Good Nutrition List found in your Parent's Handbook or the general guidelines below when packing your child's lunch. Water is always available and served during lunch.

- One or two pieces of fresh fruits and/or vegetables
- Source of protein
- Complex carbohydrates

Children, unless moving through a growth spurt, do not eat as much as an adult. If your child's teacher feels that your child needs additional food, (s) he will notify you directly.

When it seems your child is not eating enough

We send home any food your child does not eat so you can monitor what types of food your child is eating and how much they are eating. It can be a little disheartening to find the majority of a well packed lunch not eaten at the end of the day. Remember that young children do not come into the world prepared to be hungry at three predetermined times each day. They eat when they are hungry and do not eat when they are not. Children, like adults, may not have the strongest appetite during transitional periods, periods of not feeling well, or when feeling overly tired. Children in Montessori classrooms may also receive classroom prepared food during the day as well. Unless your child's doctor has indicated specific medical concerns about your child's weight, do not focus or worry too much about your child's eating habits. If the staff feels any concern at all about the amount of food your child is consuming we will give you a call.

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Here are a few **delicious** suggestions for inspiration (taken from an observation of our student's lunches):

Bagel with cream cheese
Vegan Chicken nuggets
Egg sandwich
Pork tenderloin and roasted vegetables
Penne with vegetables
Curry chicken and rice
Salad with Tofurkey
Quinoa
Peanut butter sandwich
Edamame (popular)
Avocados (travel well and provide their own organic bowl)
Fresh fruit
Vegetables (especially carrots and cucumbers, crunchy is great)
Hardboiled eggs
Seaweed (Nori)
Toasted pita and hummus
Turkey or ham and cheese wrap

Central Montessori School Will Send Home the Following:

- Single serving apple sauces, fruit juices, fruit roll-ups, leather and dried fruit because of dental concerns and sugar content
- Single serving container sweetened yogurt (Yogurts are wonderful to eat at breakfast) Unsweetened Greek yogurt and fresh fruit in reusable containers is wonderful.
- High fat, high sugar and salty foods including chips, crackers, fruit bars and granola bars
- Cookies and dessert foods

Learning to enjoy a healthy diet is one of the most important habits we can instill in our children!

Thanks parents for your support of this important part of our program.