

Balanced School Day Planning Tips!



Packing food for the balanced school day can be just as easy as the traditional school lunch! There are a few things to keep in mind as you and your child settle in with this new school timetable.

Children on the balanced school day timetable need the same amount of food during the day as other children do – they simply eat their food at different times. Children should look forward to their nutrition breaks and feel satisfied as they return to their classrooms.



Each child has his/her own unique eating habits, likes, dislikes and appetite. There is no right or wrong way to *balance* food during the day. Talk with your child as you begin to plan menus for the school day, and make adjustments during the school year as he/she learns what works best. You will experience more success when your child is involved in the planning and packing.



Plan Ahead

The weekend is an ideal time to plan and prepare for the coming school week as weekday mornings can be hectic for everyone!

⇒ When making weekend meals, make a little extra and freeze leftovers in individual portion sizes. Chili, soup, stew and macaroni and cheese are great on cool days.



⇒ Bake muffins, banana bread or cookies on the weekend to use during the week.



⇒ Portion foods like crackers, cut up veggies, trail mix, cheese cubes etc, ahead of time so they can be quickly placed into lunch bags. These “grab ‘n’ go” packs can be stored in a designated spot in your cupboard and fridge to make packing even easier.

Fridge Foods

- Cauliflower or broccoli flowerets
- Cherry or grape tomatoes
- Cheese cubes, sticks or slices

Cupboard Foods

- Mini rice cakes
- Mini pita bites
- Individual canned fruit cups



Packing Tips



You may find it helpful to purchase re-usable containers from the dollar store. You can label them #1 and #2 with permanent marker to help younger children choose what to eat at each nutrition break.

However, it doesn't really matter which foods your child chooses to eat at each break. It is more important that they eat a variety of foods over the course of the day.



Sandwiches can be cut in half and wrapped separately – one half for each break



Include 2 healthy beverages - 1 for each break (eg. white or chocolate milk, 100% fruit juice)



When sending hot foods, be sure to preheat your child's thermal container with hot water and reheat the food in the morning before packing it for school. These foods will be hotter and may taste better if they are eaten during the first break.



Cold foods like deli meats, tuna, egg salad and milk will be colder and may taste better if eaten during the first nutrition break.



Freezing water bottles, juice and yogurt will help them last to the second break as well as keeping everything else in the lunch bag cold.

Also, ask your children to bring home leftovers rather than throwing them out at school. This will help you see what they are actually eating at school.



Finally...Be Positive



Children are strongly influenced by their parents' own eating habits and attitudes toward food. Encourage healthy eating and a healthy attitude about food at school and at home!