



Montessori Children's House Early Childhood Program Lunch Guidelines

Children bring a boxed lunch from home. Please pack a nutritious lunch. Below are suggestions for lunch choices based on good nutrition and experience. Because the teachers will be very busy during this time, please try to send foods that your child can eat with as little assistance as possible.

The following is a list of suggestion and guidelines for preparing your child's lunch to send to school.

We provide . . .

- A peaceful and gracious setting in which manners are modeled and mealtime is a pleasant experience.
- Assistance with opening and closing packaging.
- Places for recycling packaging and composting food waste.

Families provide . . .

- Nutritious and balanced food with very little salt, sugar or additives.
- One food high in Vitamin C every day, and Vitamin A every other day.
- Lunches that include a protein, vegetable, carbohydrate, and fruit.
- Reusable or recyclable packaging.
- An ice pack for refrigerated foods. Food that can be served cold; or hot food in a thermos.
- A labeled lunch sack/box manageable by your child.
- Appropriate cutlery (spoon, fork) as needed.
- Cloth napkins to be used as a placemat daily.

Please do not send...

- Candy or pop
- The AAP lists the following as choking hazards to children younger than 4 years old:
 - Hot dogs
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Chunks of meat or cheese
 - Whole grapes
 - Hard, gooey, or sticky candy
 - Popcorn
 - Chunks of peanut butter
 - Raw vegetables
 - Fruit chunks, such as apple chunks

Some suggestions . . .

- Involve your child in choosing and packing foods! One food from each color of the rainbow should provide a well-balanced fun meal!
- Keep portions small. Large amounts of food can be overwhelming and reduce appetites. Send enough food, for seconds. The teachers will help with the portions.
- General portions guideline: 1 Tablespoon per year of age of one food from each food group. (ex. Serve a 3 year old 3 T of cereal from the grain group).
- Many children enjoy "finger foods".
- Plan for a variety: children get bored with the same foods every day and may stop eating them.

Waste-Free Lunches!

- We are excited about our Green School Certification and sustainability efforts. Information will come to you the first week of school and at Parent Night, including ideas, benefits, and more for preparing waste free lunches. Please see the Waste Free Lunch flyer in your information packet.