IDEAS FOR THE LUNCH BOX

A PROPERLY FED CHILD IS A HEALTHY AND HAPPY CHILD. THEREFORE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO OFFER HEALTHY MEALS AND SNACK FOODS TO CHILDREN.

SANDWICHES:

- TUNA FISH
- EGG SALAD
- CHICKEN SALAD
- HAM AND CHEESE
- TURKEY AND CHEESE
- PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY
- DEVILED HAM
- CHEESE SANDWICH
- HUMUS AND PITA BREAD

SANDWICHES CAN BE MADE WITH WHITE BREAD, WHEAT BREAD, PITA POCKETS, FRENCH BREAD, BAGELS, ENGLISH MUFFINS, ROLLS, OR PLAIN BREAD CUT INTO A SHAPE (HEART, STAR, TRIANGLES...)

SOMETIMES CHILDREN ENJOY HELPING MAKE THEIR OWN LUNCH (IF YOU HAVE THE TIME), OR YOU COULD SEND IN A CONTAINER WITH CRACKERS OR BREAD AND SOME SLICED HAM AND CHEESE. YOUR CHILD COULD ASSEMBLE IT THEMSELVES AT THE LUNCH TABLE, OR EAT IT SEPARATELY. ROLL UP THE SLICED MEATS AND ADD CHUNKS OF CHEESE. SOME CHILDREN ENJOY HAVING VEGETABLES SUCH AS LETTUCE, TOMATOES OR SPROUTS TO ADD TO THEIR SANDWICHES.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

FOR A CHANGE, YOU CAN SEND A SMALL CONTAINER OF YOGURT (PLAIN OR FLAVORED), APPLESAUCE, OR PUDDING FOR DIPPING. FRUIT, OR COTTAGE CHEESE, SALAD DRESSING OR PREPARED DIP FOR DIPPING VEGETABLES.

- BANANAS
- APPLES
- ORANGES
- TANGERINES
- GRAPES (SLICED TO A SAFE SIZE)
- STRAWBERRIES
- RAISINS AND DRIED FRUIT (FOR CHILDREN OVER 2 YEARS)
- CARROTS
- CUCUMBERS
- PEPPERS (YOU’D BE SURPRISED)
- TOMATO WEDGES
- CELERY WITH CREAM CHEESE/PEANUT BUTTER

WARM LUNCH IDEAS

IF YOUR CHILD CARE PROGRAM HAS A MICROWAVE OR STOVE AND THE TIME TO HEAT FOOD ITEMS FOR CHILDREN, YOU COULD TRY Sending AN ICEPACK WITH LAST NIGHT’S LEFTOVERS.

- SOUP WITH GOLD FISH OR OYSTER CRACKERS
- BAKED BEANS
- CHICKEN & RICE WITH GRAVY AND A STUFFING TOPPING
- PASTA WITH SAUCE OR MEATBALLS (SOMETIMES YOU CAN SNEAK A VEGETABLE INTO A SAUCE LIKE PEAS, CORN, SHREDDED CARROTS OR CHICK PEAS).

DESSERTS:

YOU CAN TEACH CHILDREN AT AN EARLY AGE ABOUT HEALTHY CHOICES AND FOODS THAT HELP US GROW.

- YOGURT
- PUDDING (HOMEMADE)
- MUFFINS
- TRAIL MIXES ARE FUN TO MAKE WITH CHILDREN-SCOOPING AND POURING AND MIXING-DRY CEREAL, SEEDS, NUTS, RAISINS, AND PRETZELS OR GOLDFISH OR OYSTER CRACKERS.

BEVERAGES:

- MILK (LOW FAT FOR CHILDREN OLDER THAN 2 YEARS)
- UNSWEETENED FRUIT JUICES (100 % JUICE)

AVOID PUNCHES, DRINKS, AIDES AND NECTARS BECAUSE THEY ARE MOSTLY WATER AND SUGAR.

ROUND FIRM FOODS SUCH AS WHOLE SLICES OF HOT DOGS, GRAPES, HARD CANDY, NUTS, POPCORN, OR SPOONFULS OF PEANUT BUTTER SHOULD NOT BE OFFERED TO CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS OF AGE. THE WAY IN WHICH YOU CUT FOOD CAN MAKE IT SAFER FOR CHILDREN. FOR EXAMPLE BY SLICING AN ORANGE IN SLICES VERSUS WEDGES, A CHILD WOULD BE LESS LIKELY TO CHOKE.