

Stanford-in-the-Vale

Pre-School



Healthy Lunch Boxes for children



Food and eating together is a wonderful source of learning for children, and at pre-school we aim to make lunchtime a positive experience.

When providing your child with a packed lunch it can be a challenge to keep them interesting and healthy. The key to a healthy lunch box is to provide a balance of appropriate foods from the main food groups.

- Breads and cereals
- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat or alternatives
- Milk and dairy products or alternatives

Foods in the 5th group containing fats and sugar should be eaten in moderation.

STICK TO FAMILIAR FOODS

Pre-school lunch times are not a good time to introduce new foods, best stick to the familiar ones. It can be upsetting if the child is hungry but does not like the food you have given them.

PORTION SIZES

Put in the amount of food you would normally expect your child to eat, do not put in extra in for choice, most children believe that you want them to eat everything you've put in.

NUTS

Please do not put in nuts, products containing nuts or foods produced in factories where there are nuts, in your child's lunchbox. We have children at pre-school with nut allergies

BREADS AND CEREALS

- Sandwiches are a top favourite lunchbox item. If your child won't eat wholemeal bread, compromise by buying 50/50 or try wholemeal pittas or wraps.
- Rice or pasta salads – add plenty of chopped vegetables for fibre.
- A slice of pizza
- Oatcakes, rice cakes, French sticks, malt loaf, fruit scones. Cheese scones, scotch pancakes, crisp breads and crackers.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- Small apple
- Small soft oranges
- Chopped Kiwi, grapes (but remember to cut into quarters).
- A handful of dried fruit such as apricots, raisins pear, apple or even prunes.
- Bananas are wonderful for an energy boost.
- Cubed melon or water melon, mixed blueberries and raspberries, stewed apple with cinnamon or stewed dried apricots.
- Try adding vegetables to sandwiches, the obvious is lettuce but carrot, cucumber and peppers are a good alternative.
- Carrot sticks, celery, peppers of all colours, sugar snap peas, cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters) a small pot of dip with these is fun, try hummus or cream cheese.

MEAT OR ALTERNATIVES

- Sandwiches are a good way of supplying protein. Brown bread is a healthier alternative and is slower burning keeping them fuller for longer. Ham is the most popular choice but try chicken or turkey as a change.
- Cheese is another popular source of protein in lunch boxes but its high in fat so don't stuff those sandwiches with it too lavishly.
- Fish is a great source of protein and many children really like tuna which you can mix with sweetcorn and peppers.
- Pulses are good veggie options for protein. Use chickpeas to make hummus or a mixed bean salad.
- Tofu has plenty of protein but unless your children are used to a vegetarian diet, they may not fancy it.
- **Mini sausages should be sliced lengthways.**

MILK/DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

- Milk – we provide milk at snack time
- Yogurts and fromage frais are a good thought. However, most are likely to be sugar laden so you could make them a little container of plain yogurt with stewed or raw fruit stirred through it.
- Cheese. Children love lunchbox cheeses – , strips, triangles, mini-cheese or foil wrapped finger of ordinary cheese.

DRINKS AND SNACKS

- Always ensure your child has a water bottle to drink on throughout the day. Milk is provided at snack time.
- You may send in squash or fruit juice to have in their lunch box. No fizzy drinks.
- As an alternative to crisps which are really high in salt, try bread sticks, oatcakes or rice cakes. Also, rather than a whole pack of crisps pop a few in a container.
- Biscuits, cakes etc. Try making your own as this cuts down on the amount of hydrogenated vegetable oils, sugar and additives. Muffins are great as you can add fruit to them.

FOOD SAFETY

Always wash your hands before preparing lunch box food, and keep work surfaces and chopping boards clean.

All cooked foods must be cooled, then chilled before packing. Make pasta and rice salads the night before, and chill overnight.

Use a mini-icepack to keep perishable items like yogurt, fromage frais and sandwiches at a safe temperature.

A well-insulated lunch box or bag will help keep foods cool.

Keep lunch boxes clean, wash daily after use.

WE DO NOT HAVE SPACE TO REFRIGERATE LUNCH BOXES SO WE ASK THAT YOU PUT YOUR CHILDS LUNCH IN AN INSULATED BAG AND INCLUDE AN ICE PACK

We also ask that parents use reusable packaging where possible rather than clingfilm and foil.

Many thanks for your support with this.

CONTENTS OF A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX

FRUIT	
SANDWICH, WRAP OR ALTERNATIVE	
DAIRY	
VEGETABLES (2 PIECES)	
FIBRE/GRAINS (WHOLEGRAINS)	
WATER	