

## IX. Healthy Snack List

Serving healthy snacks to children is important to providing good nutrition, supporting lifelong healthy eating habits, and helping to prevent costly and potentially-disabling diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Snacks play a major and growing role in children's diets.

Below are ideas for teachers, and parents for serving healthy snacks and beverages to children in the classroom

### Fruits and Vegetables

Most of the snacks served to children should be fruits and vegetables, since most kids do not eat the recommended five to thirteen servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Eating fruits and vegetables lowers the risk of heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure. Fruits and vegetables also contain important nutrients like vitamins A and C and fiber

#### Fruits

Fruit is naturally sweet, so most kids love it. Fruit can be served whole, sliced, cut in half, cubed, or in wedges. Canned, frozen, and dried fruits often need little preparation.

- Apples (it can be helpful to use an apple corer)
- Apricots
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Grapefruit
- Grapes (red, green, or purple)
- Honeydew Melon
- Kiwis (cut in half and give each child a spoon to eat it)
- Mandarin Oranges
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Strawberries
- Tangerines
- Watermelon

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Applesauce (Unsweetened), Fruit Cups, and Canned Fruit

Dried Fruit

Try raisins, apricots, apples, cranberries, pineapple, papaya, and others with little or no added sugars.

Frozen Fruit

Try freezing grapes or buy frozen blueberries, strawberries, peaches, mangoes, and melon.

Fruit Leathers.

Popsicles

Look for popsicles made from 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners

Smoothies

Blend fruit with juice, yogurt or milk, and ice. Many store-made smoothies have added sugars and are not healthy choices.

Vegetables

Vegetables can be served raw with dip or salad dressing:

- Carrot sticks or Baby Carrots
- Celery Sticks
- Cucumber
- Peppers (green, red, or yellow)
- Snap Peas
- Snow Peas
- String Beans
- Tomato slices or grape or cherry tomatoes
- Yellow Summer Squash slices
- Zucchini slices

Dips

Try low-fat salad dressings, bean dips, guacamole, hummus, or salsa.

Salad

Make a salad or set out veggies like a salad bar and let the kids build their own salads.

Veggie Pockets

Cut whole wheat pitas in half and let kids add veggies with dressing or hummus.

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## **Healthy Grains (bread, crackers, cereals, etc.)**

Try to serve mostly whole grains, which provide more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than refined grains. In addition, try to keep the added sugars to less than 35% by weight and the saturated and trans fat low (i.e., less than 10% of calories, or about one gram or less per serving).

Note: Cookies, snack cakes, and chips should be saved for occasional treats, given their poor nutritional quality.

Whole Wheat English Muffins, Pita, or Tortillas

Stuff them with veggies or dip them in hummus or bean dip.

Breakfast Cereal

Either dry or with low-fat milk, whole grain cereals like Cheerios, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran, and Wheaties make good snacks. Look for cereals with no more than 35% added sugars by weight (or roughly 8 grams of sugar per serving).

Crackers

Whole-grain crackers like Triscuits, which come in different flavors or thin crisps (or similar woven wheat crackers), whole wheat Matzos can be served alone or with toppings.

Rice Cakes

Popcorn

Look for low-fat popcorn in a bag or microwave popcorn. Or you can air pop the popcorn

Baked Tortilla Chips

Baked tortilla chips are usually low in fat, and taste great with salsa and/or bean dip. Look for brands with less sodium.

Granola and Cereal Bars

Look for whole grain granola bars that are low in fat and sugars

Pretzels, Breadsticks, and Flatbreads

## **Low-Fat Dairy Foods**

Dairy foods are a great source of calcium, which can help to build strong bones. However, dairy products also are the biggest sources of artery-clogging saturated fat in kids' diets. To protect children's bones and hearts, make sure all dairy foods served are low-fat or fat-free.

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## Yogurt & Frozen Yogurt

Look for brands that are low-fat or fat-free, moderate in sugars (no more than about 30 grams of sugars in a 6-oz. cup), and high in calcium (at least 25% of daily value [DV] for calcium in a 6-oz. cup).

## Low-Fat Cheese

## Low-Fat Pudding and Frozen Yogurt

Low-fat or fat-free pudding and frozen yogurt should be served only as occasional treats, because they are high in added sugars.

## **Healthy Beverages**

Water should be the main drink served to kids at snack times.

### Seltzer

Carbonated drinks like seltzer, sparkling water, and club soda are healthy options. They do not contain the sugars, calories, and caffeine of sodas. Serve them alone or try making "healthy sodas" by mixing them with equal amounts of 100% fruit juice.

### Low-Fat and Fat-Free Milk

### Soy and Rice Drinks

For children who prefer not to drink cow's milk, calcium-fortified soy and rice drinks are good choices.

Fruit Juice - Try to buy 100% fruit juice

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