

Healthy Snacks-to-Go

Giving our kids healthy snack options during the day can improve more than their health - it can improve behavior, increase brain function, stabilize emotions and help them cope with stress. With a little planning, many delicious - and healthy - options can be theirs for the taking!

Vegetables:

Some of the easiest and least messy are:

Carrot sticks or "chips"

Celery sticks

Bell pepper strips (red and orange are sweeter)

Cucumber sticks or medallions

Zucchini sticks or medallions

Tomatoes (small grape tomatoes are usually easy to eat without squirting!)

Some kids like cold **peas** (cooked) and/or cold green **soy beans** (cooked - they taste a bit like peanuts).

For something different, try a **baked potato**. Some kids will eat a cooled potato whole, like an apple (this is what they did for school lunches in the 1800s!). Others like it sliced open and laying flat. A little salt and/or pepper are usually the only seasonings young taste buds need.

Kohlrabi and **jicama** are more unusual vegetables. They need to be peeled and both have a texture and crunch like that of an apple. Many kids like them (diced or sliced) because their taste is very mild and "uninteresting."



Fruits:

Fruits that don't require peeling or cutting:

Apples

Grapes

Bananas

Berries - strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, huckleberries



Many fruits are available dried*:

Raisins

Cranberries ("craisins")

Apricots

Blueberries

Plums (prunes)

Cherries

Almost any fruit can be diced, sliced or sectioned:

Pear

Apple (sprinkle with lemon, orange or apple juice to keep it from turning brown)

Kiwi (can cut in half and scoop out with a spoon - very fun!)

Citrus fruit (orange, grapefruit, tangerine)

Mango

Papaya (though not commonly used, many kids love this gentle sweet taste)

Melon (watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew)

Pineapple

Peach



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Individual Servings of Fruit (purchase pre-packaged or package yourself):

Applesauce* (also blended with other fruits)

Dried fruit*

Fruit cup (look for low added sugars and no corn syrup; fresh fruit or unsweetened frozen fruit will have a higher nutrient content than fruits packed in liquid)

100% fruit juice*

Grains:

Slice of **bread*** or roll (if a spread is desired, try a healthy cream cheese, hummus, pesto or a nut butter)

Bagel, whole grain (half or mini)

Muffin, whole-grain

Crackers* - many varieties - evaluate labels for whole grains, moderate sodium and minimal added sugars

Oyster crackers

Saltines

Graham crackers

Animal crackers

"Crisp wheat" crackers

"Woven wheat" crackers

Popcorn (healthier choice oils,* moderate salt, optional seasonings; buy popped or make at home)

Pretzels* - many shapes and sizes (moderate sodium)

Cereal (dry) - aim for whole grains <5g of sugar per serving

Blue corn or other healthier choice tortilla **chips*** (aim for 60mg of sodium or less per 1 ounce serving)

Granola or **granola bar** (check sugar content)

Rice (some kids like it cold, with a spoon!)



Proteins:

Cheese - sliced or cubed (check sodium levels)

Ham* - sliced, chunked, or cubed (no nitrates or nitrites, moderate sodium)

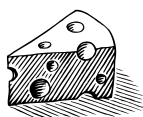
Luncheon Meats*

Nuts* (if no allergies in classroom)

Nut Butters* (e.g., cashew, almond, peanut) served on small pieces of bread, crackers or celery

Poultry - sliced, chunked, or cubed

Yogurt (check sugar levels and avoid artificial sweeteners)



* See Healthier Choices Shopping Guide in *Simple Choices for Healthier Eating*.

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