



Nutrition

Healthy Eating

for preschoolers

Daily Food Plan



Use this Plan as a general guide.

● These food plans are based on average needs. Do not be concerned if your child does not eat the exact amounts suggested. Your child may need more or less than average. For example, food needs increase during growth spurts.

● Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these amounts; other days they may want more. Offer these amounts and let your child decide how much to eat.

Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
Fruits 	1 cup	1 - 1½ cups	1 - 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ medium banana 4-5 large strawberries
Vegetables 	1 cup	1½ cups	1½ - 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn
Grains Make half your grains whole 	3 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked rice or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across)
Protein Foods 	2 ounces	3 - 4 ounces	3 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ½ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils)
Dairy Choose low-fat or fat-free 	2 cups	2 cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ½ ounce cheese 1 string cheese

Some foods are easy for your child to choke on while eating. Skip hard, small, whole foods, such as popcorn, nuts, seeds, and hard candy. Cut up foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots into pieces smaller than the size of your child's throat—about the size of a nickel.

There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Plan into meals and snacks. View the "Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas" to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler's plate at www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html.



Family Nutrition

Cook Together. Eat Together. Talk Together. Make meal time into family time.

-But my kids are PICKY!?!?-

Many children will show one or more of the following behaviors during the preschool years. In most cases, these will go away with time. Your child may refuse a food based on a certain color or texture. For example, he or she could refuse foods that are red or green, contain seeds, or are squishy.

- For a period of time, your preschooler may only eat a certain type of food. Your child may choose 1 or 2 foods he or she likes and refuse to eat anything else.
- Sometimes your child may waste time at the table and seem interested in doing anything but eating.
- Your child may be unwilling to try new foods, especially fruits and vegetables. It is normal for your preschooler to prefer familiar foods and be afraid to try new things.

Having your child help you in the kitchen is a good way to get your child to try new foods. Kids feel good about doing something "grown-up."

15 ways to get kids involved in the kitchen!

1. Planning- Invite your child to help plan a meal or pick a recipe, make a list of ingredients, find them in the kitchen or the store. This way, kids learn to organize, think ahead, and follow through. This also gives them a huge sense of control and accomplishment!
2. Wash hands together before cooking.
3. Create a safe place where kids can really get involved. Lower height of objects, or set up a stool for them to be able to reach better.
4. Set up clear rules about using the stove. Let them know that only adults are allowed to put things in or out of the oven but they can watch. Always keep pan and utensil handles turned towards the back of the stove.
5. Give preschoolers their own safe utensils. Wooden or plastic ones are great for this. Or supervise closely with real equipment.
6. Ask your child to read and give you directions if possible. Or tell you the numbers in a measurement.
7. Children can practice measuring and counting ingredients. Count everything! The number of stirs, number of ingredients, scoops, dishes in the sink, etc.
8. Let siblings or groups of kids take turns doing the same step, in their own unique way.
9. It is easier for everyone to enjoy the cooking if you're not "starving". Give kids a small snack or something to eat before the process begins.
10. Introduce new foods and recipes and title them with your child's name. This is "Timmy's Super Duper Salad" or "Janes Amazing Apples".
11. Make ordinary foods special by cutting them into shapes with cookie cutters. Good for sandwiches!
12. Try to keep a variety of healthy options for kids to eat on hand so they are not bored quickly.
13. Children learn most by watching you. Children are likely to copy your table manners, your likes and dislikes, and your willingness to try new foods. If you are excited, they will get excited!
14. Let kids serve themselves. This, again, puts them in control and gives the opportunity to learn about portions.
15. Make sure kids help with set up and clean up as part of the routine to learn these skills.

Fun & Nutritious Recipes!

- Bagel Snake- Split mini bagels in half. Cut each half into half circles. Spread the halves with toppings like tuna/chicken salad or peanut butter. Decorate with sliced cherry tomatoes or banana slices. Arrange the half circles to form the body of a snake. Use olives or raisins for the eyes.
- English muffin pizza- Top half an English muffin with tomato sauce, chopped veggies, and cheese. Heat until the cheese melted.
- Smiley Sandwiches- Top a slice of bread with peanut butter and use an apple slice for a smile and raisins for eyes.
- Frozen bananas- Put a wooden stick into a peeled banana. Cut large bananas in half first. Wrap in plastic and freeze.
- Potato Pal- Top half a small baked potato with eyes, ears, and a smile. Try peas for eyes, a halved cherry tomato for a nose, and a cheese wedge as a smile. Be creative!
- Frozen graham cracker sandwiches- Mix mashed bananas and peanut butter, spread between graham crackers and freeze.
- Fruit smoothies- Blend fresh or frozen fruit with yogurt and milk or juice. Try 100% orange juice, low-fat yogurt, and frozen strawberries.
- Frozen juice pops- Pour 100% fruit juice into small paper cups. Freeze. To serve, peel off the paper and eat.
- Ants on a log- Thinly spread peanut butter on narrow celery sticks. Top with a row of raisins or other dice/dried fruit.

***Resource for games, activities, and tools to get kids interested in nutrition: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate>