

ACC CHILDREN'S LAB SCHOOL

FOOD GUIDELINES AND LUNCHBOX SUGGESTIONS

MEAL PLANNING (for children 12 months and older)

The ACC Children's Laboratory School (CLS) promotes healthy development in all areas for the children in our care. We believe that nutrition is an important component of a child's growth and development, and so we want children to eat healthy, nutritious food at school. This philosophy applies to snacks and cooking projects offered and also extends to lunches brought from home.

Our daily snack menus are posted so that you will know what we are serving. The snack menu is rotated every four weeks. Some parents like to check the menu to ensure that children have something different for lunch than we are having for snack. Our menu reflects the diverse family population served in our program.

Make sure that we are aware of any food allergies your child has. Our program is a **NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT**. Due to the potential risk posed to children by nut allergies, foods containing nuts (peanuts and tree nuts) are not allowed in our program. When preparing something that only your child will eat (for example, lunches), it is OK to include items that are labeled "*processed in a facility that also produces nuts*". However, if you are providing something that will be shared with others in the program, food labels that say "*may contain peanut or tree nuts*" or similar wording should not be brought to school. We understand that this may sometimes be an inconvenience, and appreciate your strict adherence to this policy in order to keep all children in our program safe.

On the last page are guidelines for serving sizes for various ages developed by USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program to help you in planning a healthy lunch for your child. Please consult the guide when preparing lunches, but also use your knowledge of your child's eating habits. Your child may eat more of some types of food than is recommended, so feel free to include slightly larger servings to satisfy your child's likes. However, we ask that you send at least the amount listed for each type of food to ensure that your child has the opportunity to satisfy all of his or her nutritional needs at lunch. Please remember that your child has had a very busy morning here at the CLS, and s/he may be hungrier than after a quiet morning at home.

According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and USDA Guidelines your child must also have ½ - ¾ cup of milk with lunch, depending upon their age. The Children's Lab School provides this amount of milk for each child at lunch each day.

Packing many different kinds of foods helps your child receive a variety of nutrients and helps prevent boredom. ***In order to prepare a healthy lunch, you need to choose at least one food from each of the following categories every day:***

- **Protein**
- **Carbohydrate**
- **Fruit**
- **Vegetable**

We believe that all children will benefit from eating healthy foods while in school. These foods provide the nutrients needed to allow your child to learn and develop. We also understand that food choices at home may be different than the ones we require. Our requirements and restrictions are designed to promote an awareness and appreciation for healthy eating, and as such are part of our overall commitment to a quality early childhood experience.

Foods that are not allowed at the CLS are listed below. If these are sent in your child's lunch, we will provide your child with a healthy alternative, and we will send the food home in the child's lunch box. If you have questions about some of the items on the list, or if you are unsure if an

item is allowed, please talk with your child's teacher or the director. Foods (including beverages) which we do not allow include:

Candy or chewing gum
Cookies
Pudding
High sugar desserts

Chips (except tortilla chips)
Any sweetened drink, including sodas,
Kool-aid or fruit "beverages"

We also ask that you avoid sending the following items:

"Fast food"
"Lunchables"

Highly sweetened yogurt
"Gogurt"

LUNCHBOX IDEAS

We've listed some ideas under each type of food. Please send foods your child can eat cold. We want teachers to eat with the children and do not have additional staff to heat up lunches. We also have very limited refrigerator space at the CLS. The Health Department requires that lunches be sent with blue ice packs or in thermoses to keep food cool or hot until lunchtime.

Proteins:

Meats or Other Animal Protein: (must be accompanied by blue ice)

- Lunch Meats (95% fat free)
- Turkey Breast
- Lean/fat free wieners (must be sliced long wise to prevent choking)
- Tuna
- Ham
- Chicken (chunks or 1 piece)
- Surimi (imitation crab)
- Hard Boiled Egg

Dairy: (must be accompanied by blue ice)

- Cheese – lowfat
- String Cheese
- Plain Yogurt
- Cottage Cheese
- Cream Cheese
- Kifir

Meat Alternative:

- Soy or Sunflower Butter
- Hummus
- Sunflower Seeds (*not recommended for children under 3 years of age*)
- Soybean/tofu products
- Refried beans
- Garbanzo Beans

Carbohydrates:

Bread/Grains/Starches:

- Whole wheat bread
- Bagels
- Tortilla chips
- Raisin bread
- Popcorn cakes
- Pretzels (*hard pretzels not recommended for children under 3 years of age*)
- Pita bread
- Rolls
- Tortillas
- English muffins
- Rice cakes
- Pasta or spaghetti
- Tabouli
- Couscous
- Rice
- Potato
- Macaroni

Crackers & Cereals:

- Ryecrisp
- Finn
- Healthy Choice
- Triscuits
- Saltines
- Wafers

- Bread sticks
- Rice cakes
- Melba toast
- Graham crackers
- Low sugar dry cereal
- Granola (without nuts)

Fruits:

Fresh, frozen (unsweetened), or canned in water or own juice

- Apple
- Pears
- Plums
- Kiwi
- Peach
- Melons
- Bananas
- Pineapple
- Cherries
- Berries
- Apricots
- Mandarin Oranges
- Strawberries
- Papaya
- Mango
- Applesauce (no sugar)
- Citrus (orange, grapefruit, etc.)
- Grapes (must be sliced in half to prevent choking)
- 100% juice (no added sugar) [it is recommended that children consume no more than 4 ounces of juice daily]

Dried Fruits:

- Raisins
- Peaches
- Prunes
- Fruit Bits
- Apricots
- Banana chips
- Apples
- Papaya

Vegetables:

Raw: (A small container of dip often makes raw vegetables more attractive to children)

- Carrots (baby or sticks – no rounds; steam to soften for younger children)
- Celery sticks
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes (cherry or wedged)
- Squash/zucchini
- Cauliflower
- Tossed salads or greens (dressing on the side if desired)
- Mushrooms

Cooked or canned: (low salt if possible)

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Squash/zucchini
- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Peas
- Green beans
- Corn (baby, on-the-cob, or kernel)
- Greens (spinach, etc.)

Combination Foods:

Sandwiches: (Don't forget the blue ice if they contain meat, egg products or mayonnaise)

- Turkey
- Ham
- Cheese
- Soy butter & low/no-sugar jelly
- Soy butter & banana
- Tuna, chicken, or tofu salad (or plain)
- Egg salad

Note: Vary the breads – Pita stuffed with egg salad, tortilla rolled with meat & cheese, bagel & cream cheese, rice cakes with melted cheese

Other combinations: (Remember they will be served at room temperature)

- Pasta with sauce
- Crackers and cheese/meat
- Tuna salad & crackers
- Celery stuffed with cream cheese or soy butter
- Crackers with soy butter
- Pizza slices
- Vegetables with yogurt dip

MEAL PLANNING (for children under 12 months)

Because of the unique and changing nutritional needs of infants, it is important that parents communicate frequently with their child's teacher. Food consumed prior to the child's arrival at the center should be shared with the teachers each morning. Information about new foods being introduced, changing feeding patterns, and/or increased consumption should be shared at least weekly or as needed. **Child care licensing requires that feeding plans be updated monthly.** Also, due to health and safety concerns, solids cannot be added to bottles of formula, sweetened beverages cannot be offered, and juice is not recommended for children under 12 months of age.

USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program

(Also aligned with American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines)

Serving Size Guidelines for Lunch

Children 12 months and older

Component	Ages 1 – 2	Ages 3 –5
Vegetables and fruits	¼ cup total	½ cup total
Grains or Carbohydrates		
Bread, cornbread, biscuit, etc.	½ slice/serving	½ slice/serving
Cooked pasta, noodles or cereal	¼ cup	1/3 cup
Protein		
Meat, fish or meat alternative	1 oz.	1 ½ oz.
Cheese	1 oz. slice	1 ½ oz.
Eggs	½ egg	¾ egg
Beans or Peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup
Soy butter	2 Tbsps.	3 Tbsps.
Yogurt	4 oz.	6 oz.
Milk (PROVIDED BY ACC LAB)	½ cup whole milk	¾ cup 2% milk

Children under 12 months of age

Time of Day	Component	4-7 months	8-11 months
Morning	Breast milk or iron fortified formula	4-8 oz.	6-8 oz.
	Dry, iron-fortified infant cereal*	0-3 Tbsp.	2-4 Tbsp.
	Fruit of appropriate consistency		1-4 Tbsp.
Mid-Day	Breast milk or iron fortified formula	4-8 oz.	6-8 oz.
	Strained fruit and/or vegetable*	0-3 Tbsp.	1-4 Tbsp.
	Dry, iron-fortified infant cereal <i>and/or</i>	0-3 Tbsp.	2-4 Tbsp.
	Fish, lean meat, poultry, cooked dry beans or peas <i>or</i>		1-4 Tbsp.
	Cheese <i>or</i>		½-2 oz.
	Cottage cheese <i>or</i>		1-4 oz.
	Egg yolk		1 yolk
Supplement	Breast milk or iron fortified formula	4-6 oz.	2-4 oz.
	Whole grain hard toast <i>or</i>		0-½ slice
	Whole grain crackers or teething biscuits		0-2

**optional before 6 months, but introduce by 6 months*

Fruit and vegetable juices are not recommended for children under 12 months