



Healthy Bag Lunches: Getting your Children Involved

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Teaching kids cooking skills is a topic of great importance for the future health of our children. There are many benefits to making homemade lunches, including:

- Improving children's overall health and wellness while at school,
- Improving their ability to learn,
- Saving money, and
- Teaching children the importance of cooking/preparing their own meals from scratch.

However, if you are like most parents, making lunches can begin to feel like a chore after a while. Below are some ways to get your children involved in the lunch-making process, while making it fun for the entire family.

1. ***Use Dinner Leftovers*** - Make use of leftovers to save time and prevent food waste. Ask your children to help with portioning out leftovers into containers and bagging them for the next day's lunch.
2. ***Ideas to Keep Lunches Warm*** - For lunch items that need to be served hot, you can ask children to leave the thermos on the kitchen counter overnight. Simply add your warm meal to the thermos in the morning.
3. ***Plan Ahead*** - Encourage children to assemble an extra pizza, macaroni dish, or any other preferred dish during general meal preparation. Let kids know that the extra dish will be their lunch for the next day or two.
4. ***Soups and Stews*** - Cooking soups and stews can be a fun way to involve children in washing and chopping vegetables, dicing onions, crushing garlic, and breaking up herbs to add to the meal. If you are making a cream soup, ask them to help with pureeing the soup with a food processor (once it is cooled). The next morning, simply warm up the dish and pour it into a thermos.
5. ***Taste Tests*** - While cooking, ask children to taste meals and tell you what they think is missing. This process gets them actively involved in cooking and learning how to make meals that are nutritious and tasty.

For more lunch recipes visit:

www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/meals/lunch and
www.bonappetit.com/test-kitchen/common-mistakes/article/school-lunch-common-mistakes

About Breakfast for Learning

Breakfast for Learning is committed to ensuring students attend school well nourished and ready to learn. During the 2014/15 school year, Breakfast for Learning invested in 2,174 breakfast, lunch and snack programs, serving 271,663 children and youth and providing over 44 million nourishing meals and snacks. Since 1992, Breakfast for Learning has helped 3.6 million children and youth across Canada enjoy over 554 million healthy meals and snacks. For more information, visit breakfastforlearning.ca.