

## Ideas for lunches and little snacks

### Lunches -

- One slice of wholemeal toast with some mashed / chopped banana
- Cheese, meat or fish sandwich using one slice of bread. You could add some sliced tomato and make a toasty sandwich
- Cheese with two or three crackers or breadsticks. You can add a few grapes or apple slices
- Small bowl of breakfast cereal and milk
- Small bowl of homemade soup
- Half a bagel with lightly spread peanut butter
- Mini wrap with cheese, meat or fish filling. Add some veg and make a toasty sandwich
- Mini wholemeal scone and low-fat spread
- Small slice of malt bread / teabrick
- One crumpet
- One bought pancake

### Little snacks -

- Piece of fruit
- Vegetable sticks
- Small pot of yoghurt
- Glass of milk
- 2-3 crackers / 1-2 oatcakes
- 1 / 2 rice cakes
- Handful of nuts and seeds
- 2-3 Breadsticks

<https://www.safefood.eu/START/Healthy-Meats/Healthy-snack-ideas.aspx>

## Drinks, water bottles (Covid-19)

- Children should have water at every meal and as part of snack. Every child should be encouraged to bring water to preschool/school as part of their snack or lunch.
- A water bottle for lunch and snacks that is easy to open and close is useful. Water provides good hydration and offers the healthy option.
- A water bottle offers hygiene as children only touch and use their own bottle. It is also useful as it does not leak when closed properly. It is very important the water bottle is kept clean.
- The water bottle should be washed everyday with hot soapy water or put through the dishwasher.



## Importance of Nutrition

A child's early years are important for their future health and wellbeing, and good nutrition during this time lays a healthy foundation for all of childhood and life. Children are not "little adults" Children grow and develop at a fast rate and they need more energy for their size than adults do. Therefore, snacks between meals are important to help children to meet their energy needs for growth (Food & Nutrition Guidelines for Preschools 2004).

Developing good healthy habits, including positive attitudes and behaviours around food, is very important for future health. Preschool children are undergoing rapid growth and good nutrition is essential to ensure they get the nutrients they require. (Safefood)

Aistear's theme of Well-being – In partnership with adults, children will make healthy choices and demonstrate positive attitudes to nutrition, hygiene, exercise and routine (NCCA, 2009).



## Portion size

Children should always be given child sized portions of food. Always use child size plate, bowls and cups. We have included examples below for health lunches and little snack so you get an idea of the portion size.

### Plates and bowls



The Caroline Walker Trust



### Making one change at a time

One of the best ways to promote a healthy lifestyle is for the whole family to be involved. It is much easier to develop healthy habits if you make changes as a family together. Don't try and change too many things together. Just choose one thing so it isn't too big a change for everyone. What goal do you want to set? What do you want to address? Choose the change you want to make and then make a plan on how to achieve it.

## Example:

- Changing from sugary breakfast cereal to wholemeal breakfast cereal on weekdays.
- Drinking water with dinner instead of sugary drinks.

Explain the change you are making to the child - why you are making the change and its benefits. Children respond better when they know what is happening and are involved.

<https://www.safefood.eu/START/Start-Now/Steps-to-starting.aspx>



### Examples of lunchboxes

Getting your own lunch bag/box for preschool and school is a very important part of helping children get ready for the transition to preschool or school. The lunch box should be easy to open and access and if you have to use plain bags/lunch boxes because of Covid-19 these can be decorated with stickers of favourite characters that children really like. Here are some examples of easy access little snacks and lunch box/bags.



Healthy Lunchboxes and Healthy Little Snacks

This leaflet is a collaboration between DCYA and National Childhood Network