

HEALTHY EATING IN PRE-K

Chicago Public Schools is proud to offer free breakfast and lunch to every student, PK-12, across the District. The benefits of eating the school meals are huge, for both you and your child:

- All school meals meet or exceed strict nutritional requirements, including limits on sugar, salt, and fat
- Meals are well balanced, and include protein, whole grains, fruits and/or vegetables, and milk
- All menus are reviewed by a Registered Dietitian
- For those classrooms that serve lunch Family Style, children will gain valuable cognitive and social skills
- Kids are more inclined to try new foods when their peers are eating the same thing! (Even “picky” eaters!)
- It's FREE!



CPS can provide substitutions for students with food allergies who have submitted the required paperwork. Additionally, pork is never served in CPS schools and a vegetarian option is available daily. However, CPS is not able to accommodate food sensitivities, religious requirements, or some general preferences (e.g. vegan or organic). While students are strongly encouraged to participate in the school meal program, we understand that some parents may choose to send in food for their child to eat at lunch. If you decide to send lunch for your child, please keep the following in mind:

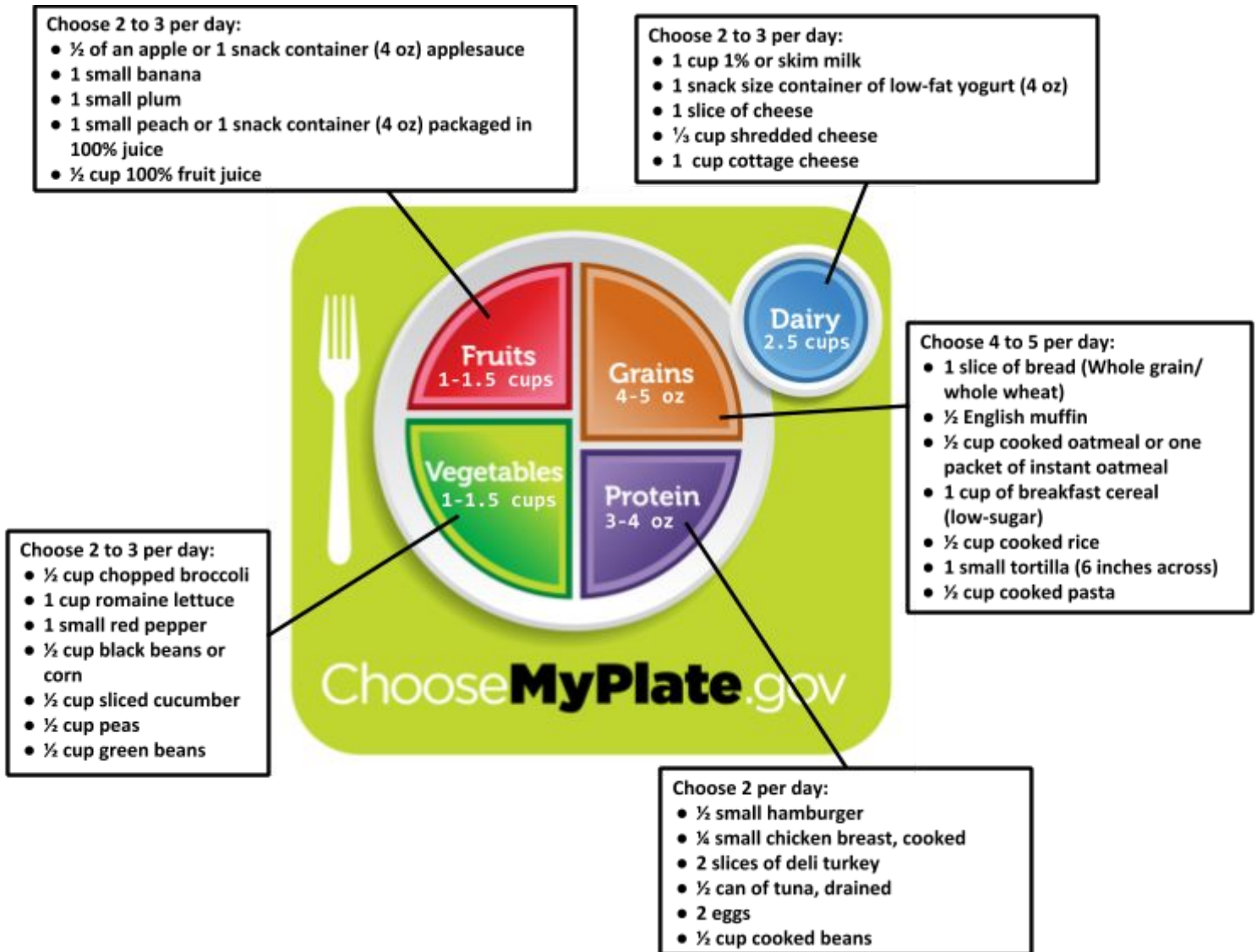
- Refrigerators are not available. If you send food that needs to be kept cold, please pack the food in an appropriately insulated lunch bag or box.
- You may not send food to be shared with other students. This includes regular meals as well as snacks or treats for holidays or celebrations.
- Aim to send food that is nutritious, and in age-appropriate portions. Need ideas? See the back of this flier for more information.
- Schools are able to set stricter rules about what students bring in for individual consumption, so be sure to check with your child's teacher and/or principal if you have any questions about the food you're sending!

StartWELL: Healthy CPS for Pre-K provides guidelines and resources to help Pre-K teachers and staff implement health and wellness activities in their classrooms. By following these recommendations and best practices, StartWELL can help ensure that every preschooler in the District has equitable access to physical activity, nutrition education, healthy food and activities, and direct health services.

Tips For Packing Healthy Pre-K Meals

Research shows that kids with healthier eating habits have better academic performance. Choose one from each food group for a healthy lunch.

The items listed below are suggestions- healthy eating looks different for everyone! Questions? Email oshw@cps.edu.



Other Tips:

- Shop the edges of the grocery store, not just the middle
- Eat and drink less sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat
- Offer a variety of healthy foods: it can take 10 or more tries before a child likes a new food
- Getting fiber from whole grains and vegetables keeps your child full and alert at school
- Calcium, protein, and vitamin D in dairy build strong bones, teeth, and muscles

The Children and Family Benefits Unit can help connect families to Medicaid and SNAP (food stamps). If you need assistance, call the Healthy CPS Hotline at 773.553.KIDS(5437) to get started!