

Wellness

Make sure your child is fueled with nutritious foods all day

As if there aren't enough things for parents and kids to argue about, many families add meals to the list. Kids often try to skip breakfast, while parents insist on nutritious morning fare—for good reason. Breakfast gives kids energy, and skipping it can hurt concentration at school.

To help your child eat well throughout the day:

- * Make breakfast appealing. If your child doesn't go for classics such as cereal and fruit, get creative. Give her a "frozen banana" (a banana coated in yogurt, rolled in crushed cereal, and then frozen) or a smoothie (blend skim or 1% milk, fruit and ice). Leftovers, such as pasta, are great, too—even cold.

- * Prepare lunches together. When your child helps pack lunches, she's more likely to eat them. There are lots of ways to make "brown bagging it" more attractive. For example, decorate the bag. Use cookie cutters on bread. And mix ingredients in new ways, such as putting strawberries in cream cheese.

- * Don't give up on dinner. If your child resists certain nutritious foods, brainstorm about alternatives. For example, some kids refuse raw carrots but like cooked ones, and vice versa. And if your child turns up her nose at milk, she may love cheese. You can also sneak items (such as pureed spinach or sweet potato) into recipes.

- * Keep offering options. Your child may try something new if it's presented with a food she loves (especially if it's in a fun pattern, like a rainbow made out of veggies). Remember that it can take several tries for your child to like new foods, so keep trying and don't get discouraged.

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