

Pasadena Christian Preschool Healthy Child Guidelines

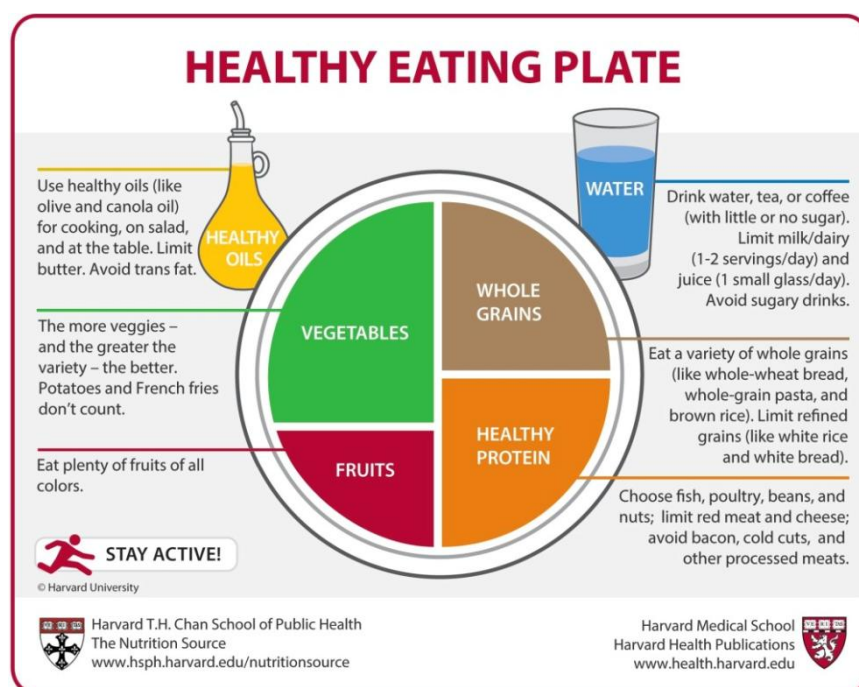
There is no better time to teach healthy eating habits than in preschool. Young children are still developing their tastes in food. The adults' role (teachers and parents) is to provide consistent opportunities to learn healthy habits and to develop palates that prefer healthy options. Our generation has seen the detrimental effects of high-sugar, over-processed, and non-nutritive foods firsthand. While these foods are often easy and convenient, they have long-lasting, damaging effects on children's health both now and in the future. As adults, we can help to break the "sugar-addicted" cycle for our kids. Our goal is for the next generation to have healthier standards for eating.

We highly recommend that lunches that are sent from home...

- Be diverse and include 3+ food groups such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seeds, protein, dairy, etc.
- Be sugar sensitive – the American Heart Association recommends that children consume no more than 4-6 teaspoons (or 19g) of added sugar per day (Yikes! That's tricky!)
- Contain age-appropriate portion sizes
- Be cut into age-appropriate pieces to encourage self-feeding and prevent choking
- Avoid juices that are not 100% fruit
- Contain minimal artificial colors (consider limiting artificial ingredients as well)
- Do not contain traditional "desserts" such as cookies, cake, candy, etc. *These items will be placed in your child's cubby for home enjoyment.*
- Do NOT contain nuts or peanuts in any form (due to high-risk allergies)

Besides excluding traditional, sugar-laden desserts from daily lunches and high-level allergens such as nuts from our environment, we leave nutritional decisions to the parents.

The following diagram illustrates our recommendation for Healthy Child Guidelines for lunches.



School Practices to Encourage Healthy Habits: Our Promise to Parents

School Policy	Meals and snacks are scheduled at regular times.
In Practice	A meal (3+ food groups) or snack (2+ food groups) is scheduled every 2-3 hours. The school provides Two (2) snacks per day. Lunch is provided or purchased by the parent. A child who forgets his lunch will be provided lunch at the parents' expense.
Rationale	When children know that they will receive a snack or meal every 2-3 hours, they do not have to think about being hungry. Snacks provide 20% of a child's nutrition; thus, they should be healthy.

School Policy	Children decide which food to eat from those offered. All food sent from home should be healthy, so whatever the child chooses will be healthy. Every item should be a "first choice" item.
In Practice	Family-style mealtimes allow children to serve themselves from healthy options so they can determine which foods to take and how much.
Rationale	Children gain independence in personal healthy eating habits when they can take ownership over their food choices (from an adult-provided selection).

School Policy	Children are not required to eat all the food on their plates/in their lunch boxes. Children will be encouraged to eat part or some of their lunch and will be gently encouraged to try new foods. They will not be forced to eat if they don't want to.
In Practice	Food is served in a manner that allows children to serve themselves, so they determine which foods to take and how much.
Rationale	Children need the opportunity to recognize their own feeding cues for hunger and fullness. Feeding problems arise when adults interfere with a child's decisions about how much to eat or whether to eat.

School Policy	Special occasions and holidays are celebrated primarily with healthy foods or non-food treats. Shared treats must be store-bought and pre-approved by the classroom teacher.
Best Practice	Please discuss healthier "treat" options for celebrations and birthdays with your child's teacher, as they understand classroom-specific allergies, overall nutritional status, etc.
Rationale	We must consider the health risks associated with food prepared in an unknown environment, and the nutritional value of the food must be considered.

School Policy	Water is freely available both indoors and outdoors.
Best Practice	Teachers will provide a water station in the classrooms. Parents may consider providing an appealing water bottle to encourage water consumption.
Rationale	Water is essential to health and should be promoted as the drink of choice.

School Policy	Juice will not be served with school-provided snacks or lunch. 100% fruit juice will may be reserved for special occasions.
Best Practice	The school will serve water or low-fat milk for snacks and school-provided lunches. The daily value of juice should be left to the parent's discretion for lunch or at home.
Rationale	The Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 1 – 6 consume no more than 4-6 oz. Per day due to high sugar content, juice should be 100% fruit.

School Policy	Daily play and planned movement experiences both indoors and outdoors are provided to children.
Best Practice	Teachers will provide structured and unstructured daily activities encouraging movement and physical exercise. Parents are encouraged to engage their children in planned and unstructured physical activities (playing at the park, gymnastics, running, swimming, playing tag, etc.).
Rationale	Children need to be active frequently throughout the day. Children learn essential motor skills during both structured and unstructured physical activity.

School Policy	Media is used only for educational purposes or on special occasions.
Best Practice	Media time is sedentary and not conducive to social development. Limited media may be used to enhance the educational program.
Rationale	The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 2 hours of media/screen time per day. The majority of media time is best left to parents' discretion.

The American Red Cross Preventative Health, Safety, and Nutrition course and the California Community Care Licensing division recommended this information. It was adapted from the handbook *Best Practices for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Environments*:
<http://www.healthybeveragesinchildcare.org/bestpractices/BestPracticesHandbook.pdf>