

ECD Nutritional Lunchbox Plan

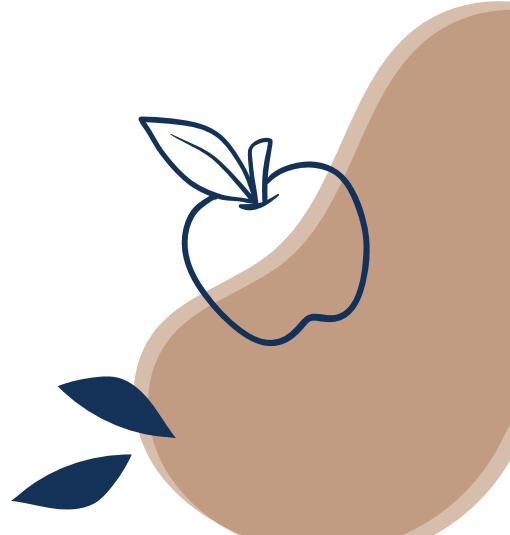
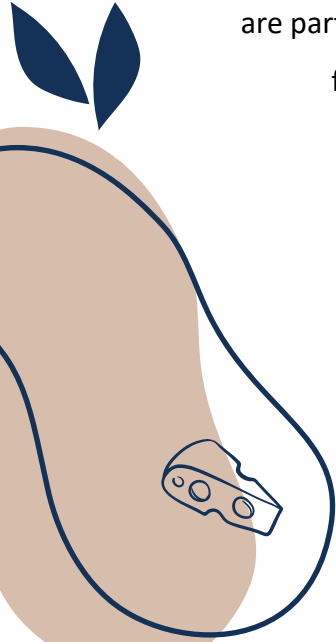


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Alḥamdulillāh

We should first thank Allāh for the perfect body that He has given us. With this perfect body comes a responsibility, the task of keeping it healthy.

As parents we are given the responsibility of the well-being of our children, which is an amānah (trust) from Allāh. The children in our care are dependent on us to look after them, to ensure they are partaking of healthy foods, which we need to fulfil to the best of our capabilities.



What is nutrition?

Nutrition is the study of nutrients in food, how the body uses the nutrients, and the relationship between diet health, and disease. Based on these definitions, nutrition is a vast field with many topics and concepts.

Nutrients are substances that that allow your body to make energy, build and maintain tissues, and regulate body processes.

Nutrients are mainly categorized into six categories:

Macronutrients – required in large quantities:

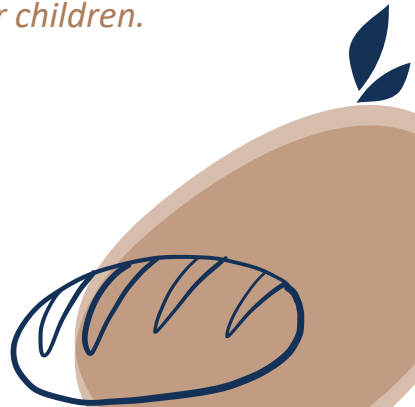
1. Carbohydrates
2. Proteins
3. Fats

Micronutrients – required in small quantities:

4. Vitamins
5. Minerals
6. Water

Nutrition is what helps with our growth and health.
It is a critical part of health and development.

*Our future is based on how well we look after ourselves
and most importantly, our children.*



Allāh says many times in the Qur'ān:

كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ

“Eat from the good/pure things”
(2 V 172)

This indicates to good and nutritious foods.

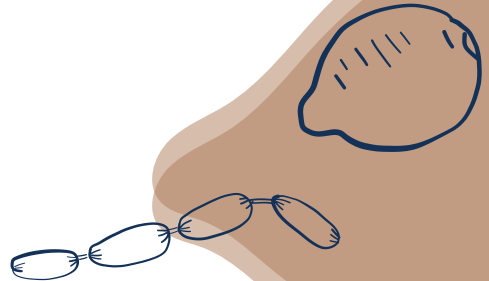
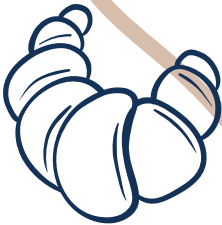
Unfortunately, today we live in an era that has easy excess to foods that are prepacked and processed.

Many of these foods have extra hormones, added sugars, and synthetic products that are harmful to our bodies, more so in children.

Foods such as:

- Processed meats
- Breakfast cereals
- Microwave meals
- Pastries
- Packaged snacks

According to a study by the American Society for Nutrition, children who eat processed foods lack locomotive skills and have lower levels of physical fitness compared to children who don't regularly partake of processed foods.



Creating healthy eating habits for our children is extremely important. Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs (2019) states that healthy eating in childhood is important for proper growth, development, and to build a healthy immune system.

Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory) and improved mood.

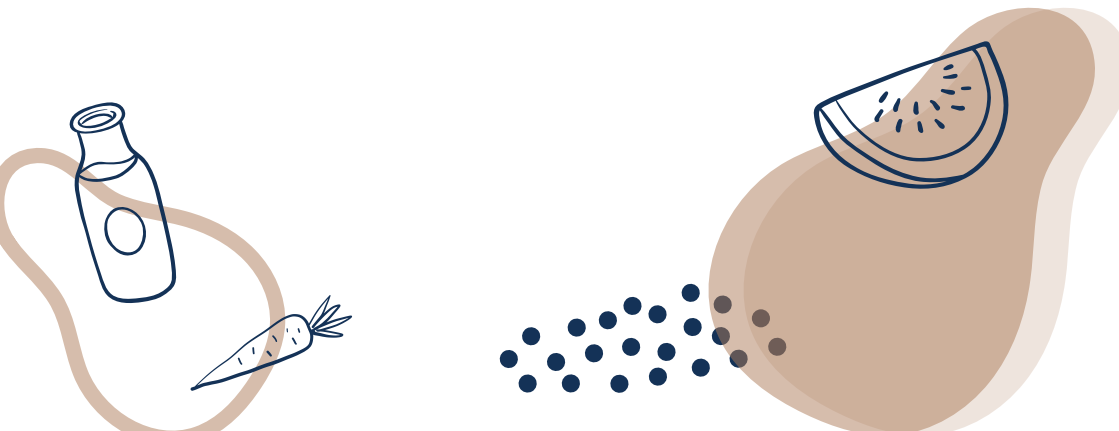
Limits need to be placed on the consumption of foods that contain high salts, fats, and sugars. Low fibre foods and caffeinated drinks should also be avoided.

A higher sugar intake can lead to a build-up of harmful fats that are not visible. A higher sugar diet can have a negative impact on sleep, academic performance, learning and the memory.

Children need to eat food from all the food groups to meet their vitamin and mineral needs.

The 5 food groups a child needs to partake from are as follows:

1. Fruit
2. Vegetables
3. Grain
4. Protein
5. Dairy



For each meal a child needs at least one food item from three groups.

Many parents struggle on a daily basis with “what do I pack in the lunch box?”. However, setting a healthy lunchbox does not need have to be elaborate fancy meals that one has to prepare hours in advance. Below I have listed easy lunchbox ideas that will contribute towards the healthy well being of the child, and are easy items for parents to prepare.

Always remember if a school lunch is done right, the child won't compensate with junk food.

How to pack a lunchbox for your young child:

Reminder: small portions only.

If a child is given too much in their lunch box, for example, a sandwich consisting of 2 slices of bread they won't eat the healthy snack like a fruit or yogurt.

1. Main meal
2. A snack
3. A drink
4. Goodies

Simplicity is best.
Don't pack too much! Small portions!



Lunchbox ideas

1 – Main meal:

- Fish fingers (3 or 4 per lunch)
- Chicken nuggets (3 or 4 per lunch)
- Chicken mayo (1 slice of bread)
- Cheese bread/ toasted cheese (1 slice)
- Peanut Butter and Jam
- Chicken roti roll (half roti)
- Tuna sandwich (1 slice)
- Chicken pie (2 to 3 pies)
- Chip roll (half)

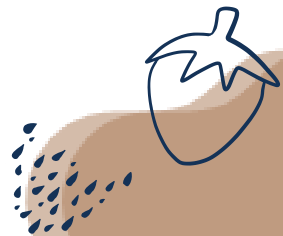
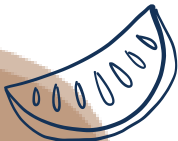
Pack according to your child's everyday meal consumption. Again, remember, we add less so they get to eat the other items in the lunchbox, which is essential for their health.

2 – Snack:

Fruit snack:

- Apple – a few slices
- Strawberries – 2 or 3
- Blueberries – a handful
- Oranges – few slices
- Grapes – a handful
- Banana – half

Remember to slice the fruits for your child otherwise they will be hesitant to eat.



Other snacks:

- Carrot sticks – 4 or 5
- Cucumber sticks – 4 or 5
- Nuts – handful
- Yogurt – 2 tablespoons (A box of yogurt is not sufficient to be sent as a “school lunch”)
- Rice cakes – 2 or 3
- Fruit roll
- Crackers
- Trail mix

One can alternate between a fruit snack and other snacks each day.

3 – Drinks:

- Water
- Fresh juice
- Once a week a pack of juice may be packed.

Lunch box = 3 items only

Children do not eat a lot of food in one sitting, that is why they have 5 to 6 small portion meals a day.

Goodies

- Homemade biscuits
- Slice of cake or a cupcake
- A small packet of crisp or little crisp in a tub
- Popcorn
- A small chocolate
- Gummies



What is not allowed:

- Sweets
- Cold drinks
- Lollipops
- Sherbet
- A big packet of crisp

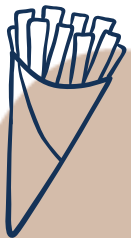
Parents, if you have a fussy eater, find out what your child likes. Include the child in the packing of their lunchbox. This will make it easier and enjoyable for them to eat.

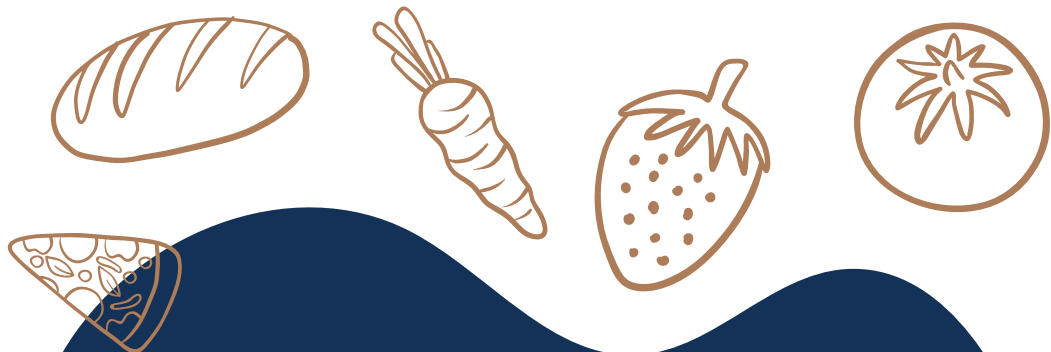
High protein foods will help your kids stay full for longer periods of time.

Sunnah foods for the lunchbox:

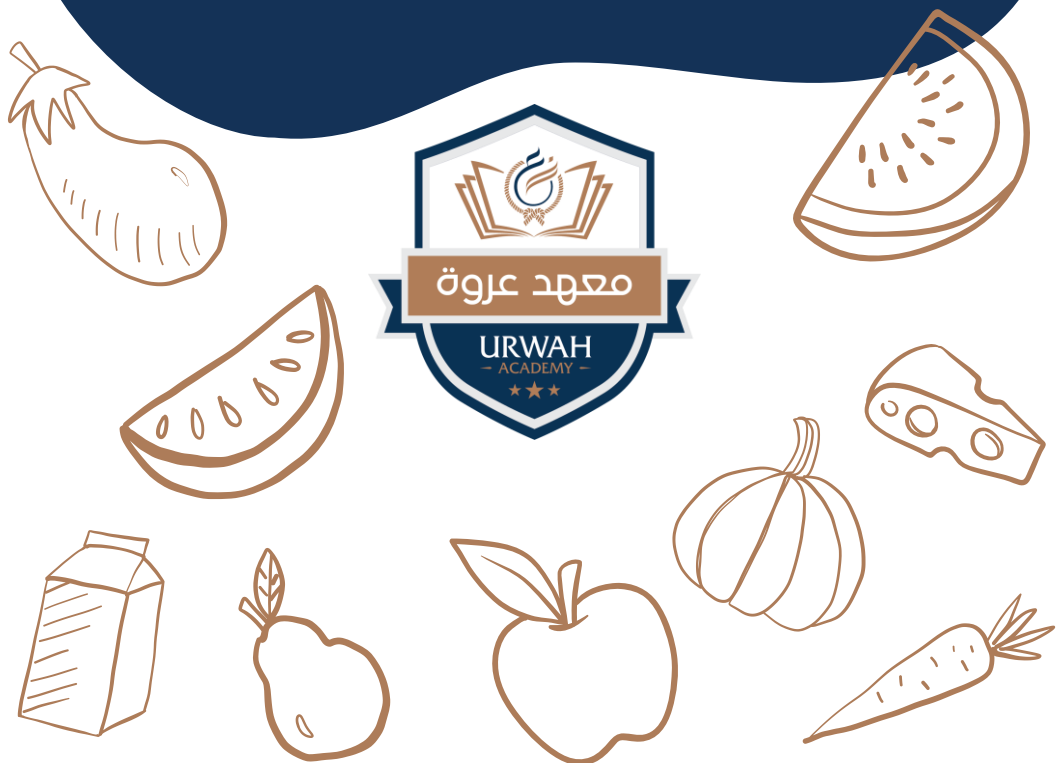
- Dates – high in fibre
- Pumpkin – rich in Vitamin A and C and Potassium
- Milk – boosts immune system and aids in digestive health

This plan is not to restrict foods, but to lessen the bad foods so our children can stay healthy In shā Allāh.





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Jazākallah khayrā

Binte Yahya Moosajee

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21 July 2023