



Best Practice: Meal times

To support the development of healthy eating habits for children, the Loyola Marymount University Children's Center (LMUCC) aims to give young children repeated opportunities to sample healthy foods in a positive context. An associative in consideration of the associative learning process, LMUCC aims to create a positive atmosphere while offering healthy snack choices.

Philosophical Foundations

Research has found that repeated exposure to new foods impacts children's preferences for those foods. Based on the findings that unfamiliar foods can become acceptable when they are repeatedly tasted (8-10 times), LMUCC exposes the children to varied foods at mealtime.

Table Settings

Food is made available to the children in an appealing and predictable manner. Snack and lunch foods are available in clear glass serving bowls so that the children can easily see the choices available to them. Knowing that children are capable of caring for fragile things when given guidance and opportunity, LMUCC offers children meals on porcelain plates/bowls and fluids in glass cups.

A Social Routine

Acknowledging that mealtimes are a social occasion for children, LMUCC offers snack and lunch in a pleasant setting. Teachers sit and converse with children at mealtimes catching up on the days events and modeling healthy eating habits. This time to connect and relate to one another with respect to our shared experiences is an invaluable part of the day and thus our curriculum.



Planning Healthy Meals

LMUCC provides healthy snack and lunch items including food choices that are low in refined sugar, low in sodium, high in whole grains, and we eliminate as much as possible the intake of saturated and trans fats. We provide hormone free milk and organic fruits and vegetables for any foods that constitute the “dirty dozen” category (Apples, Bell peppers, Celery, Cherries, Grapes (imported), Lettuce, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Potatoes, Spinach and Strawberries). Planning our snack and lunch menu is a dynamic process as it is adapted based on observed children’s food preferences. Below are menus from month’s past.



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 Chicken & Rice Soup Whole Wheat Pita Halved Grapes	3 Tofu Teriyaki Bowl Brown Rice Steamed Carrots Bananas	4 Egg Salad Sandwich Steamed Vegetables Pears	5 Vegetarian chili w/ beans Wheat Crackers Apples	6 Turkey Sandwich (no cheese) Mixed Vegetables Oranges
9 Vegetable Pita Greek Salad Apples	10 Vegetable Enchiladas (no cheese) Black Beans Pears	11 Shepard’s Pie Corn Grapefruit	12 Spinach & Cheese Pizza Squash Halved Grapes	13 Vegetarian Jambalaya Italian beans Bananas
16 Vegetable Enchilada (no cheese) Black beans Bananas	17 Spinach & Cheese Pizza Squash Pears	18 Vegetable & tofu stir fry Brown Rice Halved Grapes	19 Lasagna Steamed Vegetables Oranges	20 Grilled Cheese Sandwich Tomato Soup Apples
23 Garden Burger Steamed Vegetables Grapefruit	24 Herb Roasted Chicken Steamed Carrots Whole Wheat Pita Apples	25 Tortilla Soup Wheat Crackers Oranges	26 Rice & Bean Burrito Avocado Bananas	27 Whole Wheat Penne w/Bolognese Grilled Vegetables Halved Grapes

LUNCH &

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 AM: Cheese Quesadilla PM: Whole grain Bagels & Pears	3 AM: Shredded Wheat & Bananas PM: Jack Cheese & English Muffin	4 AM: Vegetarian Breakfast Burrito PM: Whole wheat pita & hummus	5 AM: Bran Cereal & Grapefruit PM: Orzo salad	6 AM: French toast PM: Apple Sauce & Wheat Crackers
9 AM: Cheerios & Pears PM: Plain Yogurt & Oranges	10 AM: Banana Pancakes PM: Apple Sauce & Wheat crackers	11 AM: Oatmeal & Kiwi PM: Hard boiled eggs & wheat toast	12 AM: Bran Cereal & Apples PM: Swiss Cheese & Crackers	13 AM: Vegetarian Breakfast Burrito PM: Cucumbers & Hummus
16 AM: Shredded Wheat & Bananas PM: Jack Cheese & English Muffin	17 AM: Blueberry Pancakes PM: Apple Sauce & Crackers	18 AM: Hard Boiled Eggs & Grapes PM: Whole wheat pita & hummus	19 AM: Cheerios & Apples PM: Avocados & Whole Wheat toast	20 AM: French Toast PM: Plain Yogurt & Grapefruit

SNACK MENU