



Nutrition

A child's nutritional diet plays a vital role in their brain development as well as their attentiveness and learning ability. Here, at Go Like the Wind Montessori, we value the whole child. In other words, we take pride in attuning ourselves to all aspects that are beneficial to the child from academics to nutrition.

Children at Go Like the Wind experience nutritious eating many times throughout the day in the forms of daily snacks, birthday snacks, lunches, and cooking activities.

Snack is available to the children twice a day; once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Snacks consist of a variety of foods such as fruits, vegetables, cheeses (dairy component from the food pyramid), and crackers (bread component from the food pyramid).

Lunches should be food items the child is familiar with during the first weeks of school; this is not the time to introduce something new in the lunchbox. GLTW does not provide lunch and it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide a nutritious lunch. A nutritious lunch should include the four food groups: protein, dairy products, carbohydrates (bread, cereals), and fruits or vegetables. In order to promote healthy eating habits, we instruct the students to eat protein first, then the dairy item, vegetable/fruit, and so on.

Protein: Protein is an imperative component in the healthy development of children. It is recommended that children ages one to six acquire 16 to 24 grams of protein daily as part of their nutritious diet. Proteins are indispensable for growth and maintenance of every kind of cell in our body. Proteins are necessary for body development, replenishment of lost blood, healing of wounds and scars, replacement of dead cells, and hair and nail growth. Proteins in the form of

enzymes, hormones and antibodies promote healthy metabolic and physiological processes, and boost our nervous and immunity systems. Animal (food) products are rich sources of protein. Meat, milk and milk products, egg, poultry, and fish, contain balanced level of proteins that are beneficial to the development of children. Protein can also be obtained from plant (vegetable) food items such as legumes (soybean and soybean products, peas, beans etc.), and nuts.

Dairy products: Milk and dairy products are an important part of a child's diet. They are a good source of energy and protein, and contain a wide range of vitamins and minerals, particularly calcium, which growing children and young people need to build healthy bones and teeth. Children between the ages of one and three need to have about 350mg of calcium a day. About 300ml milk (three fifths of a pint) would provide this. Milk and dairy products such as cheese, yogurt and fromage frais are great sources of protein and vitamins A and B12.

Carbohydrates: Carbohydrates are the body's most important and readily available source of energy. The two major forms of carbohydrates are simple sugars (simple carbohydrates), such as fructose, glucose, and lactose, and also found in nutritious whole fruits and starches (complex carbohydrates), found in foods such as starchy vegetables, grains, rice, and breads and cereals. A healthy balanced diet for children over 2 years should include 50% to 60% of the calories consumed coming from carbohydrates. The key is to make sure that the majority of carbohydrates children eat are from good sources and to limit the amount of added sugar in their diet. Good sources of carbohydrates include: whole-grain cereals, brown rice, whole-grain breads, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy.

Fruits and vegetables: The primary role of fruits and vegetables in the diet is to provide vitamins A, C, and K as well as folic acid and the mineral potassium. Further, fruits and vegetables

provide fiber, carbohydrates, and some trace minerals. Vegetables also provide small amounts of protein. In addition to nutrients, fruits and vegetables provide other substances, often called "phytochemicals," which may help in the prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Currently, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services recommend children eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. The Food Guide Pyramid breaks down that recommendation to at least two servings of vegetables and three servings of fruit a day.

A serving is approximately equal to each of the following:

- 1/2 cup of cooked or chopped raw vegetables
- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- 1/2 cup of chopped raw or canned fruit
- 3/4 cup of fruit juice
- 1 medium piece of fruit
- 1/4 cup of dried fruit

We send home any uneaten food with your child, so that you can get an idea of the amount and eating preferences of your child. Water is readily available to all children. Please be sure your child has had a nutritious breakfast before coming to school. Studies show that more than one third of all children in America are skipping breakfast. If children skip breakfast it can harm their growth and development. Children who skip breakfast have a greater chance of getting lower grades in school, having learning and behavioral problems, and developing nutritional deficiencies such as calcium and protein deficiencies. Children who skip breakfast regularly are more likely to have problems with obesity and even tooth decay.

School policy prohibits children from bringing candy of any type to school. Additionally, we ask that you do not send other types of pure sweets such as iced cupcakes, etc. These cause a “sugar high” that over stimulates children for a short period and then causes lethargy when the body eventually consumes the sugar. This makes learning in the afternoon difficult for your child.

Your child’s lunch box should be labeled with the name on the outside near the handle. If your child brings a lunch bag instead, please label it clearly with a dark marker. We encourage the packing of washable utensils in the lunchbox in order to promote good ecological practices.

Nutrition matters to the overall development of your child and we do our best to support healthy eating habits at Go Like the Wind Montessori School.