



Give your child credit for trying new foods at school. Keep an “I’ll be having it” chart on the refrigerator and write the name of each new food your child tries. Your child can fill in a star to rate how often he or she will continue to eat that food.

My New Food At School	Sometimes	Often	Every time
1. broccoli		x	
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Did You Know? Children who eat school lunches may get more milk, meats, grains, vegetables and fruits in their diets than children who bring lunch from home. Not only do they eat more nutritious lunches, but they also get a more complete range of nutrients over the whole day. What’s more, the healthy eating experiences they receive in the school cafeteria – enjoying nutritious foods and learning to seek them out – will stay with them into weekends and summers, and even into adulthood.

Healthy by Design

School lunches meet state and federal regulations requiring they:

- Provide one-third of children’s daily needs for calories, protein, vitamins A and C, iron and calcium.
- Average no more than 30 percent of calories from fat; no more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat; and meet limits for the amount of fat in any single food item.
- Offer a variety of milk options, including fat-free, low-fat and reduced-fat milk.
- Are age-appropriate, providing the right levels of nutrients for a child’s growing needs.

Encouraging Nutritious Choices

School lunches are moving toward supporting and reinforcing better nutrition choices based on the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which focus on whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and lower-fat dairy products as “Food Groups to Encourage.” By offering more nutritious foods, children enjoy school meals and even substitute nutritious choices for less healthy options. As guidance from the experts emerges in the future, school menus will continue evolving to serve the best lunches in town! Stop by your child’s cafeteria and you will probably see items like whole wheat breads, reduced-fat foods, and a variety of fruits and vegetables being offered as part of their school meals.

Try this:

Use new words as you explore new foods together.

Ask: How does this food:

Look? Green, orange, purple, round, skinny, oval, tiny, huge

Feel? Fuzzy, smooth, bumpy, prickly, soft, hard, hot, cold

Sound? Crunch, crackle, splash, pop, snap

Taste? Sweet, salty, spicy, sour



square meals

Nourishing children’s bodies and minds.

Commissioner Todd Staples
Texas Department of Agriculture

If you have questions about your school’s menu, talk to the school foodservice director. For a full copy of the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy or for more information, go to www.squaremeals.org.

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