

Lunch Box Boss

Encouraging children to make their own lunch inspires self-help and decision-making skills and provides the perfect opportunity to discuss healthy eating. By creating healthy eating habits in their preschool years, your child will be more likely to maintain healthy eating for their lifetime. There is also the added bonus: if they choose it, they will hopefully also eat it!

How to Do It

Begin with everyone washing their hands to be ready to prepare food. Put out a selection of snack and sandwich filling options for your child to choose from. Once they have chosen their sandwich filling, model by making your own sandwich. Show how the sandwich can be cut into triangles, rectangles or squares.

LUNCHBOX IDEAS

Sandwich Options

Use grainy or wholemeal breads, wraps or pita pockets

- Tuna
- Lettuce
- Grated carrot
- Boiled mashed egg
- Grated cheese
- Tomatoes
- Cold meats
- Avocado
- Corn
- Hummus
- Vegemite
- Falafel

Snack Options

- Carrots
- Capsicum
- Fruit kebab
- Hummus
- Cheese
- Boiled egg
- Crackers with Vegemite
- Unsweetened yoghurt
- Savoury muffin
- Fruit (e.g. grapes, oranges, apples)

Things you will need

- Bread, wraps of your choice
- Knife (not sharp)
- Fruit
- Dairy item, such as unsweetened yoghurt or cheese
- Small snack, such as crackers of cottage cheese
- Lunchbox container (with separate compartments recommended)

Tips

- Instead of using plastic wraps, purchase a lunchbox with dividers to separate the food and keep it fresh
- Supervise your child while using a knife

What Learning is Occurring?

- Small muscle development and hand-eye coordination
- Self-help and decision-making skills
- Knowledge of healthy food
- Engaging conversation and time to enjoy one another's company as you make and then enjoy eating lunch together.



Age Considerations

- For children who will be transitioning to school in 2021, practicing how to use a lunch box, choosing what to put in and deciding when to eat what, are skills to develop further. You might consider supporting other skills your 4-year-old can continue to practice and begin to master e.g. opening yoghurt containers and popper drinks.
- Having these types of 'tricky' containers as an option for your child to 'pack' every now and again, will provide opportunities for your child to practice these skills.
- Younger children can certainly participate in a lunch box lunch. Offer a variety of foods that they have tried before (shred, chop etc., depending on the age of your child).
- Enjoy some time in the fresh air and have a picnic lunch with your child on a mat in the garden. Sitting on the floor to eat is different than at a table and requires different thinking and skills. On another day, host a teddy bears lunch box picnic!

