

# Packing School Lunches and the Division of Responsibility

# What is the DOR?

The Division of Responsibility (DOR) is a feeding practice that helps children develop into competent eaters who are able to understand and respect their hunger and fullness cues. Following the DOR helps children to eat according to their body's unique needs, ultimately allowing them to grow in a way that is right for them. For parents, the DOR is a way to teach children healthy eating behaviours. This includes the food that is eaten, where it is eaten, and the frequency of meals and snacks. For toddlers through adolescents, parents are responsible for what, when, and where food is eaten. The child/teenager is always responsible for how much and whether they eat.

## How Does It Apply To School?

At school, the DOR still applies, but the parental responsibilities are partially shared by the teacher and school. Parents still choose what foods are served to the child, but the teacher and school choose when and where food is eaten.

## Trusting Your Child To Eat As Much As They Need

Children are naturally able to understand when they are hungry and when they are full. This allows them to eat as much as they need to support their unique growth and development. Remember, children are responsible for how much and whether they eat. Recognize that the amount your child eats may change from day to day, and trust your child to eat as much or as little as they are hungry for.

Parents should remember that it is normal for children to eat anywhere from a small amount to all of the food that is included in their lunch. Appetite changes day to day! If you are noticing trends of lots of or no leftovers, check in with your child and ask if there is too much or not enough food being included.

# Packing a Balanced Lunch

Parents are responsible for providing children with foods that are healthy, tasty, and developmentally appropriate. Developmentally appropriate means foods and textures that are right for the age and developmental stage of your child. Here are some things to consider when packing a school lunch:

- Familiar foods: The majority of the lunch should be foods that you know your child will eat. These don't necessarily have to be your child's favourite foods, but they should be foods that your child will reliably eat.
- New food: It can take up to 15 exposures before a child learns to like a new food. Include small amounts of new foods and be okay if they come home uneaten.
- Variety: The best way to ensure your child is getting the nutrients they need is to include a variety of foods from each food group. Aim to include a fruit, vegetable, whole grain, and protein food. Again, your child is in charge of what they eat, so be okay if a whole food group comes back uneaten!
- Treats: Including a treat on occasion can help teach children that all foods are part of a balanced diet. Including a treat food and allowing your child to decide if and how much they eat of it helps them to follow their hunger and fullness cues. If you include a treat, avoid using language like "junk food" or "unhealthy food" – treat it the same as you would any other food.
- Involve your child in packing their lunch: Not only is this an opportunity to help children learn about food and nutrition, they will also be more likely to eat the foods that they have chosen. A great way to do this is to offer your child a choice between a few foods (ex: carrots, cucumber, broccoli) and allow them to choose what they prefer.

# An Example of A Balanced Lunch





# Examples of Each Food Group

## Fruit

Frozen Strawberries  
Banana  
Canned Peaches  
Applesauce



## Vegetable

Carrots  
Cucumber  
Canned Pasta Sauce  
Steamed Frozen Veggies



## Whole Grains

Whole Grain Pasta  
Whole Wheat Muffins  
Popcorn  
Whole Grain Crackers



## Protein Food

Canned Beans and Lentils  
Chicken  
Dairy Products  
Hard Boiled Egg

