

Simple and Smart Snacks

Did you know children who eat nutritious snacks are more likely to have a better overall diet quality and higher Healthy Eating Index (HEI) score that is more closely aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?¹ Providing balanced snacks has also been shown to contribute significantly to children's daily intake of key food groups including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy.¹ This guide serves to provide some inspiration to promote smart snacking in a simple way.

SMART Snack Tips



S – Serving size:

Use appropriate portions for food type & age



M – Minimize

added sugar, sodium, & saturated fat



A – Add

foods from at least 2 food groups



R – Rainbow:

making it colorful and fun can promote excitement.



T – Together:

Helping prepare snacks often encourages eating it.

Super Simple SMART Snack Ideas



Apples + Nut Butter

Nutrients: Fiber & vitamin C (apples) + protein & healthy fats (nuts)

Benefits: Satiety & energy balance

Fun Tip: Use shape cutters (or creativity) to make the apple slices into fun shapes



Greek Yogurt + Berries

Nutrients: Calcium & protein (yogurt) + vitamins / minerals, antioxidants, & fiber (berries)

Benefits: Bone health & immunity

Fun Tip: Use different type & colors of berries to maximize appeal & nutrition



Whole Grain Crackers + Cheese

Nutrients: Whole grains & fiber (crackers) + calcium & protein (cheese)

Benefits: Sustained energy, satiety, & bone development

Fun Tip: Offer a variety of crackers / cheeses to promote creative cracker stack combos



Veggie Sticks + Hummus

Nutrients: Fiber & vitamins / minerals (vegetables) + plant-based protein & healthy fats (hummus)

Benefits: Digestion & brain function

Fun Tip: Use textures to build structures with veggie sticks held together by the hummus

References

1. Forrestal, S., Boyle, M., Bleiweiss-Sande, R., Franckle, R., Hu, M., Kali, J., Neelan, T., and Niland, K. (2025). Study of Nutrition and Activity in Child Care Settings II (SNACS-II). Prepared by Mathematica, AG-3198-1-9F-0151. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, Project Officer: Constance Newman. Available online at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/cacfp/snacs2>

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