

Parent Handbook



HARMONY
DAY SCHOOL
2023-2024

Harmony Day Montessori School, Inc. values a diverse community and complies with all applicable laws regarding nondiscrimination.

SECTION I. Who We Are

Harmony Day Montessori School, Inc. does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, handicapped status, nationality or ethnic origin with regard to hiring, admissions, or in the administration of any of its programs.

We are a thriving Montessori community of children, parents, and educators working individually and together to be:

- Responsible
- Respectful
- Compassionate
- Independent
- Loving
- Enthusiastic

And a vital part of our families, our community and the world.

We are a morning Montessori school that offers an all-day Montessori care option.

Hours of Operation:

Early Arrival	7:30 to 7:55 am	M - F
Full Day Session:	8 am to 3:00 pm	M - F

Drop In Fees:

Upon occasion you may find it helpful to have your primary aged child come to school earlier than usual. So long as we stay within state ratio requirements, this is no problem. However, we do require 48 hours' notice via email. Payments are due on or before the day of service by check or cash. Available to primary students ONLY.

Early Arrival Drop In: \$8/day

SECTION II. Admission Eligibility For Toddlers:

Children who have independently given up a morning nap are eligible. Children must be a minimum of 18 months old on their first day attending school. Toilet Training is part of our toddler classroom curriculum.

For Primaries

Students who are 3 years of age and fully toilet trained are eligible for enrollment in the Primary Program.

SECTION III. For Parents

Back to School Meetings

All parents are asked to attend a Back to School Meeting. This will keep your family informed of any format changes and added school programs.

Winter Discovery Day

Offered once each year, Discovery Day allows parents to get to know one another, our staff and learn more about their child's school day experience and how the Montessori materials are used by students. Discovery Day changes from year to year, therefore it is highly recommended that all school families attend. Coffee and donuts will be provided throughout this event. There is no childcare provided for this event, so please plan accordingly.

Parent-Guide Conferences

Offered twice each year, conferences are specific times set aside to discuss your individual child's school progress, future academic goals, and address your questions and concerns. Please make arrangements to be **child free** for this very important meeting. Conferences are an invaluable part of linking the school experience to the home environment and are therefore strongly encouraged. Additional conferences may be scheduled by either school or parents should concerns arise.

Class Observations and School Tours

HDMS encourages parents and family members to observe their child's classroom work. This is a necessary part of the Montessori experience. We want parents as partners in their child's education. We ask that you observe through our observation windows, whenever possible. An anonymous observation of your child will give you an accurate and objective picture of your child's school day experience. If you, or another family member, would like to observe, please schedule this in advance with Ms. Ericka by emailing her at HDMSexedirector@gmail.com

School tours are available to interested prospective parents by appointment only.

School Day Holiday Open Houses

Twice a year, we ask parents to spend the afternoon celebrating with us and their child. Open Houses

are offered from 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm. When you arrive, you are responsible for the care of your child/children. Parents sign up in advance to provide a dish for sharing at our potluck. If you cannot attend the Open House, carline will begin for your child promptly at 3:00 pm.

Parent Volunteer Hours & Fundraising

Each HDMS family is asked to share their time and talents with the school community by giving 15 hours of volunteer time per enrolled child, per school year. The school office will maintain a log of volunteer hours, so please notify the School Office (harmonydayoffice@gmail.com) when volunteering. In addition to our school fundraisers, our school offers 2 parent workdays each school year to assist parents in fulfilling their volunteer hours and to assist staff in maintaining the Harmony Day School building. These are held on Saturdays from 9 am to noon. For those unable to fulfill their volunteer hours, there will be a charge of \$25 per hour that is unfulfilled, which will be charged to your ACH account along with the May 1 tuition payment.

The school office will track the fundraising efforts of each family. Those unable to fulfill their fundraising requirement of \$500, will pay the balance due with the May 1 tuition payment.

Dispute Resolution Process

Disputes concerning contracts, tuition, etc. must be expressed in letter form and addressed to the "Harmony Day School Board of Directors" and emailed to HDSBoD@gmail.com.

Please include your reasons for making the request and all supporting documentation. The school office will forward it on to all members of the board for review and will be back in touch with you as soon as the school board has reviewed your request and has reached a decision regarding your dispute.

Contracting, Policy, Payment Questions

Should you have questions regarding school contracts, tuition payments, the school calendar and school policy or procedures, please contact the school office by emailing –

Harmony Day School Office

HDMSexedirector@gmail.com

Harmonydayoffice@gmail.com

Classroom Concerns

Should you have concerns regarding classroom happenings, please contact your child's lead guide.

Primary Guide

Keisha Godbey & Bethany Weimer =
hdsprimaryguide@gmail.com

Toddler Guide

Lani Cheek = hdmstoddlerguide@gmail.com

Changing your Child's School Schedule

We permit changes to a child's school schedule so long as:

- 1) We have space available in our programs to make such a change and
- 2) the change INCREASES the time your child spends at Harmony.

Because we use student contracts to set our annual budget and establish staff salaries, it is impossible to REDUCE the time a child spends at school after the point of contracting.

Weather Related School Closures

Harmony Day Montessori School follows the decision made by Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) in the following ways:

HDMS is Closed:

- When FCPS cancels school due to snow or ice.
- When FCPS operates on 2-hour delay

HDMS is Open:

- When FCPS cancels school due to extremely cold temperatures

HDMS will operate on a 1-hour delay:

- When FCPS operates on a 1-hour delay
- In the event of an unusually harsh winter (one that requires school be cancelled 8 or more days), the days missed beyond 8 *will* be made up.

For information about Harmony weather related school closures, please consult your local television stations for FCPS closure information, check your email or visit the Harmony Day Montessori School Facebook page.

Food at Harmony Day School

Our school is Whole 30 compliant. 90% of our snacks are fresh fruits and vegetables. We see great value in preparing food with our students when we are able – do not be surprised to hear your child ask for guacamole! They love it! And this is one example of a food preparation we may do with your child during the school year. Hummus and fruit/kale Greek yogurt smoothies are a few others! If we bake, we use almond flour and sweeten with local raw honey.

All our students will need to bring a healthy and nutritious lunch in the 3-sectioned box provided by the school. Lunch items must be prepared so they are manageable for your child to eat independently. Toddler students need foods diced into small bites so they can be scooped with a spoon. Soups, cottage cheese, yogurt and other foods that are of a loose or liquid consistency, or long strands of pasta are extremely difficult for young children to manage while self-feeding. We do not spoon feed your children, so please think about items they can self-feed successfully. Please keep this in mind when preparing lunches.

Lunches must include healthy, “real” food. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. **NO beverages, desserts or processed foods of any kind are permitted at school.** Please see the school lunch ideas on pages 16-22.

If you wish to include hot lunch items, please provide them heated and packed in a thermos.

Provided lunchboxes will be returned to Harmony on the last full day of school in May. They must be returned with all 4 parts (full container compartment, ½ container compartment, two ¼ container compartments and the lid. If any or all of these items are missing, you will be expected to replace your child’s lunchbox.

Registration/Supply Fee

Each family is responsible for providing the school \$300 to be used to purchase snacks and other consumables required for day-to-day classroom operations.

Arrival and Dismissal

Early Arrival is available between 7:30 am and 7:55 am. Please park your car in the side lot and walk your child up the ramp to the glass side door where

they will be greeted by our Early Arrival Staff. Absolutely no parking in the street or in the parking lot entryway.

Morning Montessori Class begins at 8 am. Please arrive promptly to the school and utilize carline. Pull into the parking lot staying close to the right side of the lot. A staff member will greet you, and assist your child from their car seat. Please make sure your car is in park, when the staff member opens the door. After your child is removed from the car and the door is closed, turn left and circle around to exit the parking lot.

All children arriving to school outside of the 8 am carline will need to follow late arrival procedures. Absolutely no parking in the street or in the parking lot entryway.

Late Arrivals The Montessori work cycle is an intricate part of your child’s day. Minimizing disruptions and distractions are integral in developing concentration, coordination, and independence for your student. Please try your very best to arrive prior to the end of carline. There will be no arrivals permitted after 9:00 a.m. unless approved by Ericka in advance.

If you arrive after 8:15 and your child is in the Primary class, please get your child out of their car seat, walk them up the stairs/ramp to the glass **side** door call the school phone and let them know you have arrived. Someone will come and greet you as quickly as they can.

Toddler class late arrival. Please get your child out of their car seat, walk them to the **front** door and call the school phone to let them know you have arrived. Someone will come to greet you as quickly as they can.

Dismissal Any dismissal other than the 3:00pm carline will need to be communicated to the school phone no later than the morning of. Absolutely no parking in the street or in the parking lot entryway.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Drop off and Pick up times are not appropriate times for asking your child’s guide specific questions about your child or their school day experience.

If you have information that needs to be shared before or after the school day, please include a handwritten note in your child's bag.

If you need to speak directly to your child's classroom guide, please call the school phone and leave a message. Your call will be returned at our first available moment. We want to maintain open communication and your thoughts and needs are very important to us.

Separation Anxiety

New children and children who have gotten out of routine due to school breaks or prolonged illnesses may exhibit some signs of separation anxiety when getting back into routine or during their first few weeks of attending school. Help your child by maintaining your composure; be kind, reassuring and brief, and leave as quickly as possible. Be sure to return for your child promptly at the time you are expected.

Late Pickup

It is important that all students be picked up promptly at the time listed in the annual contract, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. Guides and staff use this time for cleaning up the classrooms and preparing new lessons. Parents arriving late will incur a \$25 late fee.

Authorized Emergency Contacts

It is required by law that the school has on hand a list of people and phone numbers of all persons permitted to pick up your child from school. If, in the case of an emergency, someone other than those listed must pick up your child from school, the school will need a hand-written, signed note from you prior to or on that day. All ID's will be checked of any non-traditional pick-up's.

Children who Enroll Mid-School Year

Children joining our classrooms after the beginning of a term are accepted on a two-week trial basis. In most instances, new students enter the classroom and fit right in among their peers. Upon occasion, adding a student mid-term can be disruptive to the existing class dynamic, as the class has already begun creating a harmonious bond. In these instances, a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled.

All students enrolling after the school year begins must:

1.) attend every day of school for their first 3 weeks of enrollment.

AND

2.) maintain their regular arrival/departure procedures and schedule.

These are of critical importance.

Employee Identification Number

Our Federal Employee Identification Number is 27-1521372. Your business may request this number for childcare reimbursement plans, or you may wish to include this to claim childcare credit on your annual tax return.

SECTION III. For the Child

Outside Activity

Children are offered opportunities to explore and play outdoors daily. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray as appropriate and see that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Dress Code

NO flashing lights or clothing that makes sounds. Absolutely NO cartoon characters (Winnie the pooh, Peppa the Pig, Paw Patrol, Batman, etc.) clothing including, nap blankets, pillows, socks, etc. as these are an enormous distraction for young children.

Shoes. Children unable to tie shoes are to wear basic tennis shoes with Velcro closures. Children able to tie their own shoes may wear basic tennis shoes with tie closures.

Tops. Simple, solid colored or striped soft cotton shirts, with sleeves that are easy to push up.

Bottoms. Please assist your child in developing independence by having them dress in pants with elastic waists. Dresses and skirts may be worn but must have shorts, leggings or tights beneath.

All Students. Please provide an extra set of weather appropriate clothing to be kept at school (pants, tops, socks, shoes, underwear).

Please label all school clothing with your child's name.

Personal Property (Yours and Ours)

We ask that children NOT bring backpacks, lunch boxes, bags, toys, candy, gum, money, jewelry, etc. to school.

Young children tend to pocket small items of interest. Please return any item that belongs to the school in an envelope inside your child's tote bag for safe return to the classroom. It is unnecessary to include any identification with the item return. Remember that this behavior is normal and not a moral issue. If you feel the need to say something to your child about the item, please keep it simple and free from shame (e.g. "school things must stay at school for all children to use").

Animals

Please plan with the classroom teacher before bringing live animals to school. This policy includes insects.

Birthdays & Religion

Birthdays are very special to young children. Your child may wish to bring a book for the class in honor of their birthday. Please check with our Head of School for appropriate book ideas.

To honor our toddler aged students, you may wish to have one family member read a special short story to their classmates to commemorate their birthday. Please set this up with your child's classroom guide.

We honor our primary aged child's birthday by offering them a "Walk around the Sun"—a special concrete celebration that includes you, the child's parent. Please discuss with our Head of School what day and time will best work for you to attend. We ask that you bring a photograph of your child at birth and on each birthday thereafter. These photos will be made into a timeline and your child will share their timeline one-on-one with each of their classmates.

Montessori programs have been established in schools of the world's major religions, but the Montessori program itself does not have specific religious persuasion, nor does Harmony Day School. Religions of the world are a small part of our cultural studies especially during celebrations

of cultural holidays. Parents are encouraged to contribute celebrations of their homeland holidays in our classrooms.

Student Tote Bags

Your child will be provided with an HDMS tote bag (to be returned in May of each year) to carry to and from school each day. In this bag you will find some of the work your child is engaging in at school. You may be thinking "Some? Not all?" Yes, only some of the work can be brought home. Much of the work in our classrooms are hands-on, making use of the beautiful Montessori materials from the shelf. By no means does the paperwork in your child's bag indicate all that your child is accomplishing at school. They are accomplishing many challenging and important lessons every day.

You may wish to go through this work bag with your child and let them tell you about the work. Tell them you can see that they are working on their numbers, letters, cutting and sewing or whatever else might be in their bag. Encourage them by saying you like the way they make their letters, or by asking them to tell you what they like best about their work. Refrain from over praising ("wow! That's so good!") Or judging their work ("you didn't do that right"). The child will enjoy bringing home their work to share with you. Most of all, enjoy what you learn from your child about school and their work.

If you need to get a message to your child's classroom teaching staff, please send a note in your child's lunch bag. Please check your child's bag each day as notes from the school will be sent to you this way.

Student Nap & Rest Periods

Children will require the following items:

- A small travel pillow (13" x 18" available @ Walmart)
- A small blanket (no bulky quilts)
- A small stuff animal - no larger than 6" tall

Please NO cartoon characters of any kind. Absolutely no pacifiers.

If your child does not use any of the items listed above to nap (or rest) at home, please bring only what your child is used to using.

Nap items will be sent home each Friday to be laundered. Please send them back each Monday morning.

Community Diapers (Toddler Students)

We ask that diaper wearing toddler families provide 1 package of diapers in their child's current diaper size when turning in your child's supply items.

As diapers in any size are used and new diapers in that size are needed, they will be added to that weeks shopping list for replenishment. If your child outgrows a diaper size and you have extras at home, HDMS would gladly take the extras off your hands for you.

If your child has a medical reason that requires them to use a specific brand of diaper, please provide a written doctor note detailing this information. Once received by the school office, you will be notified when your child's personal diapers are low at Harmony so that you may purchase and send another package for use by your child only.

Diaper wipes and Aquaphor Healing Ointment are also shared among the toddler community and added to the weekly shopping list as needed for replenishment.

Medications & Illness

While attendance is important, if your child is sick, please keep him/her at home. A bad cough, excessively runny nose, sore throat, fever, or a contagious illness are all good reasons for a child to stay home. Children with a temperature *must stay home a full 24 hours after the fever breaks*. Children taking antibiotics *must stay home for a full 24 hours after beginning medication*.

If possible, please schedule medication doses so they can be administered outside of class times. If medication must be taken at school, there are guidelines for dispensing the medication that must be followed. A signed note must accompany the medication asking the school to administer. If the medication is liquid, please include a dosing spoon. The medication container itself must contain the following information—time to be taken, the dosage information, refrigeration requirements, and the child's name.

If a child has any of the following, she/he **must** be kept home from school:

- An oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head Lice
- Pin Worms
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Showing signs of contagious infection, i.e. green nose, runny eyes, rattling cough, etc.

Communicable diseases like chicken pox, influenza, strep throat, scarlet fever, conjunctivitis, head lice, etc. must be reported to the school immediately.

Sunscreen

Children will go outdoors most days - primary students, every day. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray to your child before school.

Attendance

Education and attendance go together. For a child to grow and thrive in a Montessori program and excel in all areas, as well as academics, attendance is essential.

The school day and school functions should take priority over other activities. Vacations should, whenever possible, be planned when school is on break. In the event of an absence, please call or text the school (859.519.6759).

Absences, Late Arrivals & Early Pick Ups

Please text or call the school office at (859) 519-6759 to report your child absent. When leaving a message, please include the date of the absence, your child's name, and the reason for the absence.

All children arriving or leaving school outside of the 8 am and 3:00 pm carline will need to report to the school office to be signed in/out by a parent.

For afternoon carline, please do not start lining up in the parking lot until at least 2:45. This is a shared space and we want to be courteous to our neighbors.

School Security

Harmony Day School is in lockdown during the school day. The side entrance will be open for

carline at 8 am and 3:00 pm dismissals. Parents arriving outside of these times, will need to text the school, park in the school lot and walk their child up the stairs to the side entrance where a staff member will greet you and ensure your child gets to class.

In Case of an Emergency

Contacting the School. If you have a situation in which you need to reach the school, simply call, or text the school at (859-519 - 6759) and leave a message. Messages will be checked throughout the school day and during afterschool hours. However, if you have a family emergency requiring the early retrieval of your child from school, please come to the school immediately (do NOT wait for a returned phone call), park in the school lot and walk to the side entrance to the school. A staff member will assist your child in preparing to leave school. In the event of a **tornado**, students will remain in classrooms where they will be positioned according to the instructions provided by the Fayette County Fire Marshal. Children and guides will remain there until the threat of danger has passed.

In the event of an **earthquake**, students will be positioned under classroom tables until the threat of danger has passed.

In the event there is need of a **lockdown**, students will remain at school with staff until such time that the threat of danger has passed. In the event, the school building should need to be evacuated due to:

- **Fire:** Students will be led from the school in a calm and safe manner, through the school playground to the backside of the Bluegrass GreenSource building.
- Students and guides will remain there until such time that the building is deemed safe for us to return and classes resume.
- **Hazardous Materials** - Students will be transported by staff across our parking lot to Bluegrass GreenSource – a “safe” place. Parents should plan to pick up their child at this location unless notified of another location.

By signing below, I am stating that I have read and agree to all information and policies enclosed in this parent handbook.

Signature of Parent 1

Date

Signature of Parent 2

Date

OFF SITE SHELTER in PLACE PROCEDURE

Parents, in the event for the need for Harmony Day Montessori to evacuate our classrooms please see the information below:

1. Children will be taken to across the side parking lot to Bluegrass GreenSource
2. Parents will be informed about the evacuation.
3. Parents will be asked to come to pick up their child/children from Bluegrass GreenSource
4. If parent is not able to pick up their child/ren they will send a designated person to do the pick-up

REUNIFICATION FORM for PARENTS for EMERGENCY PICK UP

If evacuation is necessary for Harmony Day Montessori School, we will relocate the children to Bluegrass GreenSource located at 835 National Avenue, Lexington, KY 40502.

Please designate a backup person to pick up your child/children if you cannot come. This person will need to present I.D. at the time of pickup if they are not already known to the staff.

I understand that the pickup location is 835 National Avenue. If I am unable to personally handle pick up, I designate the following person (s) to pick up my child.

Name of Person(s) to pick up my child

Parent Signature

Date

2022-2023

SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- Signed and dated annual contract.
- A copy of your child's birth certificate
- A copy of your child's insurance card
- Signed last page of the Parent Handbook.
- Tuition Payment (as outlined in Appendix I of the school contract, minus \$300 deposit)
- Most up-to-date immunization records – see page 15 (or a doctor provided exemption for religious reasons)
- \$300 non-refundable deposit (used to purchase snacks and other consumables required by the school)

ALL STUDENTS REQUIRE

PLEASE label all items.

- Rain Boots
- Raincoat
- Winter hat
- Winter mittens
- Slip-on slippers (see page 12)
- A full change of clothing, labeled and packed inside a large ziplock – see page 6 for dress code.

please provide the following items (if used at home – see page 17 for details).

- A warm, SMALL blanket (no sleeping bags)
- A SMALL, travel size pillow inside a pillowcase
- A SMALL lovey - some examples include a stuffed animal or tag toy to hold during nap.
- Absolutely no pacifiers

DIAPERED TODDLERS WILL REQUIRE: (toilet trained toddlers are exempt)

- 1 pkg. diaper wipes
- 1 pkg. diapers in your child's size, ABSOLUTELY NO PULL UPS (fully toilet trained children are exempt)

EXAMPLES of SUITABLE SLIPPERS

The essential components:

- Easy slip-on style
- Simple Velcro closure
- A thick rubber sole
- NO cartoon characters.



EXAMPLES of SUITABLE NAP ITEMS

SMALL Travel Pillow

with pillowcase

SMALL, warm blanket

no bulky quilts

NO sleeping bags



Small lovey, IF used at home
Less than 6' in any

direction



HEALTHY LUNCH IDEAS

Packing Lunch Is Empowering for Children

No, it's not passing the buck or even punishment – you'll be surprised to see that your children may even take some joy in being in charge of their own lunch. Allowing them to pack their own lunch boxes is empowering. They might not love doing it every single day, but they can be in charge of a significant part of their diet, which goes a long way towards a healthy relationship with food and cooking, even when they make less-than-optimal choices.

And, yes, getting your child to pack their own lunch frees you of the daily task. It's okay to reap benefits while teaching your child a life lesson. It's smart, even.

The Keys to Help Children Pack Their Lunch

- Keep the pantry stocked with healthy staples.
- Keep school lunch in mind when you make dinner because leftovers are lunch box gold.
- Keep a posted list of ideas available for kids to choose from.

HARMONY's HEALTHY LUNCHES

Here are some ideas of how our parents pack lunch for their child. Notice how they stick to this formula – PROTEIN + VEGETABLE + FRUIT. Lunches should be beautiful with lots of vibrant color. Please do NOT include drinks or dessert items.

FRUIT:

Strawberries

bananas

Peaches (fresh or dole makes a great option in a resealable plastic container)

Applesauce (homemade pear/apple and freeze in ice cube trays)

Apples

Mandarin oranges (dole makes a great option in a resealable plastic container, so we eat on it a few times during the week)

Yogurt

Grapes

Cherries

Oranges (cuties)

Trail Mix (quick homemade): almonds, raisins, dried cherries, walnuts, granola

Watermelon slices

Pineapple chunks

VEGGIES:

Peas (we buy the small frozen birds eye, microwave, and use several times during the week)

Broccoli (steam fresh broccoli and use several times during the week)

Carrots

Avocado

Guacamole (homemade)

Cucumbers (our kids seem to like the mini cukes - we peel and slice into rounds)



Zucchini sticks

Orange or red pepper sticks

Edamame (I haven't tried this yet but this may be a great idea. Kroger sells it frozen and already shelled)

MAINS:

Hummus with veggies sticks (real vegetables)

Sandwiches: we love ham and cheese, hummus, almond butter + honey

Tuna salad and simple wheat crackers (triscuits or similar)

Veggie soup (homemade, batched and frozen)

Pasta (they love ditalini) + red sauce and peas mixed in (sent in thermos)

Meatballs (homemade, batched and frozen)

Dal (homemade, batched and frozen. We use a simple kid friendly recipe)

Red beans and rice (homemade, batched and frozen)

Rice and lentil soup (currently they love the progresso lentil but I am going to do a homemade version soon)

Pasta salad (can be sent cold. We mix pasta, Italian seasoning, peas, ham bits, tiny veggie pieces)

Tortillas with refried beans, cheese, avocado



Leftovers are lunch box GOLD.

- Fall stew with sausage, squash and parsnips, plus a clementine
- Spinach and artichoke baked chicken, sweet potatoes and either a banana or pineapple chunks
- Costco's Normandy vegetable blend, chicken sausages plus a serving of fresh fruit
- Leftover pulled pork, frozen mango chunks (available at Costco),
- Taco meat, grape tomatoes and melon
- Hard boiled eggs, Steamer bags of peas, carrots, plums
- Spaghetti Squash with meat, plus fresh fruit
- Shredded Chicken, with peas or carrots plus fresh fruit
- Stew meat with carrots and potatoes, a banana
- Leftover chili, carrot or pees, fresh fruit
- Grilled hamburger cut into manageable pieces, cauliflower (rice) with hummus, fresh fruit
- Pork chops, green beans, fresh fruit (apple)
- Black beans, pepper strips and hummus and fresh fruit (strawberries)
- Sandwich on sprouted grain bread - almond butter and fruit spread or cheese, veggie sticks and a piece of fresh fruit
- Some type of hummus (chick pea, beet, carrot, etc) with freeze dried veggie chips or fresh veggies and a piece of fruit
- Pasta with broccoli and chicken and a piece of fresh fruit
- Veggie soup with ham, sausage or ground beef and a piece of fresh fruit
- Veggie burgers and a bananas
- Chicken dishes made with veggies, a piece of fresh fruit



TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

Prepare proteins on the weekend –

grill/bake or broil meats – think chicken breast, salmon and other fish, shrimp, pork chops, sausages, meatballs, meatloaf, hamburger patties (no bun) with (or without) cheese.

When thinking vegetables and fruits, think “fresh is always best, frozen is a good backup when you don’t have a chance to get to the grocers for fresh. Avoid canned (nutrients are lost in the canning process and they contain A LOT of sodium)

Stock up on fresh and frozen vegetables

Stock up on fresh and frozen fruits

Nut Butter & Whatever Sandwich

With the right ingredients on hand, your kid can change it up for some early kitchen experimentation. Some love making **almond butter**, [coconut butter](#), and **banana sandwich**. It's a classic for a reason. (Seed butter works, too, if your kid attends a nut-free school.)

Pair with: *Sliced apple, a cheese stick*



Leftover Lunch

Most of us cook chicken, salmon, and/or pasta at least once a week. In fact, these three mains may even cover three weeknight meals, and they each make for a great school lunch. Kids can pack **leftover chicken with a side of BBQ sauce** or ketchup, raw veggies, fruit, and yogurt for a super-healthy and totally kid-friendly meal (pictured). **Leftover salmon** easily turns into a salmon salad sandwich, and **leftover pasta** needs nothing more than to be packed and enjoyed again.



Lunch in a Bowl

If you've made **rice, quinoa, soba noodles, orzo**, or any other grain the night before, your child can easily turn the leftovers into a mouthwatering and super-healthy lunch bowl.

We love **Mexican quinoa bowls with rinsed canned black beans, thawed frozen corn, chopped red pepper, and cilantro**. It's probably a favorite because of the flavor, but it may also have something to do with the fact that a quick drizzle of olive oil and a few lime wedges make the easiest dressing ever.



Made @ Home Lunchables

Make it fun: If your child likes being in the kitchen, hand over a small, round cookie cutter that's about the same size as the crackers you use. They can use it to cut the **cheese** and **ham** to easily stack just like store-bought Lunch. Pack with cucumber rounds, they work as well as crackers and are a healthier option.



Breakfast for Lunch

Breakfast for dinner gets all the glory, but who doesn't love a second breakfast at lunchtime? Pack the freezer with your favorite whole grain **waffles**, **pancakes**, or **French toast** or – even better – homemade leftovers from a double batch that you make on the weekend, and all your child does is toast for a breakfast sandwich of champions.



Some kids like to sandwich **cream cheese** and **ham** between **leftover waffles**, **pancakes** or **French toast**. Sometimes you can even cut waffles or French toast into sticks and mix Greek yogurt and maple syrup or honey to pack on the side as a dip. Then, for protein, grab a hard boiled egg.

Don't ditch the veggies: Fruit is an obvious accompaniment, but don't forget to have them pack veggies too. We are going for well-rounded lunches, after all!

The Cheese Plate

It may sound strange – maybe even a little bit fancy – but a cheese plate is nothing more than a deconstructed cheese sandwich, and it certainly doesn't have to be made using fancy cheese.

Sliced baguette, **cubed cheddar** (which you may be able to find at the market already cut), **hunky slices of Pepper Jack** or whatever other cheese your kid likes, some grapes, and dried fruit make an easy-to-pack, protein-rich lunch that any cheese-loving kid will happily make for their midday meal.



Add a vegetable – anything will do – and this is a legitimately well-rounded meal.

Food on a Stick - chicken satays, beef skewers, or sausage kebabs, packed on lunchbox-sized sticks for kids. Because everything is more fun on a stick. (primary room appropriate)

- **Get a recipe:** Yellow Chicken with Broccoli and Peanut Sauce at Hogwash, my blog. (Obviously, leave the peanut sauce off if packing a nut-free lunch or if your kid is in a peanut-free classroom.) Also, Grilled Smoked Sausage Skewers.

- **Pack with:** sliced cucumbers, sliced mango

Quesadillas - favorites among children for a reason – and contrary to our biases, they don't need to be piping hot to be delicious.

- **Get a recipe:** How To Make the Best Cheesy Quesadillas, The Avocado
- **Pack with:** Avocado slices or guacamole, jicama sticks, pineapple chunks and pumpkin seeds.



Spring Rolls - Rice paper wrappers or large lettuce leaves make great rolled-up meals that are fun to eat. Fill them with tofu, pork, or shrimp; try our rainbow rolls; or let your kids branch out using their own ideas.

- **Get a recipe:** Rainbow Vegetable Spring Rolls
- **Pack with:** Cubed meat or cheese, sliced red bell peppers, berries



Deli Meat Roll-Ups - Think outside the bun! Rolling sliced deli turkey, ham, or roast beef (look for the natural meats in the deli meat section) around cheese sticks, cream cheese, and even greens can change the way your kiddos think about lunch meat.

- **Pack with:** Whole-wheat pretzels, celery (optional sunflower butter filling), cinnamon-sprinkled apple slices.



Vegetable Sushi or Onigiri - using leftover rice and cooked fish from a previous meal, packing sushi for the family can be as easy as making sandwiches – especially if your child likes to help.

- **Get a recipe:** Salmon and Black Sesame Onigiri (Japanese Rice Balls), Summer Project: Make Vegetable Maki Sushi with Kids!
- **Pack with:** Sushi condiments, edamame, raspberries



Cold Noodle Salads - think soba with black sesame seeds, or plain udon.

- **Get a recipe:** Soba Noodles with Wilted Bok Choy, Miso-Roasted Asparagus Soba Noodle Salad, Greek Chicken Pasta with Olives and Feta
- **Pack with:** Cubed chicken or fish, snap peas, clementine, raisins.



Hummus and Pita Plate - Most children love hummus. Why not make it the star of the show?

- **Get a recipe:** How to Make Hummus from Scratch
- **Pack with:** Salami, olives, carrots, baby tomatoes, and grapes. (Note that dipping is easier and less messy if you pack the hummus in a separate container.)



Quinoa Salad - Mix the meats, cheeses, and veggies your kids like into plain quinoa and dress lightly with a basic vinaigrette.

- **Get a recipe:** How to Cook Fluffy, Tasty Quinoa
- **Pack with:** Tomato/mozzarella/basil lollipops, popcorn, pear slices



Breakfast for Lunch - make extra food when you have time for a nice breakfast on the weekend, and save the leftovers for lunches –think hard-boiled eggs, leftover pancakes, and leftover sausages.

- **Get a recipe:** How To Hard-Boil an Egg, How To Make 2-Ingredient Banana Pancakes, The Best Pancake Recipe: Lofty Buttermilk Pancakes
- **Pack with:** Sliced strawberries, squeezable Greek yogurt (frozen to double as an ice pack and thaw in time for lunch), orange slices and veggie sticks



Leftover Picnic Lunch - if you'd eat it for lunch on the weekend, why not pack it in a lunch box? Because nothing beats a cold chicken leg on a Monday.

- **Get a recipe:** Grilled Chicken Legs with Dijon & White Wine Glaze
- **Pack with:** Potato salad or coleslaw, watermelon, broccoli with yogurt ranch dip

