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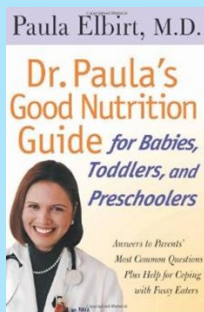
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Toddler Lunch Ideas

When preparing for school and making toddler lunches, as a parent I struggle between finding fun yet healthy foods to pack. I have been most successful with packing foods that my little one enjoys and is easily able to eat without help. For better results, save the new stuff to try at home with you and the family. To portion meals appropriately, you should keep portions small, approximately the size of two walnuts. You don't want your toddler feeling like they are displeasing you if they don't finish their plate.



A quick and easy resource I frequently use the online Parents magazine, at www.parents.com. You can sign-up for free and they will send you weekly emails. Parents magazine provides healthy and different fun lunch ideas that anyone can use. Another excellent resource is "Dr. Paula's Good Nutrition Guide for Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers" by Paula Elbirt. This book gives great parent advice for common feeding questions and help coping with fussy eaters.

Lunch Ideas:

- ◇ Tomato soup and cheese quesadillas (use cookie cutters to cut into fun shapes) with cut watermelon
- ◇ Spinach and cheese (or just cheese) tortellini, with peas and parmesan cheese and cut grapes
- ◇ Rolled lunch meat cut into bite sizes, cheese stick or string cheese and applesauce
- ◇ Veggies and dip (try salad dressing or hummus), blueberries and crackers
- ◇ Lentils with rice and cheese, pears and milk



Helpful Tips When Preparing Lunches:

- ◇ **Prepare ahead of time.** The more you can do the night before, the easier it is in the morning.
- ◇ **Allow for variety.** Kids get bored having the same thing day after day.
- ◇ **Make it easy to eat.** Make meals easy for the little ones to eat on their own.
- ◇ **Keep it simple.** Kids will enjoy foods that are familiar to them.





The Scoop on Cutting

Cutting with scissors is a pre-writing skill that promotes hand separation and strengthens your child's hand muscles in preparation for higher level fine motor tasks. It also helps to develop a mature pencil grasp and pencil control for handwriting.

Correct scissor grasp:

The thumb goes through the top hole and the middle finger through the bottom hole, with the index finger resting on the outside of the scissors. This scissor hold enables the tripod fingers (index, middle, and ring) to strengthen and work together. Holding the index finger along the outside of the scissors also allows for greater control when maneuvering the scissors.



Progression of cutting with scissors:

- Snipping (opening and closing the blades without advancing forward on the paper)
- Lines (cutting along a wide line beginning with short lines and increasing up to 6 inches)
- Circles
- Simple shapes
- Curves
- Complex shapes

Helpful Hint

It is easier to cut index cards, card stock, or construction paper than regular paper!



Activities to help your child master cutting with scissors:

Snipping: licorice, straws, rolled playdough or putty, string cheese, french fries

Straight lines: paper chain link, paper lantern, simple decorations, coupons

Circles and Spirals: spider cut-out, caterpillar cut-out, spiral snakes

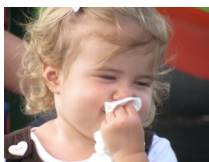
Simple shapes: house (square and triangle), rocket (square, triangle, rectangles), Christmas tree or fir tree (triangles stacked)

Complex shapes: hearts, stars, magazine pictures

Fun projects: greeting cards, collages, snowflakes, paper airplanes, paper chains

Cutting templates: <http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/support-files/ot-mom-free-cutting-template.pdf>

Ask The OT: How do I teach my child to blow his nose?



With cold and flu season upon us, parents often ask how to teach nose blowing. Most children learn to blow their nose between 2-½ years and 5 years of age. Blowing your nose involves sensory input, fine motor skills, and oral motor skills. A child needs to be able to tolerate the sensation and scent of the tissue, bring their hands together and apply pressure at their nose, keep their lips closed while blowing through the nose, and perform a multi-step task.

Teach your child why nose blowing is important. As with other self-care tasks, children will practice more if they feel a sense of pride in learning the task.

Begin by having your child blow air out of their mouth. Hold a tissue, bubble, cotton ball, or feather near your child's mouth to show them how blowing air out makes these items move. You can also practice blowing whistles or blowing out candles.

Once your child understands blowing out of their mouth, begin to practice blowing out of their nose. Have your child close their mouth and blow lightly, not forcefully, through the nose. They can cover their mouth with their hand at first to help learn this skill. Practice by blowing a tissue, bubble, cotton ball, or feather with the nose. Your child may enjoy blowing air onto a mirror and watch it fog up.

Now that your child is able to intentionally blow out of their nose, hold a tissue on their nose and show them how to block one nostril while blowing through the other. Let your child practice holding the tissue on their nose and blowing. Don't forget to teach them to throw the dirty tissue out and to wash their hands.

