

Guide to Feeding (Ages 4-5): Portion Sizes and Meal Planning

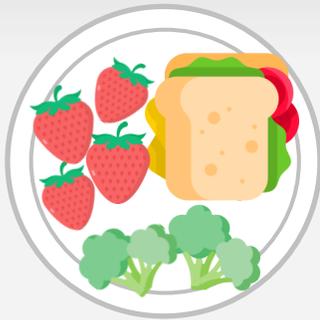
It is normal to feel stressed when your preschooler eats less than you might expect them to. Your child may want certain foods more than others. Sometimes they will avoid certain foods all together. Children have smaller stomachs than adults - your child may eat a lot one day and then very little the next. **You know your child best! Use this guide for helpful tips for feeding your child.**

What can affect how much my child eats?

Many things can affect your child's appetite, including:

- How active they are
- How much they ate earlier in the day
- How close their last meal, snack, or drink was
- Stress related to meal times
- Gastrointestinal (GI)/stomach issues or can't poop
- Screen time during meal times

Feeding your preschooler: Your role vs. your child's role



How much **you think** your child needs to eat



How much your child **knows they need to eat**

As the parent, you are responsible for deciding:



What your child will eat



When your child will eat



Where your child will eat

At mealtime, your child is responsible for deciding:



How much to eat

Helpful tips



Make sure there is always one food item on the menu that your child likes to eat. Do not make another meal if your child refuses to eat what is served. Your child will get another eating opportunity at the next snack/meal time.

Recommended Food Groups and Portion Sizes

Food group	Total servings (per day)	Each portion size would be:
Milk/Dairy	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/4 cup milk or yogurt • 4-8 cubes of cheese or 1 slice of cheese
Protein	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 tablespoons beef, pork, poultry, or fish • 4-5 tablespoons beans or chopped nuts • 1 small egg
Grains	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice of bread • 1/2 bagel or bun • 1/2 cup rice, pasta, cooked cereal, or ready-to-eat cereal
Veggies	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/4 - 1/2 cup cooked, canned, or fresh chopped veggies
Fruits	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 - 1 small fruit or 1/2 cup of berries • 1/4 - 1/2 cup cooked, canned, or fresh chopped fruit
Fats and Oils	3	1 teaspoon added butter or oil.
Water	Offer water at meals and throughout the day. Aim for 5 cups each day.	

Treat every meal or snack as an “eating opportunity” every 3-4 hours.

A good length of time for meals is no more than 30-40 minutes. For snacks, 20-30 minutes.

Here is a sample menu!



Breakfast: 3/4 cup oatmeal, 1/4 cup raisins, 3/4 cup 1% milk.

Morning snack: 1/2 peanut butter and jelly sandwich: 1 slice whole wheat bread, 1 tablespoon peanut butter, 1 teaspoon jelly, 1 mandarin orange, 3/4 cup water.

Lunch: 1 slice of cheese, 1/2 cup steamed carrots, 1 small banana, 1/2 cup 1% milk, 1/2 cup water.

Afternoon snack: 3/4 cup yogurt, 1/4 granola, 1/4 cup strawberries, 1/2 cup water.

Dinner: 1/4 cup of chicken, 2 tablespoons green beans, 1/4 cup mashed potatoes, 1 small whole grain dinner roll, 1 teaspoon butter, 3/4 cup 1% milk, 1/2 cup water.

Evening snack: 1/2 cup applesauce, 5 whole grain crackers, 1 small egg, 1/2 cup water.