

The NIU Literacy Clinic offers this informational flyer for you and your family to read and discuss things that you already know about foods and to learn new information.

When we find a new source for good information we will share it with you in this banner.

New Web Sites:

www.amazingmoms.com

www.nutrition.about.com

Missing one of "The Bite" releases? You can visit www.niu.edu and click on the A-Z index, select Literacy Clinic and then select Parents. You may then select the issue of The Bite that you are missing or want to print additional copies.

Six items to put in a lunch box

- **Vegetables**
- **Fresh Fruit**
- **Cheese or Yogurt**
- **Protein (lean slice of meat, hard-boiled egg, or beans)**
- **Starch (bread, roll, pita or flat bread, fruit bread or crackers)**
- **Water**



The Bite

A weekly information sheet from the NIU Literacy Clinic

Adventures in eating.....healthy lunch boxes for children

By About.com

Good nutrition is essential for your child to have a great day at school. Packing a sack lunch is one way to ensure that your child will have a nutritious mid-day meal, and even a healthy snack or two. The right lunch bag and accessories will allow you to pack a variety of healthy foods that are still tasty enough to please even the pickiest eaters.

LUNCH BAG TECH

Brown paper bags may be convenient and inexpensive, but they rip easily and don't help keep cold foods cold or hot foods hot. They are fine for peanut butter and jelly, but not for much else.

Insulated lunch bags are the best choice for school lunches. Some insulated lunch bags are equipped with freezer packs; you can also buy freezer packs separately. There are bags with two or more compartments, so foods and beverages can be kept separate. Some look more like a trendy purse or tote bag, and there are plenty of novelty bags to please any boy or girl.

Pick up a few plastic containers in smaller sizes and sandwich bags. Too, and you'll be prepared to offer your child a variety of hot and cold healthy foods.

HOW TO MAKE THE ADVENTURE A SUCCESS

By Kit Bennett

Think beyond the sandwich

- **Beef and veggie stew with a hard roll**
- **Chicken noodle soup and whole grain crackers**
- **Lasagna with a salad and bread**
- **Chicken casserole with carrots and veggie dip**
- **Chili with whole grain crackers or bread**
- **Left over stir-fry or sautéed veggies**

Before you load a hot food into an insulated jar, make sure that you have heated it up to 140 degrees.

Some cold lunch ideas include:

- **Tuna sandwich wrap**
- **Egg salad on whole grain bread**
- **Peanut butter, cashew or almond butter with 100% fruit spread on whole grain bread**
- **Sliced turkey, lean roast beef, or chicken from the deli with light mayonnaise, mustard and a slice of cheese**

Questions? Contact us at:

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Here are some ideas to incorporate into those lunch menus that will make the experience a success.

1. **Plan Ahead** – It is tempting to revert to packaged junk food or boring lunches when you're short on time. Planning ahead will help you feel better about what your children are eating.
2. **Involve the Kids** – Children are more likely to eat what they're prepared. Discuss a lunch menu; try new recipes and fun ideas. Add these items to the grocery list.
3. **Get Organized** – Once the menu items are purchased spend some time on early preparation; grate cheese, wash fruits and veggies, prepare snack mixes, and dips, cut grapes into clusters, place juice boxes in the freezer, etc. This will take about an hour out of your weekend, but will save so much time during the week!
4. **Storage Issues** – Who has the time in the morning to rush around looking for plastic containers, not to mention a matching lid? Before you begin, treat yourself to a new set of plastic lunch containers. Store them where the kids can reach, with zip-top bags, lunch bags, thermoses, wood craft sticks for spreading, plastic spoons, forks, napkins and straws. Every so often check to see if it is time to re-stock or even better ask the kids.
5. **EWV, Gross mom!** – Keep hot foods hot, cold foods cold and sandwiches from getting soggy. Purchase and use thermoses for their intended purpose. Freeze juice pouches and boxes, they'll keep things cold. Save or purchase ketchup, mayonnaise and mustard pouches to add to a sandwich at school (too hard for little ones).

And finally --- Make lunch interesting by cutting sandwich bread into shapes, add an interesting sticker to seal a bag, check out your party supply store for discontinued packs of napkins on sale...select favorite characters, themes and holidays, add a note or message to surprise your child at lunch to say....thinking of you!

Most of all --- ***Enjoy the lunch adventure with your child!***