

Well, the school year has started and so have the afternoon snacks. The transition from a busy day at school to coming home can be a difficult time for children; they are usually tired, hungry and maybe even overwhelmed. You can ease the transition with a healthy snack and a simple routine such as reading a book together.

Also, having your child make his or her own snack is a great routine that can be fun for your child and will give you a few extra minutes to get caught up around the house. However, depending upon the age and independence of your child you might have to do a little preliminary preparation. See below for some simple ideas for after school snacks your child can make with little or no assistance.

Another great idea is to have your child help make dinner, but don't forget to take advantage of learning opportunities such as adding and subtracting measurements; contemplating how liquids take the shape of the container they are in; comparing temperatures, textures, colors, tastes and smells; reading and following recipes, etc.

### **Quick & Easy Snack Ideas:**

- SMOOTHIES – In a blender combine frozen fruit and apple juice.
- HARD-BOILED EGGS – Prepare in large batches and for easier peeling submerge the eggs in ice water as soon as they are done boiling (fresh eggs will also be easier to peel).
- CRACKERS & CHEESE – Buy sliced cheese or cut into bite size pieces ahead of time.
- CHEESE QUESADILLAS – If you have already shredded the cheese your child should easily be able to make this alone. Just teach them to sprinkle cheese on half a tortilla, fold it in half and microwave or toast on a tray in a toaster oven.
- FRESH FRUIT – Especially fruit that does not need cutting such as bananas, apples, pears and nectarines. Keeping a bowl of rinsed fresh fruit on the table or counter is a great way to make healthy snacking easy and accessible for your child.
- POPSICLES – Have your child help make large batches with paper cups and Popsicle sticks (found in craft stores). Pour fruit juice, applesauce, chocolate milk or yogurt into a small paper cup no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. Freeze for about an hour and then put the stick in the middle. Freeze completely then peel off the paper cup.
- PITA BREAD PIZZA – Spread spaghetti sauce on a whole pita, sprinkle shredded cheese on top and microwave or cook in a toaster oven (a bagel or English muffin will work for a crust too).
- VEGGIE STICKS & DRESSING – Just keep bags of cleaned and cut fresh veggies in the fridge and your child can add the dressing.

· **SPROUTS** – These are very easy to grow at home and your child will learn a lot from growing their own food. There are inexpensive kits at most health food stores.

· **BURRITOS/WRAPS** – Roll-up tortillas with any filling your child likes and freeze large batches. When your child comes home from school they can just take one from the freezer and microwave it.