

# P.A.C.K.

PACK ASSORTED COLORS FOR KIDS!



## Join the fun!

P.A.C.K. is all about packing more colorful fruits and veggies into children's diets. If you pack a snack or lunch for your child, pack a fruit or vegetable based on the color of the day!

March 21

MONDAY is ...

Pack PURPLE/BLUE Day



A child-friendly way to "pack purple" is with 100% grape juice made with Concord grapes, snack-sized raisins, or blueberries (fresh, dried, or frozen).



March 22

TUESDAY is ...

Pack WHITE/TAN/BROWN Day



Bananas, white peaches or even cauliflower with dressing makes a nice choice.



March 23

WEDNESDAY is ...

Pack RED Day



Strawberries are a favorite, and other tasty options are red pepper slices, tomato wedges, or a delicious red apple.



March 24

THURSDAY is ...

Pack YELLOW/ORANGE Day



Baby carrots are easy to pack and so are dried apricots or orange segments.



March 25

FRIDAY is ...

Pack GREEN Day



Go green with celery sticks, broccoli florets, or a crisp green apple.



For children who buy lunch, be sure to encourage them to include a fruit and vegetable in their meal.

For more fun, have your child wear something to match the color of the day!

For more information visit:  
[www.FruitAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org](http://www.FruitAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org)



# Children in the Kitchen



Children usually love to help in the kitchen. Even young children can help with many tasks. One of the best parts about cooking with children is that they are more likely to try foods they helped to make. The next time you prepare a healthy meal, let children help based on the tasks they can safely do.

## Simple Tasks

- Washing vegetables and fruits
- Washing and ripping lettuce or other greens
- Tearing bread into smaller pieces
- Spreading butters, jams, or other spreads onto foods
- Pouring liquids into batter (you measure first)
- Mixing batter, dips, or other dry and wet foods together
- Adding dried seasonings to dishes (you measure first)
- Mashing soft fruits and vegetables
- Placing things in the trash, either after cooking or after a meal
- Using cookie cutters

Have an extra bowl and kitchen tools for children to play with while you cook. Talk about what you are doing to teach them new words and let them smell and taste foods.

## More Complex Tasks

- Scooping out vegetables seeds or pits
- Kneading dough
- Peeling vegetables and fruits
- Cutting soft foods with a child-safe knife
- Squeezing oranges, lemons, and limes to make juices
- Cracking eggs
- Beating eggs with an egg beater
- Measuring dry ingredients
- Serving foods
- Help with menu planning

Getting children in the kitchen can lead to confidence in cooking skills, a want to cook meals at home, and more healthy choices.

### TIP

**Be patient. Letting children help will take longer and make more of a mess while they're learning.**

# The Importance of Family Meals



No matter how busy life may get, it's important to prioritize a family meal even if it's one a week or month.

Did you know that experts have found that children and adolescents who eat regularly with their families are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains? Routine family meals also help with better grades in middle and high school, less substance use and depression in adolescents, and healthier weight gain in children.

## TIP

Discover healthy recipes for your family from [CookingMatters.org/recipes](https://CookingMatters.org/recipes) and [MaineSNAP-Ed.org/cook/recipe](https://MaineSNAP-Ed.org/cook/recipe)

## Tips to Get Started

- Choose a time when everyone can enjoy at least one meal together—it may be breakfast, lunch, or dinner.
- As the parent/caregiver, you should decide what time meals are served and what the food choices are. Children can then decide what and how much to eat of what is offered.
- Include your children in preparing the meal. Studies show that children who get involved in the kitchen will eat healthier and feel happier.
- Gather around the table for a meal without phones, tablets or the television.
- Keep the conversation positive. Check out [TheFamilyDinnerProject.org](https://TheFamilyDinnerProject.org) for conversation starters and ideas.
- Limit eating and drinking unhealthy snacks between meals.
- Model the habits you want your children to have such as eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.