



Fort Walton Beach, FL

FAMILY HANDBOOK

**103 First Street S.E.
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
Phone (850) 243-0431
preschool@fwbfumc.org**

We welcome each of you to our school family. It is truly our mission to provide a safe, nurturing environment in which your child can grow, excel and become all God would have him/her to be.

The office door is always open,
so please come on in to talk at any time.

Denise Severson, Director
Revised 8/10/2022

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A solid spiritual and academic foundation is important for a child's success. At FUMS we provide the foundation by having a Bible lesson, teaching phonetic approach, Mathematics, Science, History, and Writing. We also provide Art and Music and in Kindergarten PE. Bible instruction and Christian values are incorporated into our daily teaching, along with enough fun to make learning enjoyable and to increase social skills.

Philosophy & Mission Statement

First United Methodist School commits to educational excellence in conjunction with Biblical values. Our philosophy is based on the belief that learning is fun and is achieved through exposure, discovery and creativity.

Our curriculum is geared to the needs, abilities, and everyday tasks of the young child; intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Our goal is that each child develops a love for God, a greater understanding of His attributes as He develops faith in them, and maximal growth in independence, self-esteem, and academic skills.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students

First United Methodist School admits student of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to student at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of it educational policies, admissions, policies, and other school-administered programs.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST SCHOOL

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to our program! This handbook has been approved by the School Board, and we hope it helps you understand the FUMS ministry. We ask that parents/guardians read and follow the operating procedures in this handbook and any supplemental notes and newsletters we send you.

School Board Members

Rev. Gllian Walters, Pastor
Denise A Severson, Director
Kari Malone, Toni Castellanos, Janie DeWitt Staff Members
Chandler Robbins, Finance Rep.
Bob Whitney, Linda Whitney, Patsy Hunter FUMC members
Bryce Jetter, Ryan Goodman FUMS Parents
Cathy Wyant, Children's Minister
Pam Antill, Office Administrator

Responsibilities include:

- * Attendance at 2 meetings per year.
- * Oversee School operating budget (staff salary / student tuition)
- * Review/approval of policies, procedures, physical space, staffing/personnel, programming plans, major decisions
- * Act as a sounding board for director and staff
- * Interviewing and hiring New Director

ABSENCES

Please notify the school on the Brightwheel App if your child will be absent. You will be contacted by phone the 2nd consecutive day your child is absent. VPK refer to VPK Attendance Policy Document for detailed description.

School Readiness Absences:

Excused Absence (only 3 per month)

Authorized Absence ; Requires written documentation • Acceptable documentation to support extraordinary circumstances:
• Hospitalization of the child or parent (i.e., doctor's note, hospital admission) • Illness requiring home stay(doctor's note) • Death in the immediate family (i.e., obituary, death certificate, parent statement) • Court-ordered visitation (i.e. court order) • Unforeseen documented military deployment or exercise of parent(s) (i.e., military orders of deployment, reserve duty) • Vacation or recreation time NOT included in "extraordinary circumstances"

ARRIVAL

- * Children in Kindergarten, VPK and 3"s classes will be dropped off by car line each morning.
- * Wee School Children will be dropped off at their classroom door.
- * Arrive on time, morning activities are some of the most important of the day.
- * School doors open at 8:20 for Kindergarten and VPK and 8:50 for 3 year old's and Wee School.

ART CLASS

Art classes focus on designing, creating and exploring. Children benefit from opportunities to work with different types of paint and paper, drawings, materials, and putting things together. The children are exposed to a wide variety of visual arts in order to express their ideas. Children learn to draw and draw to learn. All classes 2 years to VPK will have Art once a week.

ASSESSMENTS

Teachers take anecdotally notes of children during the school day. These notes are transferred to the Child's Portfolio. VPK is required by state to complete VPK Assessment 3x a year, in September, then in January and during the last 30 day of school. Kindergarten will be taking the NWEA MAP assessment.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays or other special events may be celebrated at FUMS with refreshments provided by parents.

*Any Food brought in must be store bought.

*Please let your child's teacher know 24 hours in advance if you are planning to bring a treat to share.

*Parents are welcome to come to School to join in the celebration!

*NO gifts should be given in school.

*Invitations cannot be given out in school unless **every** child in the class receives one.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Any information about children or their families is kept strictly confidential. We protect the interest of each child and family by safely storing all files and notes.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The behavior of children while at First United Methodist School will be managed in a manner that will protect their self-esteem and will encourage the child's ability to mature and be nurtured in the growing knowledge of God's love. Children are expected to follow the directions given by their teachers. Any correction needed will be done in a positive manner. Children will not be subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening or associated with food, rest, or toileting. A child will not be denied active play as a consequence of misbehavior. Parents are expected to encourage their children to follow directions given. The **parent** will be contacted if his/her child refuses to comply with the teacher's direction.

Consequences:

Level 1) The child will be talked to about appropriate type of behavior that the child should show and encouraged to use his/her words.

Level 2) The child will be redirected to another area if the rule is broken again.

Level 3) The teacher will contact the Director to remove the child from the classroom.

(Physical altercations will move a child directly to #3 consequence. Ex. Biting, hitting, kicking, etc.)

- Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through around 12 to 24 months. We encourage children to "use their words." Teachers will maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times, in an effort to intervene before a biting incident occurs.



CLASSES

Wee School

Wee school classes are located in our church nursery rooms. School begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 12:00 noon. Parents may choose for their child to attend MWF, T/TH or all five days each week. Wee I class consists of those who are 1 by Sept 1st. Wee II class consists of children who are 2 by Sept 1st.

3 Yr. Old Classes

First United Methodist School, offers a 3 day class (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday), and two 5 day classes. The child must be 3 by September 1st and should be potty-trained. These classes are 9:00 am till 12:00 noon.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

We offer 3, five-day classes, 8:30 a.m. till 12:00 noon. For a total of 540 hours of class time free to all children who are 4 years of age by September 1 of that school year.

*VPK students must present the school with a state "voucher" before beginning this program.

*The Florida VPK attendance policy states that providers will be paid for limited number of student absences. Refer to VPK Attendance Policy Document for complete explanation.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten class begins at 8:30 and releases at 1:30. Curriculum consists of the following, Bible-Purpose Design, Sing, Spell, Read and Write, Math U See, Social Studies and Science.

*Regular attendance provides students the opportunity to master required skills. FUMS will follow the Kindergarten Attendance policy of the School District of Okaloosa County. It is our intent to encourage honest, accurate and consistent adherence to the policy by all students, parents, teachers and administrators. F.S.1003.04; 1003.21 1003.24

When a student accumulates a total of nine excused absences per semester, the student must have an excuse written from a Doctor or official agency.

- A. After the 10th, but before the 11th absence of the school year (Aug.– May) the parents or legal guardian will be notified of the absences in writing.
- B. After the 15th absence in the school year, a letter will be sent to the Parent's or legal guardians notifying them of the of the necessity for a doctor's excuse or an excuse from an official agency. In addition this letter will notify parents of additional consequences for additional absences.
- C. Between 25 and 30 absences your child's academic record will be reviewed for possible recommendation of repeating kindergarten

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed comfortably each day. They will be running, climbing, painting, exploring with water and sand, clay, glue, etc. on a daily basis. We do provide smocks for our classroom painting activities. The paint that we use is "washable," but if it does get on clothing we advise pre-treating the stain before laundering.

***Please mark all clothing items, including hats, coats, gloves, sweaters and bags with your child's name.**

***No** open toe shoes. sandals, flip flops, or crocs as they cause accidents.

*Please send a seasonal change of clothing in a labeled bag in your child's cubby in the classroom.



CURRICULUM

Our curriculum (Creative curriculum, Zoo Phonics, ABC Jesus Loves Me) identifies goals in all areas of development.

Social: To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.

Emotional: To help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.

Cognitive: To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.

Physical: To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

EARLY CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

*Parent must notify the office and we will bring student to you.

*You will sign your child out on BrightWheel.

ENROLLMENT AND ORIENTATION

*Enrollment is complete when the Registration packet is complete with fee paid.

*Orientation is prior to school beginning in August or is arranged individually with families. Children and parents may visit regularly prior to the enrollment day. Kindergarten orientation will be the day before the start of school.

Upon enrollment, it shall be understood that the child will be assigned a starting date and all forms (registration form, shot record, physical, tuition and financial agreement) are to be submitted on the first day of attendance. No child shall be permitted to attend FUMS without these documents submitted by the first day of attendance. The Florida Department of Children and Families strictly mandates that these forms are to be fully completed and submitted to the School office.

In the event of a class being at its full capacity, we will place you on the waiting list. We are sorry that we cannot always meet the needs of parents or guardians when requested, however you may call us and request a place on the list or submit an application to be placed on a waiting list. You will be called when an opening becomes available.

EXPULSION AND DISMISSAL POLICY

Our program is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment conducive for learning and growth for all our children. We strive to ensure all of our children are set up for success regardless of their need or developmental level.

Every effort will be made to prevent the expulsion or dismissal of children from the program. However, FUMS reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons, not limited to but including:

- *Non-payment or excessive late payments of fees/tuition.
- *Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as outlined in the program's Family Handbook.
- *The child has needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- *The child's behavior threatens the health and safety of him/herself, the other children or program staff.
- *The parent/guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children or staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom and/or program. This includes but is not limited to: vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or violation of child care licensing regulations.

EXTENDED HOURS

Early care 8:00 am, \$5 per day..

Lunch Bunch

- Child must bring their lunch,(per DCF regulations we are unable to heat any food for the child).
- **1 to 2 year-old Lunch Bunch:** 12–2 pm, \$15 a day.
- **3 to VPK Lunch Bunch:** 12– 2 pm, \$10 a day.
Child must be toilet trained and 3 years old

Wrap Around

- \$30 registration fee includes personal bag to fit a small pillow and blanket brought from home (items must be brought to school in this bag)
- Child must bring their lunch, (per DCF regulations we are unable to heat any food for the child).
- Nap Time-The children are provided with an individual cot.
- Parents are responsible weekly for taking home the blanket and pillow for laundering.

1 to 2 year-old Wee Wrap Around: 12–5:00 pm, \$395 per month or \$24 per day.

3 to VPK Wrap Around: 12– 5:00 pm, \$295 per month or \$20 per day.

*Children must be toilet trained and 3 years old

Kindergarten: 1:30– 5:00 pm, \$210 per month or \$15 per day.

FEES (other than VPK)

A \$100 non-fundable registration fee (\$80 for the second child) is due at the time of registration. Kindergarten requires a \$100 non-refundable registration.

Tuition (check, cash, or automatic withdrawal only)

5 days - \$250.00 per month

3 days - \$185.00 per month

2 days - \$150.00 per month

Kindergarten - \$400 per month x 10 months

Other Kindergarten Fees: Book Fee - \$150, Graduation/Fieldtrip Fee -\$25, Assessment Fee-\$15.00

There is a \$10 discount per month for a second child and a \$5 per month discount for three or more children, for tuition only. Tuition is due the first day of each month. A \$10 late fee will be added after the 10th.

The following policies and procedures for tuition payments:

1. Part-time and Full-time tuition is automatically deducted on the 1st of the month.
2. A \$25.00 per month late fee will be charged when a payment is declined.
3. There will be a \$5.00 charge per child for every five minutes elapsed after you scheduled pick-up time.
4. All tuition is due regardless of sickness, behavioral/disciplinary removal, vacations, weather related closings, holidays (including Thanksgiving, Christmas, snow days, and Spring Break), or **emergency related closings mandated by the state/local government/DHS, like a pandemic.**
5. If you need to terminate your child's enrollment, a written 30 day is to be given to the school director(s); otherwise you will continue to be charged your monthly tuition. (No reimbursement of tuition will be granted.)
6. To ensure your child's enrollment, parents must re-register their child(ren) for the following year. This enrollment is usually the 2nd week of January each year.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned by the teachers to enhance classroom learning.

*A *Field Trip Permission Form* is completed at enrollment, walking trips in the church area are a regular part of the program.

*Children will wear their blue school. If you do not have a t-shirt they are available in the school office.

*Parents will transport their child to field trips away from the school. Children must at all times be with a parent or guardian on field trips. Parents may car pool only if the child and parent/guardian are in the same car.

*Younger siblings are not generally allowed to attend field trips.

*A child not attending a field trip will remain at home for the day.

*Watch for "sign-up" information on classroom bulletin board and in newsletter.

HEALTH RECORDS (Due prior to or on the first day your child starts school)

*Every child is required to have on file a record of a physical examination and age-appropriate immunizations.

*Physical examinations are valid for two years

*If the records are not current, the child will not be able to attend school until the updated forms are brought to the School office.

ILLNESS

*If your child becomes ill at school we will contact you.

*If we cannot reach a parent we will use the emergency contact numbers you have provided.

Let us know immediately when you have a change of address or telephone number.

*We will call if a child has a fever over 100°, pink eye, vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, and any other indicators that the child is not well enough to be at school.

***Do not to bring a sick child to school** and make sure that the child is symptom-free before returning to school. While having a sick child is a hardship for most families, it is important that parents enact the Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you)-if you wouldn't want your son or daughter playing with a sick kid who exhibits certain illnesses, the same holds true for them as well.

Illnesses to keep your child home are defined as (but not limited to):

- fever of over 100 degrees (24 hours free)
- conjunctivitis (pink eye) or "cold in the eye"
- flu
- unusual rash
- severe cough
- rapid breathing or labored breathing
- severe cold
- vomiting (24 hours free)
- yellowish skin or eyes
- diarrhea
- head lice (proof of treatment required to return to school)
- green discharge from his nose-he must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before he can attend.
- contagious illness of any sort which results in child being too ill to participate in daily activities and going outside to play

Please inform us on BrightWheel when your child is sick. The Director must be notified if a child has a contagious illness, such as Strep Throat or Head Lice. The school will notify parents or guardians of suspected exposure to the communicable disease.

INJURIES & OTHER EMERGENCIES

*Minor cuts and abrasions suffered while at school will be washed with water and properly bandaged.

*Teachers will complete an accident report on BrightWheel.

*We will call you about any accident other than a minor scrape or bump.

*If a medical emergency arises, we will not hesitate to call 911 if professional help is needed. Parents would be immediately contacted. If a parent is unable to be reached the emergency contacts will then be called. Please keep this information up to date in your child's records. We are required to log any injuries observed on your child which have occurred outside our care.

*In the event of a fire, the building will be evacuated immediately, and everyone will gather in the front of the School. This will be practiced monthly, so the children are familiar with what to do.

*If severe weather arises and a tornado alert is issued, the child will proceed to the center hallway, where the children will crouch and cover their heads.

MEDICATION

*No medication will be given unless a parent has filled out a medication form.

*Prescription medication must be in the pharmacy container with child's name.

*Non-prescription medication must be in the original container with child's name.

*The container must indicate the **age-appropriate** dosage for your child or a doctor's note indicating the appropriate dosage for your child.

*Medication must be given to the school office, do not leave it with the child or in the child's bag.

*Take medication home when it is no longer needed at school.

*Parents may come to the school to give a child medicine if they prefer.

*The school does not keep any medication for use with the children.

*Diaper rash ointment, powder and sunscreen are considered medication, a form must be filled out to be applied.

*If possible, medication should be timed around school hours and given before or after school by parents.



MUSIC CLASS

Each student will attend a music education class once a week. Music class will focus on developmentally appropriate activities that foster rhythmic awareness, learning tones, rhythm patterns, steady beat, and exposure to instruments. The music class will last 30 minutes. The teacher or assistant will remain with the teacher during music time to assist and handle discipline.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

Parental involvement is a must for our school to reach its goal of providing quality education. All members of the school are urged to participate in the school activities.

We want to keep in close touch. Please let us know how your child is feeling about school, about any problems at home, or any circumstances that may be affecting his/her behavior. Parents may call or leave a note for a teacher or Director. The teachers make many efforts to keep in touch with parents regarding a child's progress and development: conversation, notes home, phone calls, bulletin board announcements, and monthly parent letters.

Formal parent conferences will be scheduled; however, we encourage you to call and set up a conference anytime you feel one is needed.

Parents can participate in the governance of the school through the School Board. There is a minimum of three parents selected to the Board. Events such as fall Open House, playground workdays, Art Show fund raising activities, Parent Seminars, etc., are held during the year. All parents are encouraged to participate. Watch for specific requests for volunteers and please come forward. **Parents are welcome to visit the school any time.** The children and teachers greatly enjoy having parents involved.

PHOTOGRAPHS

*Photo permission is in the child registration application filled out by parents.

*Teachers enjoy taking photos of the children for use in the classrooms and newsletters.

*A professional photographer takes individual photos in the fall and spring, as well as class photos in the spring.

PICK-UP

* K, VPK and 3-year-old classes will be release by car line, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Thursday and Friday pick up is at your child's classroom.

***VPK, 3-year-old class, and Wee-school** classes end at 12:00

*You must sign your child out on BrightWheel

*Lunch Bunch ends at 2:00 p.m.

*Wrap Around ends at 5:00 p.m.

**Late Pick-Up Fee* ~ begins at 15 minutes past pick up time, parents will be charged \$5, and charged an additional \$5 for every 5 minutes thereafter.

SCHEDULE OF DAY

A schedule of activities is posted in each classroom. We are not rigid as to minutes, but we do follow the general pattern each day, this gives the children a feeling of stability to have a predictable schedule. The two teachers in each classroom plan activities for the class. Group times, literature, art activities, music and bulletin boards will often reflect a concept / theme for that month/week. We welcome parents to the classroom to share their interests and talents with the children. Please volunteer.

SCREENINGS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

*Beyond Expectations and AAHA provide consultation and services in the school setting for children who require behavior therapy and modification.

*Tree House speech therapist provide screening, consultations and therapy services in the school and private setting for children who require speech and language therapy.

*Early steps, Child Find and Child Care Services perform evaluations coordination quality of care and develop program plans for children with special needs.



SNACK AND LUNCH

- * All Students will bring their own healthy snack and drink, unless otherwise notified by their teacher
- *Wrap-Around Program and Extended Care will need a separate packed lunch each day.
- *No candy, gum, peanuts, whole grapes, whole hot dogs, glass or glass-lined containers, or carbonated drinks.
- *Teachers can NOT heat up any food for your child's lunch; we are not licensed to do so.
- *If your child does not have a lunch, you will be phoned to bring them one.

*Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents will not be served to children under 4 years of age; such as, but not limited to, whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe. Food for toddlers must be cut into pieces 1/2 inch or smaller to prevent choking.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

A written notice of thirty (30) days must be given prior to withdrawing your child from the school along with an early withdrawal penalty of one month's tuition.

T SHIRTS

First United Methodist School T-shirts are available for sale in the school office. The cost of the shirt is \$10.

TOILET TRAINING

Each parent handles toilet training in their own way. It is our policy that all children entering the 3 year old and VPK classes are fully toilet trained (uses the toilet as needed, wipes themselves, pulls up pants, **no pull-ups or diapers**). There is no changing facility in these classrooms. If a child is not having success by the 2nd week of school, the Director will evaluate the situation and conference with the family.

TOYS

- *Do not allow your child to bring a toy from home unless authorized by a teacher, such as for the class "prediction bag".
- *It is too difficult to protect special toys from being broken. (We do make exceptions for the "security toys" of some of the youngest children.)
- *No guns, swords, weapons etc. are to be brought at any time to school.

VISITORS

*Sign in at the school office and obtain a pass. You will not be admitted to the class without a pass.

VOLUNTEERS

At First United Methodist School we love to have individuals who regularly enter the classroom to help or assist the teacher in some way. Parent involvement increases a child's self-esteem!

- *Volunteers will need to read and sign a notarized form each year in the school office.
- *Volunteers are required to sign in at the school office and obtain a pass before going to the classroom.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer, visit and share in their child's classroom, on the playground, or with one of the special events that we have planned for this year. When you volunteer for any reason, your child must remain with his/her assigned class. Volunteers in our school shall refrain from reprimanding the children of other families while on the school premises. Discipline is the responsibility of the staff.



Learning Centers

Young children often learn best in "Centers." This is because they only have to keep their attention on one thing for a short time and they get to continuously switch to a new activity, which keeps them motivated and excited to learn. To help better understand what happens in these centers, here is a brief description of the different centers we will be using in the classroom:

Art Center ~ Use different mediums (paint, crayons, pencils, clay, etc.) to have children create a portion of a story or how the story applies to them, to communicate an idea, or create something by following step-by-step instructions.

Science Center ~ Use sand, clay, water, figurines, pictures, etc. to help students observe and explore things in their world. Also, students can conduct simple experiments to further understand a science concept being taught.

Home Center ~ Set up with household appliances for students to role play life application situations that are taught in the classroom. This center also helps with communication and working with others.

Listening Center ~ Students use headphones to listen to a story that has been previously read in class. This helps them with fluency, vocabulary and listening skills.

Building Center ~ Children are given blocks and are encouraged to build their homes, theme parks, their favorite places to go, etc. This helps them to work as a team and use their imagination.

Puzzle Center ~ Children work together in a group to put a floor puzzle together. They not only have to work as a team, but they have to use problem solving strategies to figure out how to put the puzzle together correctly.

Dramatic Play ~ Children use costumes, masks, and other props to act-out a lesson or role play life situations in order to help apply the lesson being taught.

Math Center ~ This varies depending on the concept being taught. This center provides the children with opportunities to understand concepts in depth by using manipulatives to figure out and actually see how the math concept works. They will be creating patterns, sorting, classifying, counting, using graphs, problem-solving, matching, writing numbers, sequencing, etc.

Reading/Writing/Media Center ~ Students will identify beginning sounds of words and pictures, sort pictures according to their beginning letter, decode words by stretching out their sounds, match words to pictures, match letters to sounds, find a specific letter in print, etc.

Fine Motor Center ~ Fine motor or manipulative activities help improve eye-hand coordination and strengthen the muscles that are critical for writing and coloring. These activities also develop problem-solving skills.

Gross Motor Center ~ Young children need large muscle activity on a daily basis with both indoor and outdoor experiences. Time spent using large muscles during interactive play, not only helps develop coordination, it helps develop communication and team-building skills as well.

Get your child on the path to healthy eating.

Focus on the meal and each other.

Your child learns by watching you. Children are likely to copy your table manners, your likes and dislikes, and your willingness to try new foods.

Offer a variety of healthy foods.

Let your child choose how much to eat. Children are more likely to enjoy a food when eating it is their own choice.

Be patient with your child.

Sometimes new foods take time. Give children a taste at first and be patient with them. Offer new foods many times.

Let your children serve themselves.

Teach your children to take small amounts at first. Let them know they can get more if they are still hungry.



Cook together.

Eat together.

Talk together.

Make meal time family time.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service FNS-451 October 2012 USDA is

Grain Group - Make half your grains whole

Eating grains, such as whole-grain breads, cereals, rice, and pasta provides nutrients and health benefits. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a lower risk of some chronic diseases. Choosing whole grains that are higher in dietary fiber has additional health benefits. Many Schoolers don't eat enough fiber, and whole grain foods are an easy way to get fiber into your child's diet.

Vegetable Group - Vary Your Veggies

Help your Schooler learn to eat and enjoy a variety of vegetables. Vegetables contain many vitamins and minerals that help your child grow and stay healthy. It is common for Schoolers to dislike or refuse some vegetables. Encourage your child to try vegetables and eat them yourself. There are many types of vegetables to choose from. For example, try a new dark green, red, or orange vegetable. Include vegetables in meals and in snacks. Vegetables may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed. Choose canned vegetables labeled as "reduced sodium" or "no-salt-added."

Fruit Group - Focus on Fruits

Help your Schooler learn to eat and enjoy a variety of fruits. Fruits contain many vitamins and minerals that help your child grow and stay healthy. People who eat more fruits in an overall healthy diet have lower risks of some chronic diseases. Include fruits in meals and snacks every day. Fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed. Choose canned fruits packed in water or 100% juice instead of syrup, because light or heavy syrup adds sugar and calories. Fruit juice does not contain the fiber that is in whole and cut-up fruits. Serve your Schooler no more than ½cup to ¾ cup (4 to 6 ounces) of juice a day. Choose 100% fruit juice when serving juices -- check the [Nutrition Facts label](#) to be sure.

Dairy Group - Get your calcium-rich foods

Help your Schooler learn to consume and enjoy foods in the Dairy group. They provide health benefits like building and maintaining strong, dense bones. They are important parts of your child's food intake Include low-fat and fat-free foods or beverages from the Dairy Group in meals and snacks for your child every day. These include milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soymilk (soy beverage). It is especially important to establish the habit of drinking milk in young children. Those who consume milk as young children are more likely to do so as adults. If you think your Schooler may be lactose

intolerant or allergic to milk, check with your child's doctor to be sure. Kids that are two years and older can drink fat-free and low-fat milk. They provide the same amount of calcium and vitamin D as whole milk or 2% milk, but less solid fat and calories. Solid fats are mainly saturated fats, and foods high in saturated fat tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. Fat-free milk is also called *skim milk* and low-fat milk is also called *1% milk*.

Protein Foods Group - Go Lean with Protein

Help your child learn to eat and enjoy a variety of Protein Foods from this food group — including seafood, meat, poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, nuts and seeds. Eating foods in the Protein Foods group provides nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of your Schooler's body. For example, all kids need protein to help them grow.

Choose foods from the Protein Foods [group that are low in solid fats](#). Solid fats are mainly saturated fats, and foods high in saturated fat tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. Include a variety of lean meat and poultry choices in your meals.

Include [seafood](#) and beans and peas in meals often.

Fats and Sugars: Know Your Limits

Empty Calories are the calories from solid fats and added sugars in foods and beverages. They add to total calories but provide no vitamins or minerals. Schoolers can have some "empty calories", but too many can fill them up without supplying the nutrients they need. "Empty calories" can also add more to children's total calories than they need. Some examples of "**empty calories**" are:

The **sugars or sweeteners** in soft drinks, fruit punch, candies, cakes, cookies, pies, and ice cream.

The **solid fats** in cookies, cakes, pizza, cheese, sausages, fatty meats, butter, and stick margarine.

Some foods--such as milk, yogurt, and cereals--provide important nutrients, but they can also contain some **empty calories**. For example, sweetened yogurt and sweetened breakfast cereals contain added sugars. Whole milk and cheese contains solid fat. **Look for choices of milk, yogurt, cheese, and cereals that are low-fat, fat-free, unsweetened, or with no-added sugars.**

There is room for foods with some empty calories from added sugars or solid fats now and then. But most daily food choices for Schoolers should be low in these **empty calories**

Also look for foods that are good sources of potassium, which counteracts some of sodium's effects on blood pressure. Vegetables like sweet potatoes, beet greens, white beans, potatoes, tomato puree and paste, and soybeans and fruits like bananas, dried plums (prunes), cantaloupe, honeydew, and orange juice are examples of foods to choose for potassium.

As a parent, you have the most influence on your child. You can do a lot to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life:

Your Schooler's normal growth and development also play a big role in their eating habits. As Schoolers grow, they change physically, mentally, and socially. These changes affect everything they do, including eating

All information received from this web site: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/Schoolers.html>