Take-Out: Outside-style snacks that are fun!

Incorporating snack time with outside time can lead to fun and good health! Think how enjoyable simple outside-style snacks can be: healthy food, fresh air, and lots of fun play. Along with healthy food choices, children need outside time, connection with their community, and connection with nature daily. Research suggests that children should spend at least one hour outside every day and also have one hour of physical activity per day.

Caution: When offering foods to young children, be aware of choking hazards such as nuts, popcorn, raw vegetables, and hot dogs; do not give these to infants. Closely supervise young children when they eat.

The following snacks are suitable for children over the age of three. Always supervise snack and eating times.

Take-out picnic

**Ingredients per child**

- 4 small rice cakes (add filling of choice)
- 4-6 orange slices or citrus fruit of choice
- Small cup
- Napkin

Use take-out boxes or reusable bags (ask local restaurant if they will donate, search local craft or cooking stores, or create your own style “take-out” container)

**Extras:**

- Consider adding a fortune cookie for fun; many grocery stores carry boxes of these or you can substitute using a ginger snap and wrap with a little note or picture. Have the children make the “fortunes” ahead of time.
- Have children help assemble their boxes of snack items and possibly help in preparations.
- Pour cold water from a teapot into small cups.
- Label boxes with names so you can reuse.
- Play music from other countries while outside for added beauty.

Get Physical

Collect enough scarves for each child and dance outside, moving the scarves with the wind, music, and natural movements of the children.
Dietary cautions

• Be aware of choking risks and food allergies when preparing and serving meals and snacks. Think about the size, shape, and consistency when choosing foods due to the potential choking risks in children. Food cut in large chunks, small hard foods, and soft and sticky foods should be avoided. The top choking hazards for children include: hotdogs, meats, sausages, fish with bones, spoonfuls of peanut butter, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, raisins, whole grapes, raw carrots, fruits and vegetables with skins, and marshmallows. Be sure that food is cut in small pieces (no larger than ⅛ inch), grated, or finely chopped. Be sure that children are closely supervised when they are eating.
• Do not give honey to children under 12 months of age. Honey contains spores that can cause infant botulism.
• Many children have food allergies or sensitivities to food. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90% of children’s food allergies are from milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (pecan/walnuts), fish, shellfish, strawberries, soy, wheat, and gluten. Carefully read food labels for potential risks and be sure to ask the parents if children have a known allergy or sensitivity.
• Dental health is a growing concern with young children, so it is important to keep in mind that starchy, sticky, and sugary foods can cause tooth decay. Children should brush their teeth after any meal or snack, but particularly when you serve these foods.

Ingredients per child:
2-4 small slices of semi-hard cheese
2 small pieces of French bread or bread of choice (preferably whole wheat)

Umbrella snacks

Gather large to medium-size umbrellas (ahead of time). Open umbrellas in outside areas, preferably grassy or with a blanket under each umbrella. Estimate about 2-3 children per umbrella. Before using umbrellas with children, it is important to go over rules and safe use (umbrellas are to sit under, not open and close, adults put umbrella away, etc.). Clip name cards onto the umbrella so children know where to sit.

Using the umbrella creates a social setting and unique snack opportunity. Choose your favorite simple snack to have, such as cheese and whole wheat crackers, or fruit and low-fat, low-sugar yogurt.

Get Physical

Be an umbrella - Pretend to open and close like an umbrella, or be caught in a wind and rain storm.

Ingredients:
- 2-4 small slices of semi-hard cheese
- 2 small pieces of French bread or bread of choice (preferably whole wheat)
- Large cloth napkins to put snack items in to carry outside (dish towels can be used as a substitute) A small handful of grapes as a side

Get Physical

Ballet moves - Try simple ballet moves and stretches or make up your own!