

FOOD GUIDE FOR PRESCHOOLERS

3 - 5 years

Before you know it, your child has turned four and then five years old. You may find that your somewhat calm child of three has now become a dynamo of energy, drive, [bossiness](#), and [sometimes out-of-bounds behavior](#).



Your preschooler may seem to be in constant motion much of the time. This is because she uses her body to convey thoughts and emotions that she still can't describe through language. Moving her body also helps her better understand many words and concepts that are new to her. In addition, your child should now have a healthy attitude toward eating and consume food to give her energy, not to demonstrate defiance. If your child is a [picky](#) eater, don't give up. It can take as many as 10 or more times tasting a food before a child's taste buds accept it. Scheduled meals and limiting [snacks](#) can help ensure your child is hungry when a new food is introduced.

Lakeland's Little Learners follows the meal pattern guidelines developed by the [USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program](#). These meal patterns are based on scientific recommendations from the National Academy of

Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our [preschool menus](#) are based on the guidelines for children between three years and older.

Per the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics we do serve honey to children over one year of age, and we DO serve other food products containing items that are more likely to be allergenic, such as [peanuts](#), tree nuts, strawberries, eggs, soy, and milk. There is no evidence that waiting to introduce allergy-causing foods, beyond 4 to 6 months of age prevents food allergy.

The [child meal pattern](#) for lunch has 5 general components. The child meal pattern for snack must contain 2 of the 5 listed components. Please note that 100% fruit and vegetable juices may only be served once per day. Children 2-5 years old must have unflavored 1% or skim milk. The only milk substitute approved by the USDA is lactose free milk.

<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Snack</i>
6 oz. milk	4 oz. milk
1 serving of protein	1/2 serving of protein
1/4 c. vegetable	1/2 c. vegetable
1/4 c. fruit	1/2 c. fruit
1/2 serving of grain	1/2 serving of grain



If your preference is to have your child follow a different meal pattern, have your pediatrician write a letter with the meal pattern to be followed.

We ask that all food brought from home should be prepared so it is ready to eat. To prevent choking, make sure anything prepared is soft, easy to swallow, and cut into pieces smaller than 1/2 of an inch.

References

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