



## **Lunch Policy**

November 2023

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and wellbeing. To provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children in our program, Calvary Early Learning Programs have developed the following nutrition policies to encourage the development of good eating habits that will last a lifetime.

As required by DHS-Licensing, Calvary Early Learning is attentive to the nutritional needs of the children. All lunches must contain an item from each of the following food groups: fruit, vegetable, whole grain, and meat/protein. In addition, 1% milk will be served to all children. If your child has a documented dairy allergy, you are responsible for providing an appropriate fluid milk alternative (i.e., soy or lactaid). Water will be offered in addition to but not as a substitute to milk. If a child's lunch doesn't contain the required four food groups Calvary Early Learning will supplement as needed, charging the appropriate fee. Because families are responsible for providing nutritionally balanced lunches, per licensing mandate we are not able to dictate the order in which children choose to eat their lunches. Please provide foods that are wholesome, low in fat, sugar, and salt.

Calvary Early Learning is a peanut and tree nut free program. Because of the severity of allergies, we are asking that all families refrain from sending foods that contain peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, or food from a facility that also makes/processes peanut or tree nut products to school. Please take special notice of granola/granola bars ingredients. Foods found to contain peanuts/tree nuts will be sent home unopened.

From many years of experience, Calvary doesn't allow Lunchable type meals, frozen entrees, or any sort of cup meal that needs to be prepared (Easy Mac or dried oatmeal.) For child self-help skills and busy lunchtime ease, we ask families to remove any packaging or peel fruits that a child can't do independently. For this same reason, we discourage tube-type yogurt or sealed fruit cups.

Please keep in mind that being in school and eating lunch with friends is a new experience for many of the children. Because of this, don't be surprised if they are coming home with a lot of leftovers. It's hard to be social and eat at the same time. But rest assured if they are hungry enough, they'll make the effort to eat. We do encourage the children to bring home any unfinished foods so that you are aware of their general eating patterns.

In accordance with licensing and Hennepin County Health Department, all foods must be pre-cut and ready to eat with minimal assistance from the teacher. While our lunchroom is equipped with a microwave oven, all "heatable" items need to be in a microwave safe container (not a plastic bag or within a bento box.) Calvary provides milk, water, cups, spoons, forks, and napkins. Please label all lunch items including lunch box and any reusable containers used.

We know it is difficult sometimes to come up with lunch ideas, so we've included some ideas taken from the lunch boxes of former students. We are always surprised and delighted by the creativity we see in lunches and look forward to another year of great ideas.

Bon Appetit!!!

### Lunch Ideas:

- \* Quesadillas: melted cheese, melted ham & cheese (children don't mind it cold) \*  
Tortillas used instead of bread to roll up favorite meat and cheese.
- \* Sandwiches of any kind: ham, turkey, tuna salad, bologna, cream cheese & jelly, butter and jelly, or sun-nut butter (always label)
- \* Cubed ham, salami slices, pepperoni circles, turkey, or ham rolls
- \* Hard boiled eggs (pre-peeled)
- \* Hummus, salsa
- \* Crackers of any kind, plain or with jelly
- \* String cheese, cubes of cheese, cheese slices
- \* Veggies and dip: skinny carrot sticks/chips, cucumbers, pepper strips
- \* Cold pizza
- \* Cooked noodles, cold mac & cheese
- \* Fruit and fruit dip, applesauce
- \* Yogurt w/ cereal
- \* Pre-cooked chicken nuggets, mini-hot dogs w/ barbeque sauce
- \* In thermos: chicken noodle soup, pasta dishes
- \* Dry cereal (we can add milk) please provide a little bowl and spoon.
- \* Precooked waffles or pancakes with syrup
- \* Puff corn, chips, graham crackers, mixed dry cereal

While packing lunches, make sure all food is prepared and cut to eliminate any choking potential. For all children, all foods need to be cut to a safe size (i.e., grapes (half or quartered), hot dogs (long slices, not circles), carrots (strips.) Unprepared foods will be sent home.

Mealtime is also a time for learning! Children of all ages, especially our toddlers, are working on fine motor skills, self-help, and independence. Please keep these in mind when packing lunches, we want children to experience success.