

Welcome to the 2023-24 Little Acorns Afternoons

We would like to share the General Information/Schedule and Lunch Information & Lunch Ideas sheet.

General Information/Schedule

Our schedule is outlined below.

Lunch in Acorns is a wonderful opportunity to practice social and table manners. Children are encouraged (as they are in the kindergarten classroom) to remain seated and use polite conversation during meal times. It is lovely to gather together and reconnect after the busy morning.

- The kindergarten children will be picked up from their classrooms, at Kindergarten dismissal. We walk together -class to class gathering our friends before heading back to the lunch tables in the kindy yard. Lunch is so much fun, full of laughter and the conversation is always interesting.
- Lunches are brought from home and should include a water bottle and a cloth napkin or if you prefer hot school lunches are available free of cost through CUSD on our campus. *In the morning please ask your child's teacher to store their lunch in the classroom or to have them pick up the hot lunch.*
- Pick up is at the Kindergarten Yard gate **promptly at 3:15 pm or 5:00 pm (Depending on your schedule).**
- Please make eye contact with a staff member and verbally let them know you are picking up, as well as sign the Sign Out sheet before taking your child from the Kindergarten Yard. If you have an older sibling (3rd grade and above) who will be escorting the child from the yard, they too must sign your child out. Please be sure to let the older child's class teacher/staff member know they are picking up a sibling.
- If you would like for your child to wear a hat for the afternoon please provide a sun hat that may remain with Acorns. It needs to be media free, logo-free and labeled with their name.

LUNCH

Fostering independence and capabilities are part of Waldorf Kindergarten. Lunch naturally is an extension of this. Little Acorns supports this intent by encouraging the children to feed and serve themselves to their best ability. You can help support this endeavor with the following:

- Each child will need to bring a wholesome and healthy lunch that aligns with Journey's food policies, a water bottle and a napkin. Please pack nutritious and filling lunch, tummies are hungry after the busy morning.
- If you prefer to have your child participate in the school lunch program, make sure to let their teacher know in the mornings.
- Please do not send items that conflict with Journey's philosophies (cookies, chocolate, candy, or other sugary snacks and treats, jello, pudding etc., chocolate milk or juices. Aim for whole food choices, less processing, as close to its original source and as preservative free as possible.

Why do we ask this? Sugars, dyes and preservatives affect your child's body and brain development and emotions.

- Journey school encourages a no-waste/low packaging lunch; with this in mind, we will strive to return plastic baggies and containers home in the lunch bag. This also provides a glimpse into how much and what your child has eaten.
- Please slice the fruit if very crunchy/hard to bite into, prep the oranges for peeling if whole (tear a small portion from the skin so your child may peel it) it just makes it easier for the children.
- Please practice opening any containers at home; some are very tricky for little hands. We will help the children but most prefer to do it themselves.
- Water only to drink. Do bring a re-usable water bottle.

Little Acorn Lunch Ideas

The best and most filling balanced lunches have at least one or two servings of fruits and veggies, some sort of protein, a chip/whole grain/bread/rice carb type item, and maybe a treat like a fruit leather or applesauce.

***Whole real food is more filling than *processed foods. It will take a few lunches to get proportions correct and then as children grow during the year it will often change.**

Here are a few tips:

- Prep is half is the battle. Cut up all your veggies or fruit for the week, the same goes for portions of pretzel or crackers.
- Just as you make a weekly plan for dinner, do that for lunches.
- Make time the night before to pack lunch. During cooking dinner or during dinner clean up is a great time.
- Stick to a rotating plan for lunches, i.e. plan two weeks worth and then rotate those choices.
- If you buy prepared food make sure its healthy food not just “easy food”
- Keep it simple. Believe it or not, children do not become as bored as adults in their food choices.
- Children love using toothpicks, and enjoy food cut out into shapes.

Generally speaking, **processed foods** are food stuff produced using manufacturing methods to transform raw ingredients into neatly packaged goods, which have a longer shelf life. They don't offer much in nutritional value and usually contain artificial ingredients, artificial flavors, and artificial colors. Artificial generally means that a laboratory made it not nature. Keep in mind that foods labeled 'natural' on a package doesn't always mean its natural or even healthy.

Whole foods are grown in orchards, gardens, or greenhouses, are unprocessed and unrefined, and have a shorter shelf life. These foods are authentically flavorful, have vibrant colors, and rich textures. Moreover, they are full of micronutrient vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytochemicals, and fiber.

A great sample lunch for a kindergartener would be:

A ½ of a peach sliced, a few sliced veggies with hummus or ranch and a container of pasta with chunks of chicken or tofu, a yogurt tube (Pack a scooper or spoon)

or

A container of berries and melon, a container of tuna salad (mix in diced carrots and celery), or bean salad or guacamole, crackers, and a cheese stick or cottage cheese, dried fruit leather (Pack a scooper or spoon)

or

A thermos of soup, crackers, and veggies or fruit, healthy muffin (Remember the spoon)

or

Chop-chop salad (chopped mixed veggies, chickpeas, egg or tofu, a grain if you'd like such as quinoa or rice or bulgur or lentils) and applesauce