



A Little Nudge Goes a Long Way

What is Nudging?

Have you ever purchased a sweet snack in the checkout line, even if you weren't hungry? Has a cashier encouraged you to purchase a 'combo meal'—and you end up with French fries on your plate whether you wanted them or not?

We aren't always thinking about nutrition when we make food decisions. Businesses that sell food know that they can 'nudge' you toward buying certain foods by making them easy to grab, easy to see, or just by suggesting you buy them.

The good news is that we can use nudging to encourage kids to eat healthy food too!

Nudging in the School Cafeteria

Many schools in Maryland are learning how to make fruits and vegetables convenient, visible, attractive, and fun. Visit <http://fsnetoolkit.com/classroom-cafeteria-connection/> for more information and resources you can share with your child's school.

Nudging Your Child Toward Healthy Lunches

- Speak positively about healthy foods. Your child looks up to you and wants to be like you! Even if you don't like a certain food, don't speak badly about it. Encourage them to try it to find out if they like it.
- Print out the monthly school menu and put it on the refrigerator. Look over the menu and find the fruits and vegetables each day. Talk about the ones your child likes. If there are new fruits and vegetables listed, encourage your child to buy lunch that day and try something new!

- Each evening ask your child about what they had for lunch that day. Get excited if they talk about eating fruits and vegetables. If they ate something they didn't like, teach them to use polite words to share their feelings, such as 'I didn't care for it.'
- Make tasting new foods a fun and exciting part of your family meals. Don't put pressure on kids to eat a certain amount—just take a taste to decide if they like it or not. Tell them they are brave and encourage them to do the same at school!

Fun Fact!

Schools often offer chips, ice cream, and other snack items to purchase a la carte in the lunch line. Most people don't realize that students can also choose to buy the fruits and vegetables offered with the school meal as a la carte snacks.

If your child packs a lunch, **you can save time and money by having them buy fruits and vegetables at school.**

But wait...*what if s/he buys chips instead?*

Some school districts have made it easy for parents to nudge their child to buy healthy items a la carte. Less healthy snacks, like chips and cookies, can only be purchased with cash, not on their meal account. This makes them less convenient than the healthy items.

Talk to the cafeteria manager at your child's school to learn how students purchase snack items during lunch.

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