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Ask A Detroit Expert: 5 School Lunches Kids Can Make Themselves

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Lunchtime is important meal for growing children. Finding a balance between healthy and appetizing can be a challenge when preparing lunches for your school-age children. In a world of convenient packaged food options and the popular peanut butter and jelly sandwich, finicky eaters may even resist trying a new homemade lunch. However, one way to generate interest in a healthy and tasty homemade lunch is to have your child help make the meal. Detroit CBS Local talked to Katie Serbinski, founder of the popular healthy food and lifestyle blog Mom to Mom Nutrition, about school lunch ideas that both parents and children will like.

Katie Serbinski, M.S., R.D.
Mom To Mom Nutrition blog
[momtomomnutrition.com](#)

Katie Serbinski, founder of the blog Mom to Mom Nutrition, is a registered dietitian, Millennial mom blogger and mother of three young children. She has been a featured expert on healthy lifestyle topics for media outlets such as the Detroit Free Press, Shape, Women's Health and Fox 2. Her blog offers advice for family nutrition, healthy recipes and tips for new moms. She also provides meal planning and recipe development services. She lives in Detroit with her husband and three children.

Katie Serbinski wants parents to know that it is possible to provide healthy lunches for kids with a little planning. Pre-packaged foods may be convenient, but many parents aren't happy with the nutritional value of these types of processed foods. Even during busy times, you don't have to turn to processed food if you prefer a healthier option. Serbinski also recommends getting children involved in making their school lunches, which is a good way to get finicky eaters to try foods.

Mom to Mom Nutrition has numerous recipes that both you and your kids will enjoy. Many of these recipes are simple enough for kids to make themselves. Serbinski recommends including a vegetable, a fruit, a protein and a whole grain in every lunch for optimal nutrition. Here are five healthy lunch ideas by Katie Serbinski that your kids can either make on their own or help you prepare:

Pizza Kabobs

Pizza kabobs are a great way to fit all five food groups into one tasty meal.

Ingredients:

- 2 ounces of sliced pepperoni (around 20 slices)
- ½ of a 9-ounce package of refrigerated cheese tortellini
- 2/3 pint of cherry tomatoes (around 20 tomatoes)
- 1 cup of fresh mozzarella balls (about 20 balls)
- 1 cup of marinara sauce
- 1 cup of green bell pepper cubes
- 20 plastic or wooden skewers

Directions:

1. Cook the tortellini first, following the directions on the package. Drain the water out of the pasta. Rinse the pasta with cold water, and then drain it. Set it aside.
2. Fold the pepperoni slices in half in preparation to attach them to the skewers.
3. Slide a selection of pepperoni slices, mozzarella balls, tortellini, bell peppers and tomatoes onto each skewer.
4. Store the kabobs in a shallow-bottomed plastic container, organized in a single layer. Keep refrigerated until ready to eat. If packing in a lunch, use an ice pack in an insulated lunch bag to keep the food fresh.
5. Serve the kabobs with a dipping sauce, such as Italian dressing or marinara sauce

Note: You can substitute various ingredients, such as the meat, to customize the pizza kabobs to taste.

Hummus Snack Plate

Combining hummus with vegetables and fruit is a fast and nutritious lunch. There are many possible food combinations for the hummus snack plate. In her blog, Serbinski combines a hummus dip with tomatoes, carrots, celery and crackers. She also adds some cottage cheese topped with raspberries to the plate. She also recommends Greek yogurt as a substitute for hummus.

BLTA Wrap

A bacon, lettuce, tomato and avocado (BLTA) wrap is a simple and healthy sandwich to make.

Ingredients:

- 1 flatbread
- 4 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- ¼ cup of chopped lettuce
- ¼-½ of thinly sliced avocado
- 2 slices of cooked bacon
- Dressing of choice

Directions:

1. Lay lettuce, tomato pieces, avocado and cooked bacon on the flatbread.
2. Add a dressing, such as Ranch or mayonnaise.
3. Roll the wrap and cut in half before serving.

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Banana Sushi Rolls

Banana sushi rolls are a good sandwich substitute, and kids will enjoy making them.

Ingredients:

- 1 slice of whole wheat bread
- 1 Banana
- About a tablespoon of nut butter

Directions:

1. Use a rolling pin and roll the bread until flat.
2. Spread a nut butter onto the bread.
3. Lay one whole banana in the middle of the bread.
4. Roll the bread gently around the banana
5. Cut the rolled banana into six 1 ½-inch thick pieces.
6. Serve the banana sushi rolls with your favorite selection of vegetables and fruit with a side of Greek yogurt.

Apple Cheese Wraps

Kids will also enjoy making apple cheese wraps.

Ingredients:

- 1 apple cut in quarters
- 1 slice of cheese (your choice)
- 1 slice of deli meat (your choice)

Directions:

1. Cut an apple in quarters.
2. Slice your favorite cheese into thin pieces.
3. Cut the deli meat of your choice into sections.
4. Place a piece of cheese on each apple slice. Wrap a section of meat around each apple slice and piece of cheese to form the wraps.
5. Serve the apple cheese wraps with a side of vegetables and either crackers or some other whole grain option.

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Adrienne Warber is a Freelance Writer with more than 15 years of professional writing experience. After earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from the University of Michigan, Adrienne worked in marketing, where she specialized in communications writing. She is now a full-time freelance writer and writes on many topics, ranging from arts and events to crafts and health. Her work has appeared both in print and online. Her work can be found at Examiner.com and adriennewarber.com.



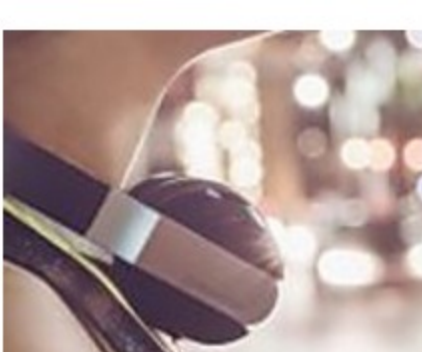
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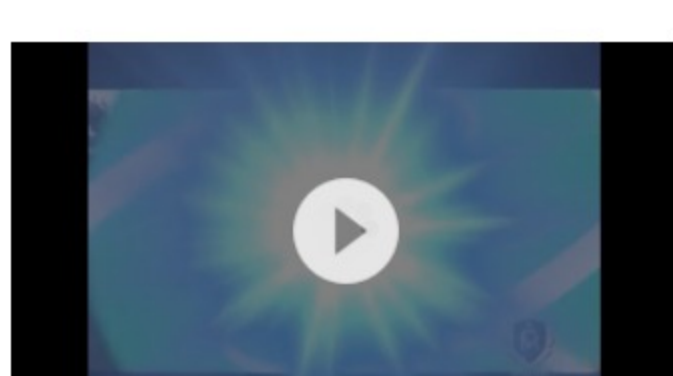
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