

What is Smarter Mealtimes?

Smarter Mealtimes is, essentially, a set of strategies designed to encourage preschool age children to consume more fruits and vegetables.



Examples of Smarter Mealtimes Strategies:

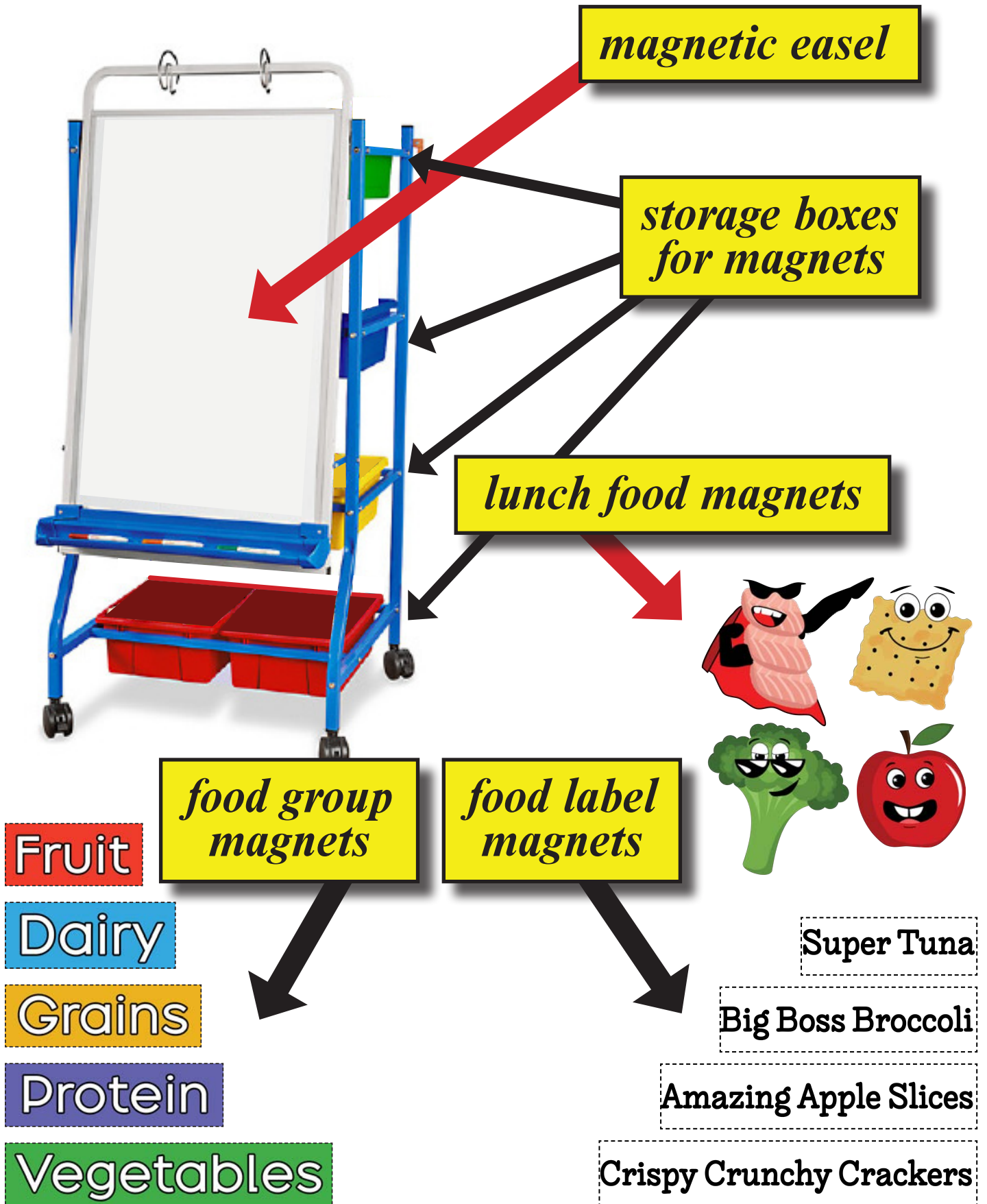
- During at least one meal per day, children are given a choice between at least two types of fruit. Fruits can be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.*
- During at least one meal per day, children are given a choice between at least two types of vegetable. Vegetables can be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.*
- Sliced or cut fruit is offered.
- Fruit is offered in attractive bowls or baskets.
- Fruits and vegetables are offered first and at least one additional time during each meal.
- Fruits are called or labeled with fun, creative names.
- Vegetables are called or labeled with fun, creative names.
- Fresh, cut vegetables are frequently paired with a healthy dip.
- The main dish (or featured entree) is called or labeled with a fun, creative name.
- Taste tests of fruits, vegetables, and main dishes are provided at least once per year.
- Children are given opportunities to learn about food and gardening (planting a garden, seed planting, farm tours, nutrition education, etc.) at least once per year.
- Popular characters (such as Elmo) are used to promote healthy foods using labels or stickers.
- Meals are offered family style.
- Caregivers model healthy eating habits such as sitting with children during meals and eating the provided foods.
- Caregivers announce the menu as part of the daily routine.
- Attractive, healthful food signage (posters, stickers, or clings) is displayed in the child care environment.
- A weekly or monthly menu is provided to all families.
- Children are encouraged to help with the mealtime set-up and clean-up routine.
- All lights in the eating area work and are turned on during meals.
- To help decide what foods are offered, children and families are asked to provide feedback.



As part of our program, we (the CFHL team here at TCCI) have been given the task of implementing aspects of the Smarter Mealtimes (SMT) movement in all TCCI preschool classrooms. To start, we designed an interactive menu tool for teachers/TAs to use as a way to talk to your kids about the lunch menu, learn more about food and nutrition, and ultimately eat more fruits and veggies.

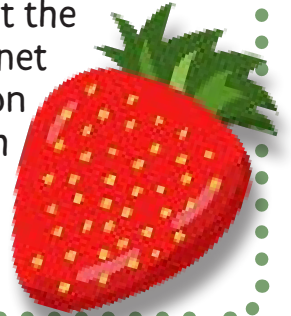


Parts of the Menu Board



How to Use the Menu Board

Every morning, check the lunch menu to see the components of the meal. If you have younger students, you may want to set up the board first and then use it to teach types of food and the food groups. As children progress, they can begin picking out the food magnets themselves, in addition to the food's matching label magnet and food group magnet. Throughout this process, start a conversation about what's for lunch and encourage kids to try all the parts of each meal - especially fruits and vegetables. Feel free to come up with your own learning activities that involve the menu board, nutrition, and/or trying new foods. Be creative!



Sample Menu Board Setup

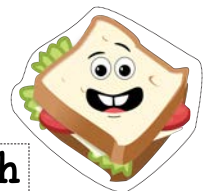


More Tools!

Be sure to check out our Lunchtime Nutrition Guide for more ideas on how to talk to kids about fruits and vegetables. Also check out:

- Our website: tcciwellness.com/smarter-mealtimes
- healthyeating.org
- fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-day-care-centers
- <https://www.cacfp.org/everyday-education/>

Lunch Menu
for October 14th



Super Sandwich

Protein

Tender Turkey Slices



Fruit

Cool Cantaloupe



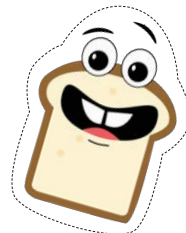
Vegetables

Super Salad



Grains

Great Grainy Bread



Dairy

1% Moo Milk



Board Details & Examples

Each food magnet has a label on the back stating it's name and then in parentheses what food group it belongs to. For example, the back of the beet magnet will say:

Boxing Beet (V)

- (P) = protein
- (F) = fruit
- (V) = vegetable
- (G) = grain

You'll notice that some items are labeled as "(main)" instead of a food group. These magnets represent the entire meal and

can be used in addition to all the other magnets. See taco example below.

Also note that some meals won't have all the items - for example, the taco meal won't have a ground beef magnet. We're working on creating a few more magnets so you'll soon have a magnet for every part of each meal.

The menu for tacos doesn't have a fruit serving and there's no magnet for the ground beef component.

Example of lunch menu meal and how the food groups are already labeled.

Component	Tuesday Food/Serving
Grain	WGR Dinner Rolls, 1 each
M/MA	Tuna, 1 ½ oz.
Vegetable	Sliced Beets, ¼ cup
Fruit or Vegetable	Honeydew Melon, ¼ cup
Fluid Milk	1% Milk, ¾ cup

Protein
Super Tuna

Fruit
Heavenly Honeydew

Vegetables
Boxing Beet

Grains
Rock 'n Roll

Dairy
1% Moo Milk

Tasty Taco

Protein
Big Bad Bandit Beans

Vegetables
Lovely Leafy Lettuce
Tangy Tomato

Grains
Tasty Tortilla

Dairy
1% Moo Milk