

## Eat, Trash Or Trade: New Survey Reveals What's Happening In School Lunchrooms Ⓣ

(NAPSA)—As many parents know, nutritious lunches help growing kids develop good eating habits—but what happens at school when no parent is around? Are the kids trashing, trading or enjoying those nutritious bag lunches?

To end this mealtime mystery the Lunchroom Monitor Survey polled parents and children nationwide. It discovered kids are trashing (73 percent) and trading (36 percent) parts of their lunch at least once a week. Kids most often swap for something sweet (16 percent) or salty (16 percent).

The survey also found 40 percent of kids have 20 to 30 minutes to eat their lunch, while almost 50 percent spend less than 15 minutes eating it. In fact, 56 percent of kids say the best part about lunchtime is hanging out with friends, while 17 percent say it's actually eating lunch.

Most parents say the biggest challenge is packing nutritious items that the child likes. The top four items typically found in brown bag lunches are sandwiches (90 percent), fruit (62 percent), chips (62 percent) and juice (61 percent). Nearly a third of parents, however, admit to occasionally sacrificing nutrition for convenience. The good news is convenient and nutritious lunches, which include children's favorite foods, can go hand in hand.

According to Jodie Shield, M.Ed., R.D., mother of three and co-author of the "American Dietetic Association Guide to Healthy Eating for Kids: How Your Children

Can Eat Smart from 5-12," parents just need to think outside the box—the lunchbox, that is. "Well-balanced lunches containing foods from the major food groups don't have to be boring," she says. "In fact, many prepackaged lunches can pack a powerful, tasty and nutritional punch—as well as deliver fun."

For example, prepackaged lunch kits such as Lunchables Fun Fuel combinations are based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid.

"Kids are picky eaters and it can be a struggle to get them to eat foods that are good for them. At the same time, parents need to remember kids also have stresses at school and lunchtime is their time to have fun and fuel up. So, it's nice to give them a break from the norm and pack a variety of fun and tasty food items," Shield adds.

Depending upon the variety, each prepackaged kit supplies about 22 to 33 percent of daily calories with less than 30 percent of them from fat. The Peanut Butter Pile-Ups, for instance, feature mini oat fiber bread slices, peanut butter, 100 percent fruit grape spread, Reduced Fat Cheese Nips, berry flavored organic applesauce and fat-free chocolate milk with vitamins A & D. The Pizza Pile-Ups are a good source of fiber from the oat fiber pizza crusts and protein and calcium from the reduced-fat cheese.

You can find Lunchables in grocery store refrigerated sections. For more information, tips, and games visit [www.lunchables.com](http://www.lunchables.com).