

January 6, 2010

Dear Wednesday Twos Lunch Bunch Parents and Caregivers,

We have some information to share with you about Lunch Bunch for the rest of the school year. Since we don't see you when you drop your child off in the morning and it's a little crazy at pick-up we're giving you this note. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. Our contact information is at the bottom.

When you pick up your child make sure that one of the teachers (Kathy and Patti are the regular teachers) knows that you have picked up your child. If someone who is not the normal picker-upper will be coming, make sure that either the regular teachers or the Lunch Bunch teachers are aware of the change.

Make sure your child's bucket has diapers, and wipes if necessary.

Due to severe allergies in several of the children who use our Lunch Bunch classroom, we must be very careful about what foods we allow to be eaten here. Any item that has a nut warning of any severity (for example, "manufactured in a facility that also processes tree nuts," or, "may contain peanuts") will be put back into your child's lunch container for later consumption. Items that are home-packaged are fine at Lunch Bunch, but anything that is likely to contain nuts, such as cookies or granolas bars, should have a note that says "no nuts" on it or in the lunch box to let us know you checked the packaging or that you know the recipe did not contain nuts. If we are unsure we will save the item for your child to eat later. Even the most experienced St. Mark's parent has made nut slip-ups, so please don't take offense if we hold back food we're not sure about.

We appreciate all the preparation--sectioned oranges and peeled eggs, for example--that you've done. We have 8 young children in our Lunch Bunch and we typically have only 25 minutes to eat once everyone has joined the class and washed hands. It is difficult for us to get to each child's lunch for

package opening as quickly as the children would like us to do, so your child will have to wait for his or her food less if everything is ready for eating right away. For sanitary reasons, we have been instructing the children to ask for help rather than using their teeth to attempt to open packages and we'd appreciate it if you'd reinforce that at home. It's hard to find packages or reusable containers that twos can open on their own. We don't mind opening them, but they're harder to open if we have to wash them first because someone tried to bite them open before asking for help.

If you pack a dessert it's likely your child will figure out a way to open and eat it before we even get a chance to help him or her with package opening, so if you don't want dessert eaten first leave it at home to eat after school. While we do encourage children to eat the healthy stuff first, we don't force a food order. They are learning to make choices, after all! Only give them the choices you want them to make.

Since Lunch Bunch is so short this year and some of the children are eating hearty snacks earlier in the morning, be prepared to serve the rest of lunch later. Some of them are not very hungry during Lunch Bunch and are very excited about the toys in the classroom so it's hard for them to sit and eat while they're with us. We encourage them to eat, but we won't force them to do so.

We hope everyone had a restful winter break and we're looking forward to the rest of the Lunch Bunch year!

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