

Tips for Taming Your Elementary-School-Aged Child's Hunger

A hungry child can be a sign of a growing child. As a child grows and develops their calorie needs increase. Foods have a purpose for growing children –to provide needed nutrients to keep their bodies free of disease and growing healthy. Choose foods that are easily recognized as whole foods –ones without a long list of ingredients. Be sure to include fruits, veggies and beans for their [fight-o-chemical plant power](#). Avoid giving too many empty, unnecessary calories from foods that have refined flours like crackers (NOT made from 100% whole grains or that contain added sugar) cookies snack foods and fruit chews.

Make sure to have regular meals. Sometimes kids will choose play time over meal time. So having a regular schedule will help them get in a rhythm of being hungry at meal times and eating a balanced healthy meal. This way, they avoid grazing through the day which can be easily misinterpreted as your child always being hungry.

Hunger can also be a sign of boredom, excitement, and sadness. So ask your child if he or she is really hungry or if something else is on his/her mind.

Here are some other tips to help address all-day hunger:

Quench the Thirst:

When a child is thirsty, they may mistake their thirst for hunger. So encourage water before snacks and meals.

- Have your child pick out a reusable water bottle. Be sure to fill it up often and encourage them to drink water *before* they feel thirsty! Make sure your water bottle is BPA free and does NOT contain Phthalates.
 - Make sure they are drinking water at school or when playing outside.
 - Role model by drinking adequate fluids
 - Invest in a carbon water filter to ensure safe drinking water
- Make your own flavored water with orange, lemon or cucumber slices.
- Consider making fruit flavored ice tea. I make a pitcher of herbal cranberry and orange teas in the morning to enjoy throughout the day. Children like the fruity flavored water.
- Add fresh mint to water to give it a cool refreshing taste.

Boost Fiber:

Overall, [higher fiber foods](#) will keep your child satisfied and feeling full for longer.

- Whole grain products have fiber. When choosing grains or bread products aim to include those that are 100% whole grain. Choose these over white products because of their high fiber content and because whole grain products still have the natural plant compounds attached to the fiber, which prevent disease.

- Also look for [cereals](#) that have at least 5 grams of fiber or more per serving and are lower in sugar. Choose cereals with