

# The **5** essential food groups

**A balanced diet is crucial for children's growth and development. It provides the nutrients they need for days full of playing and learning. A well-packed lunchbox helps improve their overall health, as well as their learning outcomes and social development.**

When packing a lunchbox, try to include items from the five main food groups:

## **1 Fruits & vegetables**

These are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibre, which are needed for healthy development. Try choosing fresh produce that is in season – not only will it taste better, but it will also be more affordable.

## **2 Grains**

Breads and cereals will provide the energy children need to take on the day! Choose whole grain varieties where possible, as they are more nutritious and will keep kids feeling full for longer.

## **3 Proteins**

Foods like lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, and seeds are excellent sources of protein. They are essential for growth and repair of body tissues. Some healthy lunchbox options include tinned tuna or salmon, lean chicken or turkey, boiled eggs, lentils or beans.

## **4 Dairy**

Foods such as milk, cheese, and yoghurt provide the calcium needed to grow strong bones and teeth.

## **5 Water**

Always include a bottle of water. It's the best thirst quencher and keeps children hydrated throughout their busy day.

**Remember, variety is key! Try to include different foods from each group to ensure your child gets a range of nutrients.**

*Helpful tip: Try freezing a water bottle and storing it with the lunch to keep it cool and safe until the lunch bell rings.*

