Quick Tips:
✓ Pack fruits & veggies instead of cookies & chips.
✓ Make a little extra salad for dinner and pack it in tomorrow’s lunch.
✓ Cheese & whole grain crackers, wraps & tuna, corn chips & bean dip, trail mix, a healthy breakfast bar & a hard boiled egg – think of new grain/protein combinations.
✓ Remember to PACK: Pack Assorted Colors for Kids
✓ Tired of sandwiches? Try salads, wraps, leftovers, soup or chili, different breads like pita, bagels or sandwich thins.
✓ Add fruits & veggies to a sandwich for crunch, flavor & good nutrition.
✓ Let your child plan, pack & participate!
✓ Include something fresh every day!
✓ Yogurt, a baggie of granola, and diced fruit lets your child make a yogurt parfait.
✓ Bite-sized and mini versions work well for small appetites.
✓ Add a love note to brighten their day!

Think Outside the Lunch Box
✓ Think of all the food groups-grains, protein, fruits, veggies & dairy-and create a balanced meal.
✓ Not used to wheat bread? Try a checkerboard sandwich with 1 slice wheat & 1 slice white. Cut into squares, then turn over 2 of the quarters to make a checkerboard. Fun!
✓ Kids need calcium. Pack skim or low fat milk, yogurt or cheese.
✓ Choose whole grains including popcorn, brown rice, oatmeal, whole corn products and whole wheat pasta.
✓ Kids love to dip! Try salsa, low fat dressing, peanut butter, hummus, tuna salad, yogurt.
✓ Make your own dried fruit & nut & seed mix and serve ¼ cup serving in a zipper bag.
✓ Water is a fine choice for your beverage. If you choose juice, make it 4 ounce, no sugar added, 100% juice.
✓ Soda & energy drinks have no place in a healthy child’s lunch.

Food Safety Basics:
✓ Include hand sanitizer or antibacterial wipes so hands can be washed before eating.
✓ Remember to add an ice pack or freeze a juice box or water bottle to keep cold food cold.
Lunch Box
Label Reading
Cheat Sheet

• The more words a product has in its name, the farther it is from the real food. “Prepared cheese product” and “processed cheese food” is not real cheese.

• Looking for whole grains? Look for the whole grains stamp or check the ingredient list to see if WHOLE is the first word describing the first ingredient. “Made with” or “Contains” whole grains just means it has some whole grains, not mostly whole grains. “Multi-grain” means it is made with several grains, such as wheat, corn, rye and oats, some of which may be whole grains.

• Breakfast bars and snack bars are tricky. Many are loaded with sugar. Look for little to no saturated fat, some protein and fiber, and less than about 10g of sugar per bar.

• Juice should be 100% juice. Look just above the Nutrition Facts box for the % juice in your product. Look just below the Nutrition Facts box to make sure there are no added sugars such as high fructose corn syrup, crystalline fructose, honey, or sugar and no sugar substitutes such as acesulfame-potassium, sucralose, or saccharin.

• Fruit punch, fruit drink, juice drink, flavored water, juice drink blends are NOT 100% juice. They often have added sugar, colorings and flavorings.

Get Packin’!
Check out these web sites for lunch ideas:

www.healthy-eating-made-easy.com

www.parenting.com/healthy-lunch-ideas-kids (see the Healthy Lunch Maker Tool)

www.lunchboxideas.org