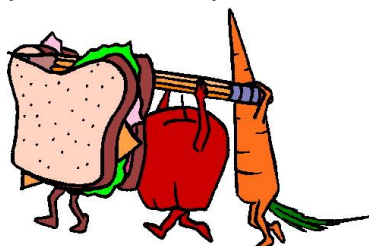


Tip Top Nutrition Helps Toddlers Learn



September may mean back to school for older kids with the resumption of familiar routines. But for your toddler, September may mean the first time at preschool and the beginning of a long learning career. While taking stock of everything your children need for the best start, don't overlook your toddler's diet. The foods your child does and does not eat can have a big impact on school success. Although an overall, well balanced diet is important, the following nutrients play a critical role in brain development and function, and thus, academic achievement over a lifetime



1. Energy: A child's brain depends on glucose for fuel. Something as simple as skipping breakfast can cause enough of a deficiency in blood sugar (glucose) to impair cognitive abilities. Kids who skip breakfast have shorter attention spans, score lower on tests and have more difficulty concentrating than well fed classmates. A child's liver can store only four hours worth of glucose, so a child needs to eat every four to five hours during the school day to keep blood sugar at a sufficient level for optimum brain function. [Earth's Best offers a wide variety of toddler breakfast foods](#) to get them off to a day of learning and a lifetime of success.

2. B-vitamins: B vitamins help unlock the energy in glucose. A deficiency in B vitamins can interfere with learning by causing personality changes that include aggressiveness, hostility, and depression. No one food supplies all the necessary B vitamins, so a variety of foods are important. Fortified breakfast cereals are a good source of B vitamins. Earth's Best and Sesame Street have teamed up to make [fortified cereals](#) perfect for getting kids the B vitamins they need.

3. Iron: Iron deficiency anemia is common in children. A child's brain is sensitive to slightly lowered iron levels even before blood tests indicate trouble. Iron plays two important roles: it carries oxygen in the blood and helps transport that oxygen into the cells where it is used. Iron anemic children have decreased attention spans and are less motivated to persist in intellectually challenging tasks. Serve iron fortified cereals for breakfast and include red meat, tuna, salmon or chicken on the menu at least three times per week. Serve lots of dark

green leafy vegetables, broccoli and legumes. Also look for fortified snacks such as [Earth's Best Sesame Street Smiley Snacks](#).



4. Folic acid: Folic acid is essential for the formation and maturation of red and white blood cells. A toddler with a deficiency in folic acid is tired, apathetic, irritable and forgetful. Raw fruits and vegetables are the best source of folic acid, especially orange juice and spinach.



5. Vitamin A: This nutrient is needed for proper development of the nervous system in the growing fetus. There is also growing evidence that it is needed for optimum brain function during life. Vitamin A is found in the form of Beta-Carotene in dark green and deep orange and yellow fruits and vegetables.

6. Zinc: Zinc is an integral part of the communication structure between nerve cells. Therefore it is important to proper brain function and deficiencies in zinc appear to be linked to cognitive impairment. Meat and seafood are the best sources of zinc. Peanuts, wheat germ, whole grain cereals, and pumpkin and squash seeds are also high in zinc. Many Earth's Best toddler foods are fortified with zinc such as [Sesame Street Sunny Day Snack Bars](#).