

# How to pack a fun-filled lunch for your back-to-schooler

As the kids go back to school this September, Canadian families begin to fall into a familiar routine, which includes packing lunches from Monday to Friday.

While the chore can be monotonous, there are fun ways to spice up a regular lunch and bring a smile to your child's face at the noon bell. They might be physically away from you, but you can show them you're still thinking of them even when you're not together.

"In fact, research shows that the first day back at school can be daunting for some children," says parenting expert, Dr. Michele Borba. "A recent study from Kellogg Canada showed that the majority of Canadian parents find their children need encouragement on their first day back at school. So why not surprise them with a fun-filled lunch to give them the boost they need."

Borba, author of 22 books including *The Big Book of*

Parenting Solutions, provides the following tips on how parents can add some pizzazz to their children's lunch bags.

1. A note from mom or dad in the lunch bag can be so exciting for a kid to find at the lunch bell. Whether it's a love note, or words of encouragement for a test, kids young and old love to be reminded that their parents are thinking of them even when they're apart. Rice Krispies Squares Bars now have writable wrappers which are a perfect way to send a little love and a tasty treat all in one.

2. No need to send a boring sandwich anymore. Build a sandwich the way you normally would and then cut it into imaginative shapes using cookie cutters in a variety of shapes and sizes. Your child will have so much more fun eating their nutritious lunch when it looks like stars or even gingerbread men.

3. Pack a small toy or game

into their lunch bag that they can use over afternoon recess with friends. Try packing in a bouncy ball, travel sized checker game or even stickers.

4. To include healthy food in their diet, try threading cheese cubes and pre-sliced fruit and veggies on a caramel apple stick like a kabob. By presenting regular food in an imaginative way, kids will love to show it off and eat it to the last bite.

5. While most juice boxes come with a straw, why not add in a silly straw to make the apple or grape juice that much more fun to drink.

Whether you try to add in one or a few of these ideas, the effect will be the same. Your child will rave about his or her "cool" lunch to their friends and feel happy that mom and dad took some extra time to make them feel special while they're back at school.

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