

Packing lunches? Start with this planning guide

Packing lunches may feel like a chore on busy mornings. Investing a little time to plan can go a long way in saving time, money and energy. These practical tips will help you plan easy, tasty and nutritious lunches for growing minds and bodies.

Invest in reusable containers. Buying reusable containers will help save money over time. They will also allow more options for what you can pack. An insulated bag and ice pack will help keep cold foods cold and safe to eat. An insulated food container can help keep hot foods like soup warm until lunchtime. Kids can refill reusable bottles with water throughout the day.

Consider lunch limits. To help children get the most out of the much-needed lunchtime boost, find answers to these questions.

What time is lunch? Lunchtime may be early or later in the day. With early lunches, frozen foods may not have time to thaw. With later lunches, your child might need a snack to bridge the gap between breakfast and lunch.

How long is lunchtime? The lunch period may be as short as 20 minutes. With short lunch periods, it is helpful to send foods that do not require preparation and that are easy to eat. For example, soup or salad may take longer to eat than cheese and

crackers or a sandwich. Is the school nut-free? Because of the increasing numbers of children who have food allergies and potentially serious outcomes, some schools do not allow peanuts or tree nuts. Examples of tree nuts include almonds, cashews and pecans. If your school is nut-free, try alternatives like sunflower or soy nut butter.

Can children open packages? Whether you pack reusable containers or prepackaged items, make sure your children can open them. If not, you can either open packages before you put them in the lunchbox or put the food in something that is easier to open.

Is there access to a microwave? Access to a microwave means you can send foods that need to be heated up. (Hello, leftovers!) If there is no microwave, make sure foods are ready to eat as packed.

Make a plan. When planning lunches, aim to include a protein, whole grain, fruit and vegetable. Choosing two to three staples from each of these groups will provide options for the week without breaking the bank. Protein ideas include hard-boiled eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese and canned beans. Whole-grain ideas include tortillas, crackers, pasta and frozen waffles. Fruits can be fresh, frozen or packaged in a fruit cup or pouch.

Vegetables can be fresh, frozen or reheated, including leftovers from dinner.

Keep it simple. Create a list of five to 10 main-dish ideas. You can use this over and over with the same or different ingredients. For example, you can use a whole-grain tortilla for a peanut butter and banana roll-up one day and a bean and cheese quesadilla the next. Serving familiar favorites in different ways gives children nutrition they need while also exposing them to new textures and flavors.

Get children involved. Include your children when you make the lunch plan. Invite them to help with grocery shopping. This can provide time to find new foods to try.

A little planning and creativity will help you pack lunches that fuel your children for the second part of their day. For more nutrition information and meal-planning tips, contact the Family and Consumer Sciences agent at the Simpson County Extension office.

Resources:
Courtney Luecking, Extension specialist for nutrition and health
Academy Nutrition Information Services Team. (2021, May 1). Banishing Brown Bag Boredom. Kids eat right. The Nutrition Source. (n.d.). Packing a Healthy Lunchbox. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Nancy Doyle is the Simpson County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences.

Pots & Pals: Finding the right support system for your roots

Selecting the right pot is essential for growing a healthy plant, yet choosing the ideal vessel can challenge even seasoned green thumbs.

Why does the container matter? Simply put, it directly affects the plant's future growth.

For instance, setting a small plant into a much larger pot than its root mass can traumatize or even kill it. Likewise, a big plant cannot adequately spread its roots when enclosed in a tiny pot.

And don't forget to make sure all of your pots have drainage holes. Without them, water can't escape and air pockets will not form in the soil, leading to water pooling and root suffocation.

What about plants that require consistent moisture? Well, pots made from plastic, glazed terracotta, or metal are your best choice. While clay pots and coir hanging baskets are beautiful to

look at and allow plants to breathe, they can dry out quickly. This leads to soil shrinkage and permanent root damage.

It's also worth noting that clean pots equal healthy plants. Leftover roots and debris can deplete nutrients and hinder new growth, so make sure to wash your containers before reusing them.

Finally, keep an eye on the temperature. Terracotta and plastic pots can crack when the climate changes, leaving a container that either needs repaired or replaced, depending on the damage.

I say all of that to ask this...

If selecting the perfect pot for a plant significantly impacts its growth and longevity, is the same not true of the friends we choose? After all, the people we surround ourselves with help create the vessels in which we grow.

To that point, here are three quick thoughts to ponder:

1.) Develop deep-rooted friendships by selecting the right group environment. A quiet person may find it challenging to thrive in a large friend network, while someone with a vibrant personality might struggle to grow in the company of introverted friends. Choose your habitat accordingly, and be willing to change it when necessary.

2.) Be cautious of fair-weather friends that crack under pressure. They may be pretty, but only available for a season, abandoning you when things get tough. Instead, seek dependable, honest, and grounded friendships built to last.

3.) Do your part to keep your social circle clean and protected. Be prepared to remove toxic behaviors, unnecessary drama, and chronic negativity from your life to ensure your emotional, physical, and mental health continues to flourish.

So remember, be it pots or pals, choose wisely to protect your roots.



BEVERLY BRAGG

FIRE

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department with equipment specifically designed for firefighting, replacing equipment currently used for that purpose that is not dedicated firefighting equipment.

“Our firefighters have done a good job making what they have work, but this gives them equipment that is actually designed for the job,” Hughes said. “Any time we can use grant funding to improve the equipment available to our fire department and better serve the community, that is a good opportunity for Auburn.”

Together, the two Logan County communities will receive \$4,477 in federal funding for fire equipment projects totaling \$8,955.

The Kentucky Division of Forestry administers the grants through the state's Energy and Environment Cabinet. The program helps volunteer fire departments across

Kentucky obtain wildland fire suppression equipment.

“Being a small rural community, we have agricultural fields and wooded areas all around us, and those fires can put firefighters in places where we can't always get a truck,” Adairville Fire Chief Zach Rouse said. “These backpack units will allow our firefighters to carry water with them and get directly to areas that are difficult to reach with our apparatus. Having four of them also means we can put multiple firefighters to work on a fire at the same time.”

“A lot of the areas we may have to reach are wooded, and access can be a challenge when you're dealing with a brush or wildland fire,” Auburn Fire Chief Jay Woodward said. “Having a skid unit designed for firefighting will give us a better way to get water and equipment into those areas and help us respond more effectively. It's an important upgrade for the department and gives our firefighters a tool that's

actually built for the work we're asking it to do.”

The Adairville and Auburn awards are among 19 grants in a multi-provider agreement administered through the Division of Forestry's Madisonville No. 1 Branch. The Commonwealth may reimburse recipients under the agreement up to a combined \$78,226.

Under the grant terms, participating departments must purchase the wildland fire suppression equipment identified in their 2026 Volunteer Fire Assistance applications and provide cash or in-kind contributions to match the Commonwealth's share.

The grant agreement is effective Oct. 1, 2026, through June 1, 2027. Departments must also submit a final report after the grant period ends, detailing the equipment purchased and other project activities.

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HIGH

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designing, prototyping, testing and programming a robot while developing a strategy for competition.

“With award funding, we plan to support students through every stage of that process,” Kisslebaugh said.

The funding will help students build and refine a competition robot, develop game strategy and improve driver control and teamwork. It also will support engineering notebook documentation and provide additional opportunities for students to repeatedly test, evaluate and revise their designs.

“Our goal is to give students the tools and experiences needed to respond to a brand-new challenge with confidence, creativity, and discipline,” Kisslebaugh said.

Beyond preparing for competition, Kisslebaugh said the funding will give students greater access to hands-on opportunities to apply skills learned in the classroom.

“For our students, opportunities like this mean access,” he said. “Robotics gives them the chance to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it through problem-solving, engineering, coding, teamwork, and competition. More importantly, it gives students a chance to discover abilities and interests they may not have realized they had.”

The award also sup-

ports Russellville Independent Schools' effort to develop robotics opportunities spanning multiple grade levels rather than limiting students to a single experience.

“As we continue building our robotics program from elementary through high school, support like this helps us create a pathway instead of just a single experience,” Kisslebaugh said. “Students can begin developing these skills at a young age and continue growing throughout their time in our district.”

Kisslebaugh said the skills students develop through robotics can benefit them regardless of the careers they eventually choose.

“Whether they eventually pursue engineering, technology, skilled trades, computer science, or something completely different, they are gaining the confidence to solve problems, work with others, and understand that those career opportunities are within their reach,” he said.

The local effort reflects the broader purpose of the TVA program, which is intended to expand student access to hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. Funding may be used to establish new robotics programs or enhance existing programs, including purchasing equipment and materials.

This is the second year TVA and Bicentennial Volunteers Inc., an independent nonprofit organization of TVA retirees and employees, have partnered to provide the

robotics awards.

“TVA and BVI are deeply committed to expanding access to robotics education across our seven-state region,” Interim TVA President and CEO Mike Skaggs said in announcing the awards. “These hands-on skills open doors to a wide range of career paths, and we're focused on preparing today's students to become tomorrow's skilled, confident workforce.”

Russellville High School was one of two Kentucky recipients identified by TVA. The IMPACT Center for Leadership and Innovation in Bowling Green also received \$5,000.

Adam Wolcott, BVI director of operations, said robotics programs provide students with experiences extending beyond building and programming machines.

“Robotics gives students something lasting: the experience of problem-solving under pressure, working as a team and seeing their own ideas come to life,” Wolcott said.

Schools and nonprofit organizations receiving electricity from local power companies served by TVA were eligible to apply for the awards.

TVA is a federal corporation and the nation's largest public power supplier, providing electricity to more than 10 million people across seven southeastern states.

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

On or about July 31, 2026, North Logan Water District #1 will file an application with the Kentucky Public Service Commission to adjust its monthly rates for water service. North Logan Water District #1 is making this application to comply with the Kentucky Public Service Commission's Order of February 12, 2025, in Case No. 2025-00003. North Logan Water District #1's application will be filed pursuant to the procedures set forth in 807 KAR 5 :07.6. Under those procedures, the proposed rates may not be placed into effect until the Kentucky Public Service Commission has issued an order approving the proposed rates or six (6) months from the date of the filing of the application, whichever occurs first.

North Logan Water District #1 proposes the following rates for water service:

CURRENT AND PROPOSED RATES						Change(\$)	Change(%)
Current Rates 5/8" x 3/4" Meter		Proposed Rates 5/8" x 3/4" Meter					
First 2,000	\$ 26.15	Minimum Bill	First 2,000	\$ 33.49	Minnum Bill	\$ 7.34	28.07%
Next 2,000	0.01195	per gallon	Next 2,000	0.01530	per gallon	\$ 0.00335	28.03%
Next 6,000	0.00764	per gallon	Next 6,000	0.00978	per gallon	\$ 0.00214	28.01%
Next 15,000	0.00725	per gallon	Next 15,000	0.00929	per gallon	\$ 0.00204	28.14%
Over 25,000	0.00685	per gallon	Over 25,000	0.00877	per gallon	\$ 0.00192	28.03%

If the Public Service Commission approves the proposed water rate, the increase in a customer's monthly bill will be:

Customer	Average Usage (gals)	Monthly Bill at Current Rates	Monthly Bill at Proposed Rates	Monthly Bill Increase (%)	\$ Increase
5/8" x 3/4" meter	7,054	\$ 73.38	\$ 93.96	28.04%	\$ 20.58

The Kentucky Public Service Commission has established Case No. 2026-00195 to review North Logan Water District #1's application. Any person may examine this application at North Logan Water District #1's office, 3221 Lewisburg Road, Russellville, Kentucky 42276, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or at the Kentucky Public Service Commission's offices at 211 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort, Kentucky, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or through the Public Service Commission's Web site at <https://psc.ky.gov/CaseNewCaseFilings/2026-00195>.

Comments regarding the application may be submitted to the Kentucky Public Service Commission through the Commission's Web Site at <https://psc.ky.gov/Case/SearchCasesPublicComments> or by e-mail to pscled@ky.gov or by mail to the Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 615, Frankfort, Kentucky 40602.

The rates contained in this notice are the rates proposed by North Logan Water District #1. However, the Kentucky Public Service Commission may order rates to be charged that differ from the proposed rates. Such action may result in rates for consumers other than the rates in this notice.

A person may submit a timely written request for intervention to the Kentucky Public Service Commission, P. O. Box 615, Frankfort, Kentucky 40602, establishing the grounds for the request including the person's status and interest. If the Kentucky Public Service Commission does not receive a written request for intervention within thirty (30) days of the initial publication of notice, it may take final action on the proposed rates.

North Logan Water District #1