Dear Parents and Caregivers,

When preparing foods you receive in your child’s backpack — or any foods — you want to do so safely so no one in your family gets sick. Start by keeping backpacks and books off the kitchen table and counters. Here are some other tips for safely preparing and handling foods:

- Wash your hands and kitchen surfaces often; wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Also wash your hands after playing with pets or using the bathroom.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water just before eating them raw or preparing them for cooking or baking.
- Use a thermometer to determine if your food is fully cooked and safe to eat.
- Always use clean knives, forks, spoons, and plates. Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw food.
- To safely save leftovers or takeout foods, refrigerate them within two hours.

Here are some tips for safely using a microwave oven:

- Always use special glass or plastic containers safe for microwave use. Do not use the following in the microwave because they might crack, burn, or warp: 1) Regular dinnerware or cookware; 2) Plastic product containers, such as margarine tubs or yogurt cartons; or 3) Metal or aluminum foil containers.
- Foods and liquids can heat unevenly in a microwave oven, even if it has a turntable, so it’s a good idea to stir or give a quarter-turn to containers (with food or liquid) midway through cooking.
- Cover microwave-safe containers with a lid or plastic sheeting and vent the lid or wrap the sheeting loosely to let steam escape. The moist heat created will help destroy harmful bacteria and ensure uniform cooking.

Physical Activity Corner

Children should get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. "Moderate" activity means you can talk while you move, while “vigorous” activity means you can only say a few words without stopping to catch your breath.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (n.d.); Clean: Germs can be hiding just about anywhere; retrieved from http://www.foodsafety.gov/multimedia/

APPLE SALAD

Servings: 8

Ingredients
2 cups apples (diced)
1 cup celery (diced)
½ cup raisins
½ cup nuts (walnuts work well)
2 tablespoons lite mayonnaise-type dressing (or mayonnaise)
1 tablespoon orange juice

Directions
1. Mix orange juice with salad dressing or mayonnaise.
2. Toss apples, celery, raisins, and nuts with the dressing mixture.