



Mood-Nourishing Nutrition Checklist

Small, steady choices for regulated children

Build Balanced Meals & Snacks

- Include a source of protein each time they eat
- Add a natural fat (nut butter, avocado, olive oil, seeds)
- Offer a complex carbohydrate (whole grains, potatoes, oats, beans)
- Add color when possible (fruit or veg)
- Keep portions simple and familiar

Support Steady Blood Sugar

- Avoid long gaps between meals/snacks
- Pair carbs with protein to prevent spikes
- Offer a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack
- Keep emergency snacks on hand for “wobbly moments”

Hydration for Mood & Focus

- Encourage small sips throughout the day
- Offer water before juice or milk
- Add fruit slices for flavor if needed
- Check hydration after big emotions or outdoor play

Sensory-Friendly Eating

- Offer at least one “safe” or familiar food each meal
- Keep textures predictable
- Serve foods separately if your child prefers it
- Reduce pressure — gentle exposure works better than forcing

Brain-Supporting Foods

- Protein sources (eggs, yogurt, chicken, beans, tofu)
- Healthy fats (avocado, nuts/seeds, olive oil, salmon)
- Fiber-rich carbs (oats, whole grains, potatoes, fruit)
- Magnesium-rich foods (spinach, bananas, pumpkin seeds)
- Iron-supportive foods (leafy greens, beans, fortified cereals)

Predictable Eating Rhythm

- Breakfast within 1–2 hours of waking
- Snacks every 2–3 hours
- Dinner at a consistent time
- A calming, screen-free eating environment when possible

Gentle Mealtime Practices

- Keep the table low-pressure
- Use simple language: “Try one bite if you want”
- Model curiosity with food
- Celebrate effort, not intake
- End meals before frustration builds

Daily Mood-Nourishing Essentials

- Protein at each meal/snack
- Hydration
- Color on the plate
- Predictable rhythm
- Low-pressure environment
- One familiar food offered every time

This checklist provides a framework for supporting children's mood and well-being through nutrition. Remember that every child is different, so it's important to tailor these guidelines to their individual needs and preferences. Consistency and a gentle approach are key to creating positive and lasting change.