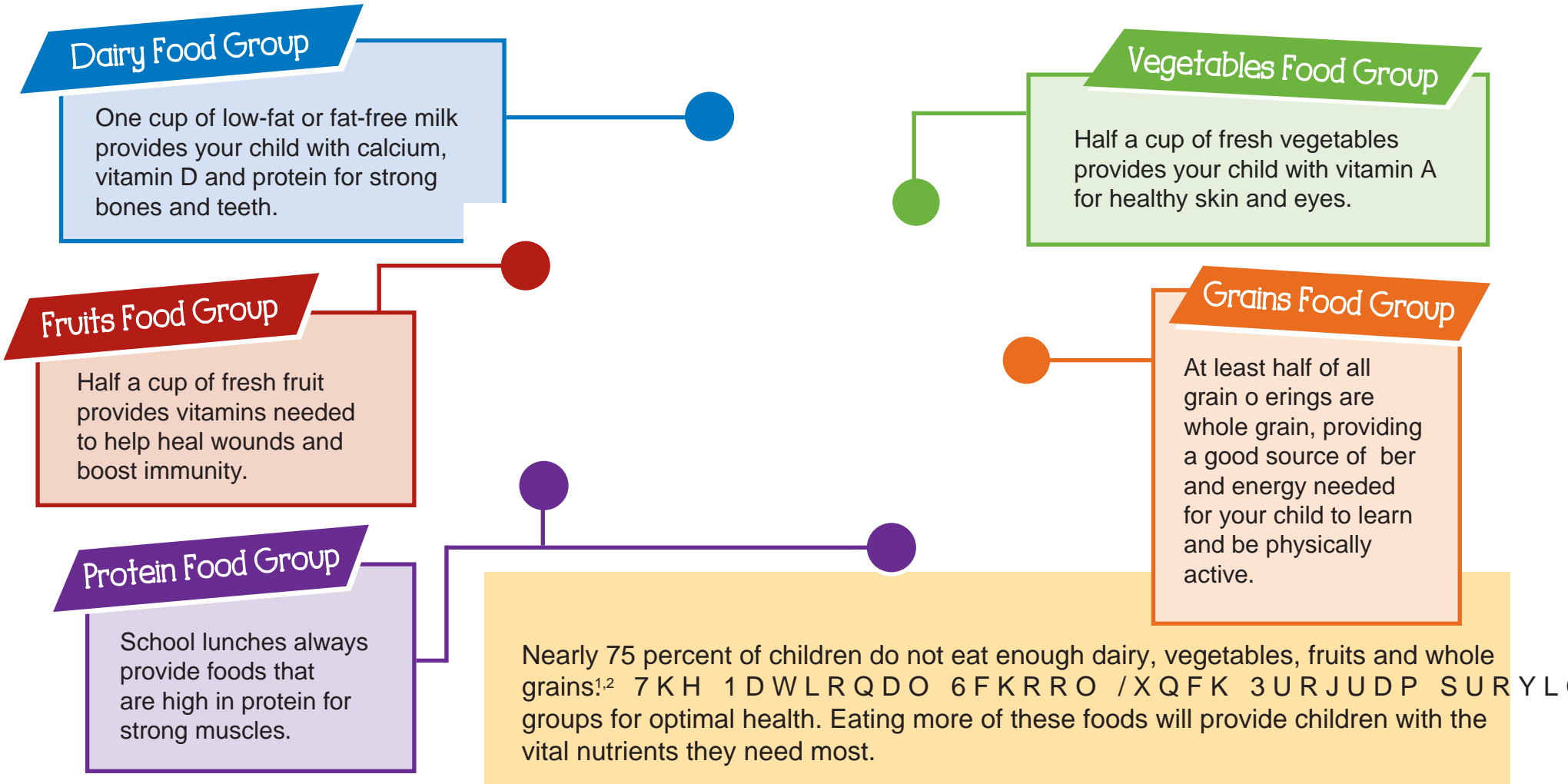


# SCHOOL MEALS: A SMART AND EASY CHOICE!

Children who eat lunches provided by the school meals program are more likely to eat a greater variety of foods—providing nutrients that are often missing from children's diets.



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Adding Dairy, Vegetables and Fruits to students' diets improves academic performance

Students who participate in school breakfast or lunch programs show improvement in grades and standardized test scores.



Here are a few things you can do to help encourage your child to eat more of these foods:

Ask your child which vegetables and fruits they tried today.

Encourage your child to try new vegetables and fruits

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Go over the school menu with your child ahead of time so they can think about what they want to eat.



“School meals are helpful because at that meal, I know she is eating healthy.”

Parent of a student at Nelson Elementary School, Tustin, CA

School lunches taste good to children, and they are healthy!

### School Lunches:

- Contain one-third of the recommended nutrients needed each day.
- Provide healthy, balanced meals.
- Ensure students have the option to select dairy, vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- Enhance children's learning abilities by fueling their minds with nutrient-rich foods.
- Save time by not having to pack lunch.



In California, 373 school districts actively participate in Farm to School to bring in local milk, vegetables, fruits and protein, reaching over 3,446,240 students each year.

Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Service Nutrition Standards, National School Lunch Program  
1. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. 2015.  
2. [https://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/nutrition\\_insights\\_uploads/Insight32.pdf](https://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/nutrition_insights_uploads/Insight32.pdf)  
3. Bradley BJ, et al. J. Adol. Health. 2013; 52:523-532  
4. USDA Farm to School Census, 2015

About Dairy Council of California  
Dairy Council of California provides science-based nutrition information and programs to elevate the health of children and parents in California through the pursuit of lifelong healthy eating habits.

