



Mid-morning snack – or “what’s cool?”



Tipp von Esther Kern



The good old sandwich. It actually makes a lot of sense as a mid-morning snack. It fills you up. It's fresh. You can vary the fillings each day. But watch out: it's not necessarily cool. What my son finds cool are fish-shaped crisps. Or pizza crackers. Or chocolate-covered cereal bars. Because that's what the others have. And when the sandwich regularly starts coming back, uneaten, in your child's lunch box – that's when you have to take the issue of what is 'cool' and 'uncool' seriously. And ask yourself: should my son be the only one who never has anything cool to share with the others? The one who scrounges food from others? It goes without saying that no parent wants that. So, you try and come up with a strategy. Mine varies. After a full year at school, it still isn't strict and ranges from 'putting my foot down' to Minipic snack days to saying "then let's just go shopping and you can choose what you want". Sadly, his preferences are for food that comes wrapped in plastic or foil. With lots and lots of E numbers. And when you take a closer look at the ingredients, you discover that almost all of these snacks are prepared using palm oil.

In other words, letting my son choose means abandoning most of my principles. Nevertheless, I let him do so on occasion. However, I still keep trying to make sandwiches and good quality spiced sausage seem appetizing to him. My main concern is that there should be one rule for all at school. If I had my way, I'd



ban sweets from the playground altogether. Officially, they're not allowed but you still frequently find them in children's snack boxes. I'd also like to see ultraprocessed foods, with all their packaging and preservatives, disappear from the list of approved snacks. Because if none of the other kids had them, they wouldn't be an issue for me either. And yes, this is not my usual way of thinking. Normally I'm against banning things and in favour of raising awareness and letting people make their own, informed choices. But when it comes to children's eating habits, I think we have a long way to go to catch up with developments – which often leave me speechless. That's why I believe the state should take a more active stance on food education.

PS: Nuts seem to work pretty well for my son – even without shiny packaging and E numbers. And sometimes a spicy sausage from the 'Das Pure' brand (www.daspure.ch). And carrots never seem to go out of fashion.