

## Shovel It In, Kids. And Quiet Down While You're At It.

How long does it take you to eat your lunch?

And what's on your lunch menu, generally speaking?

Today I surprised my oldest and snuck up to school with a bag of processed goodness from a certain "Clown-Based Establishment" in our town. That's right, [McDonald's](#) was in the house school. My son was over the moon with the revelation that meat sandwiches and apple slices would be replaced with cheeseburgers and fries. I, of course, gazed at the luke-warm patty sitting neatly on its yellow paper and calculated how I would completely nullify my morning workout in just one hearty serving of grease.

Super.

At any rate, this is not a post about the cuisine found at the [Golden Arches](#). It is about school cafeterias and what I learned sitting at a round table of third-graders in the middle of the day:

1. They get *fifteen minutes* to eat their lunch. Some of you are probably thinking it takes you that long to relieve yourself [ahem], so how in the name of all that is holy could kids consume an entire lunch in fifteen minutes? Good question. This is how:

2. They eat only the good stuff. A sweet boy and friend of my son was sitting a few butt-spaces over

from us. I took mental notes on *what he chose to eat* from his bag-lunch.

- [1] [Jell-o](#) chocolate/vanilla swirl pudding cup
- [2] Chips 'Ahoy cookies
- [1] bag of mostly crushed potato chips which were literally jammed into his mouth while the bell rang...before he politely declined my offer of a napkin and proceeded to smear salted hands down the front of his pants. Mmmm.

3. It is loud and stressful. Now, I must commend our school for maintaining high and clear

expectations and having disciplinary procedures in place; however, 100+ kids in a small echoey place?

Not ideal.

4. Did I mention they get ***fifteen minutes*** to eat? And, might I highlight the fact that if they

can't properly stab their own [Capri Sun](#) or if you forgot to add a fork to their lunch box, they

have to raise their hand and *wait* for a helper to come to their aid. Again, it makes sense to

not have dozens of small bodies bustling around, but for real. We're down to twelve

minutes--best case scenario.

{EXHALE}

I guess the moral of the story is this : pack light, pack little, and tell your kids to sit down and

shovel it in.

TICK.

TOCK.

*Time's a'wastin.'*



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