



**AT THE COUNTER** on Friday, Adrian Chambers (left) got his lunch plate from Angie Erickson. After lunch at Oberlin Elementary School, Tyler Nichols (above) sat in a swing while Gage Cressler pushed him.

## Students choose items to fill their lunch plates at the grade school

The girl reached into the large metal cooler and came out with a small carton of white milk before moving forward in line for silverware, a tray, napkin and a plate of food.

The 181 students at Oberlin Elementary School get lunch Monday through Friday in two shifts, with the first group arriving in the cafeteria at 11:25 a.m. and the second at 11:55 a.m. The kindergarten through third graders eat in the first shift, followed by fourth through sixth grade.

Last Friday, the main course was chicken nuggets. Students matched the chicken with milk, salad, fruit and vegetables.

The kids do get some choices on what they want to eat, said Principal Duane Dorshorst. They are required to pick a minimum of three different servings, although those don't have to be from different food groups.

A carton of milk, he said, does count as one serving.

One of the reasons the students get to choose, said Mr. Dorshorst, is it helps them learn how to make healthy choices. By letting the kids choose, he said, they are more likely to eat what they take. That helps the district cut back on waste.

Teachers and staff, including Principal Duane Dorshorst and Administrative Assistant Mardi Lohofener, walk around the cafeteria making sure the students eat and that everything runs smoothly.

After lunch, the kids get a 20-minute recess before heading back to class.

Meals served at the grade school are cooked at Decatur Community High School, then driven across town in the district's yellow van.

The schools' cafeteria staff normally serves 175 lunches a day, Mr. Dorshorst said.



**HER PLATE** in hand, Lily Marine (above) went to find a seat in the lunch room while Amy Wentz (right) played outside. Dayton Kempt, Tabor Erickson and Gatlin Hissong (below) ate their lunches.

