



How Do They Compare? Child Nutrition Programs Meal Pattern Requirements

*Please note: This chart only addresses meals served to children age 1 year and older as well as adults. It does not address the infant meal pattern requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast (SBP) Programs (jointly referred to as School Meal Programs). Additionally, the chart is based on the updated CACFP meal patterns and the updated pre-school meal patterns in the School Meal Programs. These updated requirements go into effect October 1, 2017.

| Meal Pattern Requirement | Child and Adult Care Food Program (and Schools' Pre-K Meal Patterns) | School Meal Programs (NSLP and SBP) | K-12 Afterschool Snack Service (under NSLP) | Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Milk | | | | |
| Fat content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year olds: whole milk • 2 year olds and older: low-fat or fat-free milk • Yogurt may be served in place of milk once per day for adults only | Low-fat or fat-free | No restrictions | No restrictions |
| Flavored milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibited for children 0 through 5 years old • Must be fat-free when served to children 6 years old and older and adults | Must be fat-free | No restrictions | No restrictions |
| Non-dairy beverages (fluid milk substitutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to participants with special | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to non-disabled students with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to non-disabled students with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed for SFSP sponsors • School sponsors claiming meals under SFSP may serve non-dairy beverages that are |



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| | <p>dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian, adult participant, or a person on behalf of the adult participant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastmilk may be served in lieu of fluid milk; a written request is not required Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal or snack | <p>medical or special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal | <p>medical or special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable snack | <p>nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to non-disabled students with medical or special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian or licensed health care professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal or snack |
| Vegetables/Fruit | | | | |
| Components | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables and fruit are one component at breakfast Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch, supper, and snack | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only the fruit component is required at breakfast; vegetables may be offered in place of fruits as long as 2 cups/week of under consumed vegetables (dark green, red/orange, beans and peas, or other vegetables) are included on the weekly breakfast menu Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch | Vegetables and fruit are one component | Vegetables and fruit are one component at all meals and snacks |



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| Vegetable subgroups | No requirement | Must offer specific serving amount of each vegetable subgroup (dark green vegetables, red-orange vegetables, beans and peas, starchy vegetables, other vegetables) over the course of a week (NSLP only) | No requirements | No requirements |
| Full-strength juice (100% juice) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May count towards the entire vegetable or fruit component no more than once per day • Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component | May count towards no more than half of the vegetables or fruits offered over the week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May count towards the entire vegetable/fruit component • Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May count towards no more than half of the vegetable/fruit requirement at lunch and supper • Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component |
| Crediting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit credit as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit) • Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit credit as twice the amount offered (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit) • Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount offered (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable) | All fruits and vegetables are credited based on volume served with the exception of tomato paste and tomato puree which credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¼ cup dried fruit = ¼ cup fruit • ½ cup raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable |



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| Grains | | | | |
| Whole grain-rich | Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day | All grains offered must be whole grain-rich (exemptions allowed through school year 2016-2017) | No whole grain-rich requirement | No whole grain-rich requirement |
| Grain-based desserts | Grain-based desserts cannot count toward the grain requirement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts per week may be offered as part of the grains component at lunch • No restrictions at breakfast | No restrictions | Allowed only at snacks and breakfast meals |
| Breakfast cereals | Must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce | No sugar limit – the cap is generated by the dietary specifications for the weekly menu | No sugar limit | No sugar limit |
| Crediting | Based on ounce equivalents (starting October 1, 2019) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on ounce equivalents • Non-creditable grains (e.g. bran, germ, etc.) are limited to no more than 2% or less than 0.25 ounce equivalents per portion | Based on ounce equivalents | Based on serving sizes |



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| Meat/Meat Alternates | | | | |
| Tofu | Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight) | Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight) | Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight) | Not creditable |
| Yogurt (including soy yogurt) | Must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces | No sugar limit per product – the cap is generated by the dietary specifications for the weekly menu | No sugar limit | No sugar limit |
| Meat/meat alternates in place of grains <u>at breakfast</u> | May substitute meat/meat alternate for the entire grain component no more than 3 times per week | May substitute 1 ounce equivalent meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met, or it may be served as an extra within the dietary specifications for the weekly menu | Not applicable | May be served as an extra food item |
| Dietary Specifications | | | | |
| Dietary specifications | Sugar limits on breakfast cereals and yogurt (see above) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meals must, on average, meet weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium | No dietary specifications | No dietary specifications |



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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food products served in meals must contain zero grams of trans fat | | |
| Meal Service Options | | | | |
| Offer versus serve | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed in adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs, only. At lunch or supper, participants must select at least 3 food components out of the 5 components offered; at breakfast, at least 4 food items must be offered and participants must select 3 items No ½ cup vegetable or fruit requirement Not allowed at snack service Not allowed in pre-k | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required in high schools. At lunch, students must select at least 3 food components out of the 5 components offered; at breakfast, menu planner must offer 4 food items and students must select 3 food items. Students must select at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable at breakfast and lunch Optional for middle and elementary schools Not allowed at snack service | Not allowed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed at all SFSP sites, regardless of location type or sponsorship. At lunch, children must select 3 food components out of the 4 components offered; at breakfast, at least 4 food items must be offered and children must select 3 items No ½ cup vegetable or fruit requirement Not allowed at snack service |
| Family style meals | Allowed in all CACFP settings | Allowed in all schools and RCCIs | Allowed in all afterschool snack settings | Allowed only at camps and closed enrolled sites |