

OSPI Child Nutrition Services Reference Sheet

Implementing Share Tables

Using “share tables” is an innovative strategy that encourages nutritious food consumption and reduces food waste in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Requirements

[SP 41-2016, CACFP 13-2016, SFSP 15-2016: Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs](#) provides information about share tables and outlines the food safety requirements that child nutrition program operators must follow when choosing to include share tables in their meal service.

Share tables allow food or beverage items to be reused in several ways, depending on the program’s preference:

- ✓ Children may place whole food or beverage items they choose not to eat on a share table, provided the practice is in compliance with local and state health and food safety codes.
- ✓ Children may take an additional serving of a food or beverage item from the share table at no cost.
- ✓ Food or beverage items left on the share table may be re-served and claimed for reimbursement during another meal service. For example, eligible items leftover from a school lunch may be served during an afterschool program.
- ✓ Food or beverage items may be donated to a nonprofit organization, such as a community food bank, homeless shelter, or other charitable nonprofit organization. See [SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012: Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs](#).
- ✓ Share tables must operate in compliance with the [Washington State Food Code](#) (page 40).
 - Sponsors should consult with their local health department to ensure that all food safety precautions are met.

Reminders

- ✓ Share tables may not be used for adult consumption, nor may they be used for programs outside of child nutrition, except for food donation, which is outlined in the policy memorandum above.
- ✓ The food cannot be:
 - Used by an outside program.
 - Given directly to families.
 - Left in a classroom for extra snacks throughout the week
- ✓ Sponsors should use forecasting to determine the correct numbers of meals to plan and serve, limiting the number of leftovers and re-servicing those leftovers when possible.



Resources

- [SP 41-2016, CACFP 13-2016, SFSP 15-2016; Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012: Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Washington State Retail Food Code](#)

Acronym Reference

- CACFP – Child and Adult Care Food Program
- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- SFSP – Summer Food Service Program