



Updated Meal Pattern

The updated CACFP meal pattern takes effect October 1, 2017. CACFP sponsors, centers, and homes have approximately one month left to start implementing the changes. Although most have probably made some changes, keep in mind the effective date for all changes is one month away. If you have not started, now is the time to do so.

You may have started slowly, adding one new requirement at a time. By making the changes gradually, you will adapt them in a short period of time, and the updated meal pattern requirements will soon become a part of your daily routine. The new requirements address the following groups.

- Infants
 - o birth through 5 months
 - o 6 through 11 months
- Children
 - o 1-2 years old
 - o 3-5 years old
 - o 6-12 years old
 - o 13-18 years old in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters

Review the meal pattern updates and make a to-do list of new items to change or start. Menus and milk can be easy changes.

Using skim or 1% milk may already be in place at your center. Remember, serve 1 year old children whole milk, and serve children 2 through 5 years old unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk.

If you foresee any issues and need training, ICN trains all over the country (including Hawaii, Alaska, and the U.S. Territories). Training comes at no cost to child nutrition programs. If you are interested in ICN's CACFP Meal Pattern training, talk to your State agency or contact ICN directly to find out when your staff can be trained. Visit the ICN website: www.theicn.org. Remember all ICN trainings and resources are FREE!

Although there are various changes in the CACFP meal patterns. Here is a summary of the main changes along with some best practices. For a copy of this information along with additional best practices, visit the USDA Food and Nutrition Services CACFP website. (See references for specific links.)



Updated Infant Meal Pattern

Encourage and Support Breastfeeding

- Providers may receive reimbursement for meals when a breastfeeding mother comes to the child care center or child care home and directly breastfeeds her infant.
- Only breastmilk and infant formula are served to infants 0 through 5 month olds.



Developmentally Appropriate Meals

- The current meal pattern has three age groups, Birth through 3 Months, 4 through 7 Months, and 8 through 11 Months. The updated meal pattern has two age groups, 0 through 5 months old and 6 through 11 month olds.
- Solid foods are gradually introduced around 6 months of age, as developmentally appropriate.

More Nutritious Meals

- Requires a vegetable or fruit, or both, to be served at snack for infants 6 through 11 months old
- No longer allows juice, cheese food, or cheese spread to be served
- Allows ready-to-eat cereals at snack

Updated Children Meal Pattern



Greater Variety of Vegetables and Fruits

- The previously combined fruit and vegetable component is now a separate vegetable component and a separate fruit component.
- Juice is limited to once per day.

More Whole Grains (Children)

- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich;
- Grain-based desserts no longer count toward the grain component; and
- Ounce equivalents (oz eq) are used to determine the amount of creditable grains (starting October 1, 2019).

Updated Children Meal Pattern, continued

More Protein Options

- Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast, a maximum of three times per week.
- Tofu counts as a meat alternate.

Age Appropriate Meals

- A new age group to address the needs of older children 13 through 18 years old.

Less Added Sugar

- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces.
- Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.

Making Every Sip Count

- Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year olds; unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk must be served to children 2 through 5 years old; and unflavored low-fat, unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free must be served to children 6 years old and older and adults.
- Non-dairy milk substitutes that are nutritionally equivalent to milk may be served in place of milk to children or adults with medical or special dietary needs.
- Yogurt may be served in place of milk once per day for adults only.

Additional Improvements

- Offer versus serve is extended to at-risk afterschool programs.
- Frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods on-site.

Remember, there is help from your sponsor, State agency, or ICN.

For additional information, refer to these resources:

- USDA Team Nutrition's Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs
<http://icn.ms/2w7lBem>
- USDA Updated Meal Standards Charts:
 - o Infants = <http://icn.ms/2v78VXB>
 - o Children - <http://icn.ms/2v5p0xu>
 - o Adults - <http://icn.ms/2ha8O8y>

In the puzzle at the end of this memo, see if you can find the CACFP-related words and phrases.

References

United States Department of Agriculture. (3/27/2017). *Infants one-page summaries of the updated meal standards*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_InfantMealPattern_FactSheet_V2.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture. (3/27/2017). *One-page summaries of the updated meal standards*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_MealBP.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture. (3/27/2017). *Infant updated meal pattern*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_infantmealpattern.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture. (3/27/2017). *Child updated meal pattern*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childmealpattern.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture. (3/27/2017). *Adults updated meal pattern*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_adultmealpattern.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture. (3/27/2017). *Best practices*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf

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