

MENU PLANNING

Meals served in the NSLP should always be appealing, nutritious, well-balanced and designed so that, over a period of time, they will provide children with approximately one-third of the nutrients they need according to the Recommended Dietary Allowances. They should also conform to the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans – see Appendix D.

We have also included in Appendix E, F, and G, the Menu Plans and meal requirements for **School Lunch**, **School Breakfast**, and the **Afterschool Snack Program**. These charts list the food components and the minimum quantities required, by age/grade groups, for complete, reimbursable meals. As of July 1st, 2012, all schools and RCCIs are required to operate the same food-based meal pattern under the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA).

Meal Requirements: National School Lunch Program

For the Lunch Program, there are special requirements concerning the minimum daily and weekly amounts of various food groups (components). RCCIs will follow their own specific meal pattern chart because the number of operating days per week is 7, as opposed to 5 days for schools.

A complete lunch consists of five different food components in required serving sizes. See Appendix E for specific details on the required serving sizes for the examples below:

- Meat/Meat Alternate
- Vegetable
- Fruit
- Grains/Bread
- Fluid Milk

Sample Lunch Menu	Food Item	Food Component
Turkey Sandwich	Turkey Whole Wheat Bread	Meat/Meat Alternate Grain
Tossed Salad	Lettuce, Tomatoes and Carrots	Vegetable
Banana	Banana	Fruit
Milk	Milk	Milk

Meal Requirements: School Breakfast Program

A complete breakfast consists of four food items from the three food components:

- Grains (can add Meat/Meat Alternative and count as Grain)
- Fruit (can also serve Vegetable and count as Fruit)
- Milk

Sample Breakfast Menu	Food Item	Food Component
Sausage Biscuit Sandwich	Sausage Biscuit	Grain (Meat/Meat Alternate counting as a Grain) Grain
Apple Juice	Apple Juice	Fruit
Milk	Milk	Milk

Offer versus Serve (OvS)

Offer versus Serve (OvS) regulations were introduced in 1975 to reduce the amount of plate waste in the NSLP. OvS allows children to choose a specified minimum number of food items for breakfast and food components for lunch from those offered. These regulations mandate that the OvS provision be implemented in institutions serving students of a high school grade level as defined by the State. However, this provision is optional in RCCIs for any grade level because it may be difficult to administer OvS to institutionalized children, particularly when there are special circumstances such as special diet or security concerns.

Nevertheless, in certain institutions where it is desirable, officials may wish to offer this option. In RCCIs implementing OvS in their lunch program, children **must be offered all five components**. All children must choose at least full portions of **three** of the five components offered. The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 further requires each reimbursable meal to include a minimum of ½ cup of fruit, vegetable or combination of the two.

RCCIs which have OvS in their breakfast programs must offer all **four** food items to all children. Children then have the option to choose at least **three** of the four items offered. Please note the difference between breakfast and lunch with OvS. Breakfast focuses on food items, while lunch focuses on food components. Sample OvS menus have been included in Appendix H.

If properly implemented, OvS should reduce food waste, since children would not be forced to accept food they do not wish to eat. The reduction of food waste may not be achieved, however, unless managers take care to avoid overproduction. To ensure proper planning for OvS, managers will need to keep accurate daily records of food production for each menu item.

Family Style Meals

If your facility serves family style meals, food items must be placed on the table in sufficient quantities to provide at least the minimum portions of the components for all the children at the table and to accommodate any adults supervising the meal service who are eating with the children.

The required amount of each food item must be served to each child. When the full portion has not been served to a child initially, supervising adults must assume the responsibility of actively encouraging the child to accept service of the full portion during the course of the meal.

If an RCCI has both a family style meal service and is implementing OvS, once a child has taken at least the minimum portions of the required food items, then he/she may also take less than the minimum quantity of other food items.

Food Production Records

Food production records are required to be completed and retained for every meal served and claimed under the NSLP and SBP. Production records provide documentation that meals claimed for reimbursement meet the quantity and component requirements. The SA does not require a specific form, but the form should contain all the same information as the suggested sample in Appendix I. The food production records should show the quantities of food prepared (in cans, lbs, servings, etc.) and left over each time reimbursable meals are served. The record should also include a space for other pertinent information about the day's production, such as overproduction due to circumstances beyond the manager's control, and comments on acceptance of each menu item. These records then become a valuable planning tool, since you can use them to help estimate the amount of each menu item to prepare the next time it is served.

Varying Portion Sizes

Determining Portion Sizes – RCCIs must serve quantities of foods based on their residents' nutritional needs, which vary with age. Review the ages of your residents and refer to the Meal Pattern Requirements chart in Appendix E, F, or G for guidance. If the RCCI is restricted to serving the same quantities to all children, the minimum portion size must be that required for the highest age group and a meal pattern exemption to serve the same serving sizes to all age groups must be approved by the state agency. Note that the ages of some children may not necessarily correspond to the grades outlined in our charts.

Meal Requirements: Afterschool Snack Program

To be eligible for this program, the RCCI must offer education or enrichment activities in an organized, structured and supervised environment AFTER school. It must be stressed that this would be available to ALL resident children of the RCCI.

The snack meals may only be claimed on days when the child went to school whether on-site or at another regular school. RCCIs are not allowed to claim after school snacks when school is not in session, including weekends and holidays. This is different than lunch and breakfast, which may be claimed on all days of participation. There must also be a way to determine that children are present on a given day, such as having a roster or sign-in sheet for the snack program.

See Appendix G for the snack meal requirements. Production records are required to provide documentation of meal pattern compliance. It is also required that the RCCI review the after-school care program two times a year to insure compliance. See our website for more information: <http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/after-school-snack-program>

Questions about Menu Planning

Q: Can food substitutions made for medical, dietary or religious reasons?

A: If the child has a disability, then substitutions may be made as long as a doctor or other recognized medical authority has provided a physician's statement providing acceptable alternatives. Certain alterations for medical or dietary reasons that are not disabilities may be made as long as the substitutions still meet the meal pattern requirements. Alterations may also be made for religious reasons, if nutritionally sound and approved by the USDA's Food & Nutrition Service. A statement for each child should be on file explaining who made the request and how it was determined that granting the special meal pattern was in the child's best interest. If substitutions are for the RCCI as a whole, only one statement is necessary.

Q: Can RCCIs serve pitchers of milk placed on tables in the eating area (beyond the serving line) and be in compliance with the meal requirements?

A: RCCIs may choose to have pitchers of milk on the table and allow children to serve themselves; however, they must take extreme caution to ensure all meals are reimbursable. Glasses of sufficient size to meet the quantity requirement should be provided. For example, a 10 oz. glass must be used to ensure that the minimum requirement of 8 oz. is met.

Q: Can RCCI's claim meals for days when the meals are provided by parents or otherwise donated by the community?

A: Unless the RCCI has full documentation of the meal, including production records, recipes, etc., showing that the meal has met the meal pattern requirements, they should not claim a meal for reimbursement.