

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) has developed eight weeks of child care menus. This resource offers eight complete weekly menus, including breakfast, lunch or supper, and snacks meeting the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements for 3-5 year olds. These healthful and appealing menus can be used as cycle menus offering variety and moderation for balanced nutrition in the child care setting. The menus include nutrient analysis and crediting information.

The cycle menus are designed to show how to achieve dietary variety, to use USDA Recipes for Child Care (available online at www.nfsmi.org), and to follow the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Menus meet the meal pattern requirements for 3-5 year olds. Portion sizes can be adjusted for other age groups using the **meal pattern requirements** available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/ProgramBasics/Meals/Meal_Patterns.htm. Readers should consider any state and/or local requirements when planning menus for children.

Menus were analyzed for major nutrients using Nutritionist Pro™ (version 3.0.30, 2007, Axxya Systems LLC, Stafford, TX). Weekly averages for the nutrients are presented.

In some cases, additional foods are included in menus beyond meal pattern requirements to increase variety in meals. For instance, although there is no requirement to include meats or meat alternates at breakfast, a few menus include dishes such as scrambled eggs. Anytime foods are included in menus *beyond* meal pattern requirements, these foods appear in red print.

For nutrient analysis purposes, fruit is canned in juice, drained unless otherwise specified. Menu planners are encouraged to serve fresh fruits and vegetables as often as possible. These menus include lowfat (1%) milk, which is appropriate for children older than 2 years of age. For toddlers between 12 months and 2 years of age, serve whole milk. For infants younger than 1 year of age, serve breast milk or formula.

Crediting information appears in parentheses after each item on the menu.

Click this link to view the menus:

<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentLibraryFiles/PDF/20080225095731.pdf>