

Implementing the New CACFP Meal Patterns

Brianna Holmes: Hello. Welcome and thank you for joining us today. My name is Brianna Holmes. And my colleague, Adaobi Nwoka, and I are from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. Today's seminar is Fully Implementing the New Child and Adult Care Food Programs, Meal Patterns, Tips and Strategies for Success.

This webinar is designed to provide you with tips and strategies to support the implementation of the new Child and Adult Care Food Programs, Meal Patterns in your program. Beginning October 1st, all the CACFP participating programs will be required to adhere to the new meal pattern.

Along with updating the meal parent requirements, the new guidelines will help children receive more of the nutritious food they need to grow and thrive. Part of the meal pattern revision process was to include public comment, to allow providers, organizations, health care associations, and others to provide input and feedback on the proposed revision. Many of the comments recognized the need to update the meal patterns to address the nutritional gaps in children's diets. Along with updating the meal pattern requirements, the ruling addressed optional best practices for providers. While the best practices are not mandatory, they are recommended guidelines to assist you in increasing competitive nutritional value of meals to children in your program.

Let's look at the goals of the revised meal pattern. A greater variety of vegetables and fruits, more whole grains, less added sugar and saturated fats, and encouraging breast feeding were some of the areas that were identified as a need to increase the nutritional value in children's diet. During the process, the need for the alignment of the nutritional standards with other child nutritional programs was recognized.

Programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, otherwise known as WIC, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the National Academy of Medicine have all influenced the revised meal pattern. The revised infant meal pattern establishes two infant groups, as opposed to the previous three. The new age groups were designed to encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. Having two age groups instead of three is consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations and the WIC program and is easier for providers. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast milk as the best source of nutrition for infants the first year of life.

To encourage breastfeeding, providers are now able to be reimbursed for breast feeding when directly breastfed by the mother. Expressed breast milk is an acceptable fluid milk alternative for a child at any age. Infants zero to five months should only be fed infant formula or breast milk. For infants six to 11 months, fruit or vegetables must be served at breakfast, lunch, supper, and snacks if they are developmentally ready. It is essential to communicate with families about the readiness of the child to accept solid foods. Juice is also not allowable.

The revised meal pattern allows cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt as meat alternates for infants six to 11 months. Cheese foods or cheese spread cannot be counted under the new meal pattern. Cheese food and cheese spread is known to contain a higher sodium content. Ready-to-eat cereals can be served to an infant six to 11 months and counted as a grain. These cereals have a sugar limit consistent with the sugar limits of other age groups. We will go more into detail about the different sugar limits later in the presentation.

Additionally, whole eggs are allowed as a meat alternate for both the yolk and white. The revised child meal patterns were developed to continue to support children's access to healthy foods throughout the day. The new meal patterns include a variety of fruits and vegetables, more whole grain, protein alternate, and less sugar intake. More detailed information regarding these changes will be discussed in the following slides.

Additionally, the new meal pattern addresses sugar content, beverages, and food preparation changes. The final rule indicates that children one years old should be served unflavored whole milk. Meal accommodations may be made to children with medical or special dietary needs. For children ages two years and older, milk should be low-fat or fat-free. Nondairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent to milk and meet most of the nutritional standards found in cow's milk can be served in place of fluid milk for children who cannot be served cow's milk due to dietary or medical needs.

If cow's milk needs to be substituted for children two years and older, a parent or guardian should provide a written request. If the nondairy beverage does not meet the nutritional value of cow's milk, such as almond milk, rice milk, and others, then a medical statement should be provided to ensure that the child's nutritional needs are being met.

Additionally, deep fat frying is defined as cooking by submerging food in hot oil or fats. Meals can be prepared in many different ways, but frying food should be prevented. For example, fish is a credible food item if it is pan fried or prepared another way. Although store-bought and pre-fried foods still contribute to large amounts of saturated fat and calories to a meal, best practice recommends limiting all pre-fried food to one serving per week.

Implementation of the new meal patterns requires a team effort. Work with your program staff to identify needs, challenges, and possible solutions. Think about the resources you may need to make these changes possible and where to get them. Make the changes a team effort. Also consider the people that play a role in your program's implementation of CACFP. Using the Implementing the New Child and Adult Care Food Programs Meal Patterns webinar discussion guide, work with your staff to think about implementation plans and changes.

This handout is provided with the webinar. It has been found that Americans consume too much refined grain. And half of the grain served should be whole grain. Adding more whole grains will help children increase their intake of whole grains and benefit from the important nutrients they provide.

As we begin to look at what whole grain-rich foods are, we must first understand how to identify them. It is important to look at the nutrition label while you are planning and shopping for food. Whole grain-rich foods should be listed as the first ingredient or second ingredient after water on the nutrition label. If there are other grains in the food that are not whole grains, they must be enriched.

So, let's look at the picture. The picture on the left shows the whole grain as the first ingredient. And the picture next to it shows the amount of whole grain and acknowledges that the grain is the second ingredient. The challenge may be when identifying if a food is whole grain-rich with mixed dishes.

The picture on the right shows multiple grains that are the primary grain ingredient. As long as the grain is over 50 percent in weight make this food and allowable item. Remember, whole grain-rich foods are only required when grains are required to be served. Rather than introducing many whole grain-rich foods all at once, begin introducing them gradually so that children have time to get used to them. Whole grain-rich items should be indicated on your menu. The minimum requirement is once per day, but best practices recommend serving them twice a day.

Since some children may not be familiar with whole grain-rich foods, try having taste tests to find out which food is most appealing to the children. Also, it may be helpful to slowly swap out small items not recognizable by the children. For example, if you serve pasta, using whole wheat pasta is a simple way to meet the grain requirement. And there may be less of a chance the children will know the difference. Also, think about food that children like. You could introduce whole grains and in foods such as pizza, which is a huge favorite. The goal is to offer foods that children enjoy but also meet the whole grain requirement.

Reading the nutrition label is the best way to ensure that you are purchasing whole grain-rich foods. Many times, the front of the label can be misleading and could say that the food item contains a whole grain. But that may not be the case. It may not be the primary ingredient or meet the 50 percent of the weight that is required.

Think about the foods you already purchased. It may be helpful to keep a running list in your program of whole grain-rich food items that you use or have found to be useful when developing your menu. With the new meal patterns, all breakfast cereals must contain no more than six grams of sugar per dry ounce. This includes ready-to-eat instant and hot cereals. If you make homemade cereal or granola, for example, you should always remember to calculate the sugar content based on the recipe that you use. Remember--look at the nutrition facts label to determine the amount of sugar the cereal contains.

In the next slide, we will look at a sample nutrition facts label to practice identifying the sugar contained in the cereal. As we identify allowable breakfast cereals, the first step is to look at the nutrition label. The top of the picture has an arrow pointing to the serving size. On this label, the serving size is 3/4 cups, or 28 grams. After you've identified the serving size, look below to the amount of sugar the item contains. This arrow shows that this item contains nine grams of sugar.

Now that you have identified both the serving size and sugar content, divide the amount of sugar by the serving size. Remember, in order for the items to be creditable, it must contain less than 0.212 grams of sugar per dry ounce.

Based on our calculation, the above item contains a sugar content level of 0.3214, which is not credible. During the initial release of the new meal pattern requirements, grain-based desserts were not allowable. Grain-based desserts were identified as a source of added sugars and saturated fat. The determination to disallow these foods was considered an opportunity to reduce the amount of sugar consumption in a child's diet.

Examples of grain bases or are listed on the slide. Grain-based desserts previously, the definition included sweet crackers, such as graham or animal crackers. As of June 30, 2017, the proposed ruling was reviewed and allowed for comments to define grain-based desserts. As a result, changes were made to allow sweet crackers as a creditable item and may count towards the grain component. Although it is credible, best practices recommend serving sweet crackers on a limited basis.

Although it may seem difficult, grain-based desserts can be replaced with enjoyable items. Breakfast and snack time may be the perfect opportunity to serve these desserts, but there are other snacks that you can substitute. Many of these items can be turned into fun treats that are appealing to the children. By encouraging children to try new foods, allows them to taste other foods they may not be familiar with.

One tip to consider when planning your menu without grain-based desserts is to serve a meat or meat alternate for breakfast instead of the grain component. A meat or meat alternate may only be used to meet the entire grain component at breakfast with a maximum of three times per week. An example of grain substitution that would be creditable could include the appropriate serving size of cheese, peanut butter, yogurt, or eggs.

Another option may be removing the grain altogether and swapping them out with two different components. After a while, children may not even notice that they are missing these desserts because they become accustomed to not eating them. Effective October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents will be used to credit the quantity of grains needed to meet the grain component requirement. By using the ounce equivalents to determine minimum serving sizes, we'll also include increasing the minimum serving size for ready-to-eat breakfast cereals. Again, the ounce equivalent implementation will not be effective on October 1, 2017. More information about identifying and calculating ounce equivalence is forthcoming. The new meal patterns require serving more fruits and vegetables.

This revision includes the opportunity for you to mix both fruits and vegetables during meals and snacks and count for both components. To promote the consumption of vegetables and fruits, separate components for fruits and vegetables are required at lunch, supper, and snack. This means that children should be offered a serving of fruit and vegetables at lunch and supper.

Additionally, snacks with a vegetables and fruit with appropriate serving size is allowable. To identify different fruits or vegetables, please visit ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information. The new revisions allow the option of serving two vegetables at lunch and supper instead of one fruit and one vegetable. Allowing two vegetables at lunch can increase children's vegetable consumption to go along with the recommended amount.

The vegetables served must be two different types of vegetables and the same serving size as the vegetable that is replaced. Two servings of the same vegetables will not be counted. For example, you may offer green beans and carrots to meet the vegetable requirements, but two servings of green beans will not be allowed. As you think about planning your menu with the increased amount of fruits and vegetables required, look at the food that you are already serving.

It is recommended to provide at least one serving of vegetables from each subgroup a week. This may include a green vegetable, starchy vegetables, beans and peas, and red and orange vegetables, or others. Mixed fruits and vegetable dishes make credit if they contain at least 1/8 cup of vegetable and 1/8 cup of fruit. Vegetable mixtures may count towards the vegetable and fruit component at lunch and supper as long as they meet the serving size requirements.

Remember, this is allowable because vegetables can replace the fruit component at lunch and supper meals. If the quantities are not known, such as frozen carrots or peas, the vegetable mixture will only count as one serving of vegetables and not a fruit component. Another fruit component would be required in order to meet the requirement.

So, let's look at the above chart to clarify how the mixed vegetables are credited. The first line shows the carrot and raisin salad mixture. Since the carrots are 1/2 cup and the raisins are 1/8 cup, this would be creditable as it would meet the requirements of 1/4 cup of fruit. This meets the full vegetable and fruit component. The next example is broccoli and cauliflower mixture. Now this example is creditable because the cauliflower meets the serving size for fruit. Remember, serving two vegetables can only happen during lunch and supper. Serving mixed vegetables without knowing the serving size makes it hard to determine if the food item is creditable or both servings. If the serving size is unknown, the food can only be counted as one serving of vegetables and not meet the fruit component requirement.

Lastly, when vegetables are pureed, they may be able to meet the requirements as long as the dish provides 1/8 cup of recognizable and creditable fruits or vegetables. If it doesn't contain the 1/8 cup of a recognizable component, then they cannot contribute to the requirements. It is important for children to be able to recognize the components of a nutritious meal. There are many affordable vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, and others. Consider frozen vegetables. They are lower cost and just as nutritious.

This sample menu allows you to see how the two vegetable components can be used during meals. A 100 percent juice can be part of a healthy diet for children. One serving of juice should be provided to children over one year of age. A 100 percent fruit and juice blend, fruit and vegetable juice blend may contribute to the fruit requirement only when the fruit juice or puree is the most prominent ingredient. This requirement is also the same for vegetables. The dietary guidelines recommend that at least half of fruits should come from whole fruit, therefore reducing the amount of juice that is served. Whole fruits refer to all fresh, frozen, and canned fruit and vegetables.

This guideline is also consistent with WIC and is expected to help increase children's consumption of whole vegetables and fruits. Limit on juice applies to the program, not to each individual child. For example, if a center serves two different meals to two different groups the children, then only one meal may contain juice. If a program has a morning group of children and the afternoon group of children, this would be an example. If a program serves one meal in two different shifts, two different groups of children, then juice may be served at both shifts. Water must now be available to children throughout the day as requested. Since some children may not be capable of requesting water, it should be offered to the children throughout the day.

Now, Adaobi will cover the remaining revised meal pattern requirements, additional tips and strategies and available resources to support you in implementation.

Adaobi Nwoka: Thank you, Brianna. And hello everyone. Again, my name is Adaobi. And I will brief you all on the changes for breastfeeding and meat alternates. So let's continue. Meat and meat alternates are a good source of protein, along with other vitamins and minerals. Meat and meat alternates are allowed to be substituted for the entire grain component at breakfast at a maximum of three times a week. Tofu and soy yogurts may be used to meet the meat and meat alternate component. However, soy yogurt is not allowable for infants.

A CACFP center or daycare home may offer two distinct servings of legumes in one meal and count one towards the vegetable component and the other towards a meat or meat alternate component if they are in separate dishes. For example, peas may served as part of a salad, which is a vegetable component, and as part of a chili or bean soup, which is a meat and meat alternate component. Please note when a meal contains one serving of beans and peas, it can only count towards the meat and meat alternate component or the vegetable component, but not both.

Commercial tofu can be served and is reimbursable as a meat alternate for children ages one and older. It does not credit for infant meals. Tofu and soy products can be used to meet all or part of the meat and meat alternate component. The tofu must be easily recognized as a meat substitute. This means that it's not incorporated into drinks or other dishes, such as baked desserts, then it does not credit towards a meat alternative. Noncommercial and non-standardized tofu and soy products are not credible.

As a tip, the Wisconsin Department of Education has a CACFP tofu recipe guide available online for free. So you can feel free to look through it and get inspired to try a couple of recipes that your kids may enjoy.

This slide includes tips on how to introduce meat alternatives to toddlers. This includes planning ahead, hosting taste tests, getting creative about how foods are introduced-- for example, using story time to introduce a food item, then presenting that item for lunch. Be sure to minimize plate waste when trying new foods. You can do this by producing the amount needed for the day or serving meals family style.

As I briefly mentioned earlier, soy yogurt is not a credible meat alternative item under CACFP. For best practices, consider low-fat or fat-free, even though whole fat is credible. Yogurt maybe plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened. Noncommercial or non-standardized yogurt products are not credible-- for example, frozen yogurt, drinkable yogurt, homemade yogurt, yogurt bars, and yogurt-covered fruits and nuts. Yogurt claimed on CACFP for infants and children must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per six ounce of yogurt. The steps are similar to the whole grain calculations. But the numerical value must be within threshold limits in order to be credible. Remember, yogurt should not be substitute for fluid milk for infants and children.

So here are the steps of how to calculate yogurt. First, we must locate the nutrition fact label. We'll find the total sugar. Then we identify the serving size, whether it's ounce or grams. Next, you calculate the amount of sugar by serving size. So for ounces, the calculations is 23 over 6, which gives us a threshold limit of 3.83. And for grams, the calculation is 23 over 170, which gives us a threshold limit of 0.135. So let's give it a try.

So you pick up a yogurt at a local grocery store. And you want to know is it's credible. We see here that the total sugar is 19 grams and the serving size is 150. So next, we take out our phone and calculate 19 grams over 150 grams. And we get 0.1267, which is less than our threshold of 0.135. So our yogurt is credible. Just a tip-- the USDA has a two-page resource guide you can use in case you forget your calculations on your next shift in the grocery store.

Remember that some yogurt products are not credible. As a tip, think about yogurt as a topping for pancakes or waffles to minimize the use of sweets like syrup and jam. Another tip includes adding flavor to yogurt by adding fruit, nuts, seeds, and more.

Here's a sample breakfast menu, which includes meat alternates. You can see they include cheese and yogurt and other items. So now we'll get into breastfeeding and infant feeding. Providers must serve whole vegetables, fruit, or both. The term whole refers to a fruit that is fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, but not juice.

Below are types of fruits and veggies that may be served. The goal of introducing vegetables and fruit is to help young children establish healthy eating habits early. Offering a variety of foods with high nutritional value help support healthy nutritional development. Although fruits, vegetables, or both should be served at every meal for infants six to 11 months, it is always dependent on the developmental readiness of the infant. It is important to delay the introduction of solid foods to six months to meet the developmental and nutritional needs of infants.

Best practices recommend having constant communication with families about when and what solid foods should be introduced. If an infant is younger than six months and families would like to introduce their child to solid food, it's important to have families provide written documentation from a physician to support early feeding.

Additionally, solid foods should be introduced gradually to follow the infant's oral development and acceptance to tastes and textures of food. Remember, solid foods are only introduced to infants when they are developmentally ready to accept them. Best practices recommend constant communication with infants' parents about when and what solid foods should be introduced and that parents must put in writing when they will would the solids to be introduced.

Also encourage parents to consult with their child's physician when they are considering introducing solid food. This is an important step in an infant's life. And we want to ensure that physicians as well as the provider are meeting the infant's developmental needs. Soy yogurt is not credible for infants. Whole eggs are now credible for infant meals. The American Academy of Pediatrics found no convincing evidence to delay foods considered major food allergens.

Cheese foods and cheese spreads are disallowed for infant meal and snacks. By definition, these are cheese items whose product package include statements such as imitation cheese, cheese food, or cheese product. For example, American cheese, cream cheese, cheese whip all include these statements.

When it comes to infants, it's important to have an adaptable standard menu. This includes adjusting the menu based on each infant, on what each infant is offered, and using a menu template to outline meal pattern requirements. It's important to remember that infants do not need to be offered a solid food component that is part of every meal pattern until the infant has established tolerance for that solid food component.

Solid foods are reimbursable when the infant is developmentally ready, even if an infant is younger than six months. The American Academy of Pediatrics' infant food and feeding has additional information on size and developmental readiness. However, a written note from parents is recommended but not required. You can expand the food served to each infant based on infant developmental readiness.

Remember that infant meals may be served outside of the established meal time period. Breast milk is an allowable substitute for fluid milk for children of any age. Programs must document if infant is served breast milk or formula. It is not necessary to document the method of delivery for breast milk-- for example, bottle versus breastfed on site. When an infant is breastfed on site, it is not necessary to document the quantity of breast milk served since it can be determined.

For infants younger than 12 months of age, meals may include iron-fortified infant formula, breast milk, including expressed breast milk or mother directly breastfeeding on site, or a combination of both. When an infant is served expressed breast milk or infant formula in a bottle, the program must document the quantity of breast milk or infant formula served to the infant.

Please note that modifications can be made for infants with disabilities who need accommodation. However, a medical statement must be on file and signed by a medical authority. USDA has guidelines that may be used to determine whether or not a formula is eligible for reimbursement without a medical statement.

If a child over 13 months old is breastfed on site, it will count towards the meal that is closest to the meal. For example, if the child was breastfed and 9 a.m., which is closer to breakfast than lunch, then it will count towards breakfast. If a mother chooses to breastfeed her infant her car, the meal will be claimed for reimbursement as long as the mother does not leave the premises.

Here's a tip. Check with your state agency to ensure there aren't any additional documentations required. The Oregon Department of Education has a list of iron-fortified infant formulas that do not require medical statements. We want you all to keep staff, parents, and food suppliers in mind as you navigate the CACFP hot topic areas, such as more whole grains, increased variety of fruits and vegetables, less sugar and saturated fat, protein alternatives, and breastfeeding.

Timely information sharing, clear expectations, and training will help to ease implementation. Also know what you need so that you can communicate that clearly with food service vendors and suppliers. How will the new CACFP meal patterns impact the type of food and frequency of delivery you need? Is your program already implementing some of the new meal patterns? What are the main cost concerns? Communicate with your food service vendors and suppliers as soon as possible. Allow vendor time to be responsive to your needs and to plan ahead. Lastly, look for economies of scale. Ask your current food service vendor if there are ways to bring costs down with the new standards.

Consider if there are other suppliers, such as local farms, that can meet some of your needs, especially seasonally. Please remember, centers and daycare homes may not use a reimbursable meal or components of a reimbursable meal as a way to reward or punish a child or adult participant under any circumstance.

For example, if a daycare home is helping to potty train a child in their care, they cannot withhold a reimbursable meal or snack from the child as a punishment. Additionally, the daycare home cannot offer the child a certain food or beverage as a reward for potty training. For example, the daycare home cannot say the child will get juice as a snack if he or she uses the bathroom. Also remember, CACFP promote family-style meal dining, as it encourages a pleasant eating environment for most mealtime as a learning experience by allowing children to serve themselves from common platters of food. And it provides educational activities that are centered around food.

Use the building an implementation plan follow-up slide included as a hand-out to this webinar to assist in the development of the CACFP implementation plan in your program. The USDA has a CACFP web page which includes several resources like the policy memos and questions and answers, meal pattern summaries, and implementation resources. The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center includes resources for Head Start programs. And the Association for Child Development has online training webinars available.

Let's Move Child Care website organizes information for national organizations in states. It provides resources related to CACFP topics, such as nutrition, family-style dining, breastfeeding, and others. The state and local agencies overseeing the CACFP provide training and guidance on content of the new standards and administrative implementation.

They also include information about early implementation. In addition, the CACFP roundtable has created a CACFP new meal pattern implementation library for your use. This library includes CACFP sponsors, state agencies, partners, and the USDA agency, new CACFP meal pattern materials, trainings, presentations, and tool kits being used for implementation of the new pattern.

More information is expected from USDA, states, and other entities to support implementation, the updated USDA Food Buying Guide, Nutrition, Wellness Tips. The USDA is constantly uploading CACFP policy memos and questions and answers, information . About the implementation and ounce equivalents.

Be sure to check the new resources often and adapt your approach to implementation as needed. You can also contact us at our website at health@ecetta.info or our toll-free number if you have additional questions.

Thank you.