

# GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR MEETING USDA MEAL PATTERN

FOR CHILDREN AGES 1 THROUGH 11 YEARS  
AT HOMES AND THROUGH 12 YEARS AT CENTERS

## MILK

1. All milk must be served in fluid form. Whole milk, lowfat milk, skim milk, cultured buttermilk, or flavored milk made from fluid milk must meet state and local standards.

## GRAINS/BREADS

1. Bread, bread alternates, pasta, or noodle products must be made of enriched or whole grain meal or flour.
2. Cooked whole grain or enriched pasta or noodle products, including macaroni, spaghetti, rice, bulgar, and corn grits, or an equivalent quantity or any combination of these foods.
3. Cereal must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified.
4. Cold dry cereal portions must be determined by measuring volume (cup) or weight (ounce), whichever is less.
5. Cookies may be served as part of a snack not more than twice a week.

## FRUIT/VEGETABLE

1. Two or more kinds of vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s) must be served at lunch or supper. No less than 1/8 cup may be served to meet part of the fruit/vegetable component.
2. It takes six carrot sticks measuring 4 x 1/2" to equal 1/4 cup, it takes four celery sticks measuring 3 x 3/4" to equal 1/4 cup; therefore, at snack time, at least two types of raw vegetables should be provided to ensure acceptance of the 1/2 cup or 3/4 cup portion requirement.
3. Dried beans or dried peas may count as a vegetable or meat alternate, but not as both components in the same meal.
4. Full-strength vegetable or fruit juice may meet not more than one-half of the requirement for vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s) for lunch or supper.
5. Juice may not be served when milk is the only other component at snacks except in certain adult day care centers.
6. Canned soups must be reconstituted one-to-one. One cup reconstituted soup equals 1/4 cup of the fruit/vegetable requirement. Only vegetable soups may be counted.
7. Raisins should be supplemented at breakfast and at snacks.

## MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE

1. Meat or meat alternate portion sizes include cooked, edible portion only.
2. Nuts or seeds must be combined with another meat/meat alternate at lunch or supper. Only one-half or less of the requirement can be met with nuts or seeds. One ounce equals one ounce meat/meat alternate. NUTS OR SEEDS ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR SMALL CHILDREN who may choke or not chew well.
3. Peanut butter and other nut butters should be served in combination with another meat or meat alternate for lunch or supper.

## OTHER

1. Additional food may be added to improve the nutrition of participating children over one year of age.
2. A cup means a standard measuring cup. One cup equals eight ounces.
3. Exceptions to or substitutions for the meal pattern shall be made only with a physician's written statement that includes the recommended alternate food(s). If it is necessary for a parent to supply a particular item for medical reasons, the meal may be claimed for reimbursement if the provider supplies at least one required meal component.
4. Any time food is provided by parents for parties or nonmedical reasons, the meal cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

## CACFP MEAL PATTERN FOR CHILDREN AGES 1 THROUGH 12 YEARS

### Breakfast

(Select one from each of the three groups)

	Ages 1–2 Years	Ages 3–5 Years	Ages 6–12 Years
<b>Milk, fluid</b>	1/2 cup (4 ounces)	3/4 cup (6 ounces)	1 cup (8 ounces)
<b>Full-strength juice or fruit or vegetables or an equivalent combination of juice or fruit or vegetables</b>	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
<b>Grains/Breads:</b>			
Bread or	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Corn bread, rolls, muffins, etc., or	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
Cold dry cereal or	1/4 cup or 1/3 ounce	1/3 cup or 1/2 ounce	3/4 cup or 1 ounce
Cooked cereal or Cooked pasta or noodle products or Cooked cereal grains or an equivalent quantity of any combination	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup

### Lunch or Supper

(Five components are needed to meet USDA requirements; two must come from the fruit/vegetable category)

	Ages 1–2 Years	Ages 3–5 Years	Ages 6–12 Years
<b>Milk, fluid</b>	1/2 cup (4 ounces)	3/4 cup (6 ounces)	1 cup (8 ounces)
<b>Fruits and/or vegetables</b> (two or more kinds)	1/4 cup (total)	1/2 cup (total)	3/4 cup (total)
<b>Grains/Breads:</b>			
Bread or	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Corn bread, rolls, muffins, biscuits or	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
Cooked pasta or noodle products or	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cooked cereal grains or combination of any equivalent quantity	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
<b>Meat and meat alternates:</b>			
Lean meat or poultry or fish (edible portion as served) or cheese (or cottage cheese, cheese food, or cheese spread)	1 ounce 1 ounce	1 1/2 ounces 1 1/2 ounces	2 ounces 2 ounces
or eggs	1	1	1
or cooked dry beans or cooked dry peas	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup
or peanut butter, soy-nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
* or peanuts, soy-nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1/2 ounce	3/4 ounce	1 ounce
or yogurt, plain, or sweetened and flavored	4 ounces or 1/2 cup	6 ounces or 3/4 cup	8 ounces or 1 cup
or any combination of meat/meat alternate			

\*Can meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate for lunch or supper.

### A.M. or P.M. Snack

(Select two items from the four groups)

	Ages 1–2 Years	Ages 3–5 Years	Ages 6–12 Years
<b>Milk, fluid</b>	1/2 cup (4 ounces)	1/2 cup (4 ounces)	1 cup (8 ounces)
<b>Full-strength juice or fruit or vegetables or any combination of juice or fruit or vegetables</b>	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
<b>Grains/Breads:</b>			
Bread or	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Corn bread, rolls, muffins, or biscuits	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
or cold dry cereal	1/4 cup or 1/3 ounce	1/3 cup or 1/2 ounce	3/4 cup or 1 ounce
or cooked cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
or cooked cereal grains or a combination of bread or bread alternate	1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup
<b>Meat and meat alternates:</b>			
Lean meat or poultry or fish	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce
or cheese (or cottage cheese, cheese food, or cheese spread)	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce
or eggs	1/2 egg	1/2 egg	1 egg
or cooked dry beans or cooked dry peas	1/8 cup	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
or peanut butter, soy-nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
or peanuts, soy-nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce
or yogurt, plain, or sweetened and flavored	2 ounces or 1/4 cup	2 ounces or 1/4 cup	4 ounces or 1/2 cup
or any combination of meat/meat alternate			