

OFFER VERSUS SERVE IN AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL CENTERS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) final rule, *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, allows offer versus serve (OVS) in at-risk afterschool programs, effective October 1, 2017. OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack.

Note: If a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) sponsor operates the CACFP at-risk after-school meals program and follows the NSLP meal pattern, they must also follow the NSLP OVS requirements. The NSLP OVS requirements are different from the CACFP OVS requirements. CACFP sponsors must follow the CACFP meal pattern. If a CACFP at-risk after-school meals sponsor chooses to implement OVS, they must follow the CACFP OVS requirements.

FOOD COMPONENTS AND FOOD ITEMS

Under OVS, the determination of a reimbursable meal is based on the child’s selection of a minimum number of food components (lunch and supper) or food items (breakfast).

- A **food component** is one of the food groups that comprise a reimbursable meal. The breakfast meal pattern requires three components (milk, vegetables and fruits, and grains). The lunch/supper meal pattern requires five components (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates).
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, a hamburger on a whole-grain bun is one food item that contains two components (grains and meat/meat alternates). A 1/2-cup serving of applesauce and a 1/2-cup serving of blueberries are two food items from one component (fruits).

For a reimbursable breakfast, the CACFP center must offer at least four food items and the child must select at least three food items. For a reimbursable lunch or supper, the CACFP center must offer all five food components and the child must select at least three food components.

CACFP menus can provide food components as single foods, such as pasta, fruit, and vegetables, or as combination foods. A **combination food** contains more than one food component. Examples include lasagna, beef stew, pizza, burritos, chef’s salad, and smoothies made with yogurt and pureed fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains) and cheese (meat/meat alternates). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as a burrito or pizza) or are not intended to be separated (such as hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).



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SIGNAGE

If the CACFP menu offers combination foods or two or more food items from one food component such as bread and rice, the CACFP facility must provide instructions or signs about the OVS requirements. This signage must indicate what choices make up a reimbursable meal and let children know that they cannot select two of the same food items or components. For example, a child cannot select two pieces of toast and milk for a reimbursable breakfast because this choice provides only two different food items. A child cannot select two servings of chicken and one serving of rice for a reimbursable lunch because this choice provides only two components.

BREAKFAST

The CACFP center must **offer** the minimum serving of at least four food items from the three food components. For a reimbursable meal, the child must **select** at least three food items.

OVS Breakfast Requirements for Ages 6-12 and 13-18	
Center must offer at least four food items from three food components ¹	Child must select
1. One serving of milk ² 2. One serving of vegetables and fruits 3. One serving of grains ³ 4. One serving of meat/meat alternates or one additional serving of fruits and vegetables or grains ³	At least three food items 
<p>¹ Serving sizes must be at least the minimum daily required quantities in the CACFP meal pattern.</p> <p>² For ages 6-12 and 13-18, milk must be unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim). Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk.</p> <p>³ All grain products must meet the minimum weights for one serving in <i>Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP (Effective October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019)</i>.</p>	

Meals must meet the criteria below to be reimbursable under OVS.

- Breakfast menus must meet the CACFP meal pattern for children. Each breakfast must include the minimum serving of at least four food items from the three food components (milk, vegetables and fruits, and grains).
- All offered food items must be different. For example, a breakfast of milk, banana, and two servings of toast (e.g., enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and whole-wheat bread) is not a reimbursable meal because the two servings of toast are the same food item.
- Larger servings count as only one food item. For example, 1 cup of strawberries counts as only one food item (vegetables and fruits). A 3-ounce whole-wheat bagel or two servings of whole-grain toast each count as only one food item (grains).
- If the menu offers the minimum daily serving of a component as two separate food items, children must take both servings to credit as one food item for OVS. For example, the breakfast meal pattern requires ½ cup of vegetables and fruits. If the menu offers ¼ cup of sliced peaches and ¼ cup of pineapple tidbits, children must select both to count as one food item (vegetables and fruits). The breakfast meal pattern requires one serving of grains. If the menu offers ½ serving of cereal and ½ serving of whole-grain muffin, children must select both to count as one food item (grains).

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- Amounts less than a full serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For example, a selection of ¼ cup of cantaloupe does not count as a fruit food item.
- Children may decline any one of the four food items, including milk.
- If a combination food contains two or more food items and the breakfast menu offers only four food items, children cannot decline the combination food. For example, a menu offers a fruit smoothie made with yogurt (meat/meat alternates component) and strawberries (fruits component), a whole-grain muffin (grains component), and milk (milk component). Children must select the smoothie (two food items) and one other food item for a reimbursable meal.



Examples of OVS at Breakfast

The sample breakfast menus below show examples of OVS for ages 6-12 and 13-18 in at-risk afterschool centers.

SAMPLE BREAKFAST MENU 1 (FOUR FOOD ITEMS)		
CACFP Meal Pattern	Planned Menu	Food Items
Grains (G), 1 serving	Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces	1 G
Vegetables and Fruits (VF), ½ cup	Strawberries, ½ cup	1 VF
Milk (M), 8 fluid ounces ¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1 M
Meat/Meat Alternate (MMA) (1 ounce) or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 serving)	Orange slices, ½ cup	1 VF
<i>Children must select the minimum serving of at least three different food items</i>		
Child Selects	Food Items (Minimum Daily Serving)	Reimbursable Meal?
Strawberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 VF and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Strawberries (1 VF)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF).
Bagel (1 G) Milk (1 M)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 M).
Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 VF and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Bagel (1 G)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 VF and 1 G).
¹ Milk must be unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim). Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk.		

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SAMPLE BREAKFAST MENU 2 (FIVE FOOD ITEMS)		
CACFP Meal Pattern	Planned Menu	Food Items
Grains (G), 1 serving	Whole-wheat toast, 1-ounce slice	1 G
Vegetables and Fruits (VF), ½ cup	Cantaloupe slices, ½ cup Blueberries, ½ cup	2 VF
Milk (M), 8 fluid ounces ¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1 M
Meat/Meat Alternate (MMA) (1 ounce) ² or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 serving)	Swiss cheese cubes, 1 ounce	1 MMA
<i>Children must select the minimum serving of at least three different food items</i>		
Child Selects	Food Items (Minimum Daily Serving)	Reimbursable Meal?
Toast, two servings (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF). Two servings of the same food count as only one food item.
Toast (1 G) Swiss cheese (1 MMA) Blueberries (1 VF)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 VF).
Toast (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Toast (1 G) Swiss cheese (1 MMA) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 M).
Swiss cheese (1 MMA) Cantaloupe slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 MMA, 1 VF and 1 M).
Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Blueberries (1 VF) Cantaloupe slices (1 VF) Swiss cheese (1 MMA)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 VF and 1 MMA).
<p>¹ Milk must be unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim). Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk.</p> <p>² Without OVS, breakfast menus can substitute a meat/meat alternate for the entire grains component up to three times per week. One ounce of meat/meat alternates substitutes for one ounce of grains. With OVS, breakfast menus can include a serving of meat/meat alternates every day as the fourth food item.</p>		



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OVS AT LUNCH AND SUPPER

The CACFP center must **offer** all five food components. For a reimbursable meal, children must **select** the minimum serving of at least three of the five components.

OVS Lunch and Supper Requirements for Ages 6-12 and 13-18	
Center must offer five components ¹	Child must select
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One serving of milk ² 2. One serving of fruits 3. One serving of vegetables 4. One serving of grains 5. One serving of meat/meat alternates 	 <p>At least three food components</p>
<p>¹ Serving sizes must be at least the minimum daily required quantities in the CACFP meal pattern. ² For ages 6-12 and 13-18, milk must be unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim). Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's CACFP Best Practices recommends only unflavored milk.</p>	

Meals must meet the criteria below to be reimbursable under OVS.

- Lunch and supper menus must meet the CACFP meal pattern for children. Each lunch/supper must include the minimum serving of the five components. For information on the CACFP meal patterns, see the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) Web page.
- Larger servings count as only one component. For example, 1 cup of carrot-pineapple-raisin salad counts as only one food component (vegetables). Two 1-ounce slices of whole-grain bread count as only one food component (grains).
- If the menu offers the minimum daily serving of a component as two separate food items, children must take both items to credit as one component for OVS. For example, the lunch meal pattern requires ½ cup of vegetables. If the menu offers ¼ cup of broccoli and ¼ cup of corn, children must select both to count as the full vegetables component. The lunch meal pattern requires one serving of grains. If the menu offers ½ serving of brown rice and ½ serving of whole-wheat roll, children must select both to count as the full grains component.
- Amounts less than a full serving do not count as a food component for OVS. For example, a selection of ¼ cup of broccoli does not count as the vegetables component.
- Children may decline any one or two food components, including milk.
- If a combination food contains three or more food components and the menu offers only five food components, children cannot decline the combination food. For example, a menu offers spinach lasagna made with cheese (meat/meat alternates component), lasagna noodles (grains component), spinach and tomato sauce (vegetables component), apple (fruits component), and milk (milk component). Children must select the lasagna (three components) for a reimbursable meal.

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Examples of OVS at Lunch and Supper

The sample lunch/supper menus below show examples of OVS for children ages 6-12 and 13-18 in at-risk afterschool centers.

SAMPLE LUNCH/SUPPER MENU 1			
CACFP Meal Pattern	Planned Menu	Meal Pattern Contribution	
Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) 2 ounces	Turkey, 2 ounces	2 ounces MMA	
Grains (G), 1 serving	Whole-wheat bread, 2 ounces	2 servings G	
Vegetables (V), ½ cup	Broccoli florets, ½ cup, with low-fat yogurt dip	½ cup V	
Fruits (F), ¼ cup	Cantaloupe slices, ¼ cup	¼ cup F	
Milk (M), 8 fluid ounces ¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1 cup M	
Children must select the minimum serving at least three of the five offered food components			
Child Selects	Food Items	Food Components (Minimum Daily Serving)	Reimbursable Meal?
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G)	1	2	No. The selected meal contains only two full components (MMA and G). Two servings of the same food (two slices of bread) count as only one food component.
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M)	2	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F)	2	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and F).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V)	2	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V).
Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F, and M).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, V, and M).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, F, and M).
¹ Milk must be unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim). Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk.			



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SAMPLE LUNCH/SUPPER MENU 2			
CACFP Meal Pattern	Planned Menu		Meal Pattern Contribution
Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) 2 ounces	Meat sauce, 2 ounces of cooked hamburger		2 ounces MMA
Grains (G), 1 serving	Spaghetti, 1 cup		2 servings G
Vegetables (V), ½ cup	Tossed garden salad, 1 cup ² Tomato sauce in meat sauce, ¼ cup		¾ cup V
Fruits (F), ¼ cup	Fruit salad, ½ cup		½ cup F
Milk (M), 8 fluid ounces¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup		1 cup M
Children must select the minimum serving at least three of the five offered food components			
Child Selects	Food Items	Food Components (Minimum Daily Serving)	Reimbursable Meal?
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA)	2	2	No. The selected meal contains only two components (G and MMA). Two servings of the same food (1 cup of spaghetti) count as only one food component.
Spaghetti (G) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (G, F, and M).
Salad (V) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (V, F, and M).
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (G, MMA, and M). The ¼ cup of tomato sauce in the meat sauce does not count as a component for OVS because it is less than the minimum serving.
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Fruit salad (F)	3	3	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (G, MMA, and F).
Salad (V) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F, and M).
¹ Milk must be unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim). Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk. ² Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of lettuce credits as ½ cup of vegetables.			



RESOURCES

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE Web page):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=336518

Meal Pattern for Children (October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cacfp/mp/cacfpmpnew.pdf.

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE Web page):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=336512

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/offer-versus-serve-and-family-style-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program



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