



Best Practices for Healthy Eating

For Organizations Serving Children and Youth

Nemours[®]
A Children's Health System

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Introduction

This guide is intended to serve as a practical tool for implementing feeding best practices for optimal nutrition in early care and education settings. You and your program play an important part in supporting children's development of healthy habits, both by providing nutritious food and by teaching children how to make healthy food choices. Children who learn these habits when they're young are more likely to continue making healthy choices in adulthood. By sharing information with families, you can work with them as partners to support healthy children. In this guide you will find:

- Recommendations for healthy options in the following categories: beverages, fruits and vegetables, milk, meats and meat alternates, and grains and breads
- Rationale for the recommendations
- Appropriate portion sizes by age that are based on the CACFP reimbursable meal guidelines
- Ideas for engaging children in healthy eating
- Tips and tools for reading nutrition labels, motivating picky eaters, and modeling healthy habits
- Tip sheets for families
- Sample policies for use in your program and with families

This toolkit is the result of extensive research, collaboration and feedback from many individuals. It is a "living document." It will continue to be edited, updated and improved over time. We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions. It is YOU that this toolkit is intended to serve! If you have feedback, please contact:

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Before you begin reading this guide, consider taking a few moments to do a self-assessment of your program's current practices using the tool on the *Let's Move!* Child Care website below. It is important to know your program's strengths, as well as areas of opportunity. This will help you determine which sections of this guide best address your specific needs.

Let's Move! Child Care
www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org

Glossary of Terms

Added Sugars – Sugars and syrups that are added to foods during processing or preparation. Added sugars do not include naturally-occurring sugars such as those found in milk and fruits.

Basic Food Groups – In the USDA meal pattern, the basic food groups are grains; fruits; vegetables; milk, yogurt, and cheese (dairy); and meat, poultry, fish, dried peas and beans, eggs, and nuts (protein). In the CACFP meal pattern, the basic food groups (also called “meal components”) are grains and breads; milk; meats and meat alternates; and fruits and vegetables.¹

Cardiovascular Disease – Refers to diseases of the heart and diseases of the blood vessels (arteries, capillaries, veins) within a person’s entire body, such as the brain, legs and lungs.¹

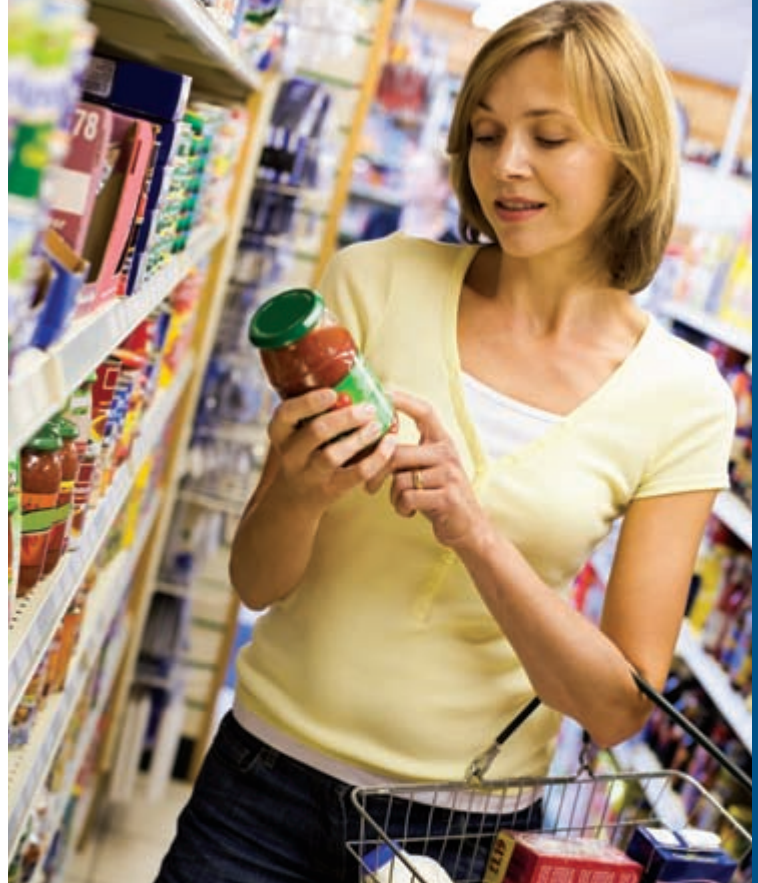
Cheese Food – A processed cheese prepared by mixing one or more cheese ingredients with one or more dairy ingredients into a homogeneous plastic mass, which reduces the amount of cheese in the finished product. It must contain at least 51% of the cheese ingredient by weight, have a moisture content less than 44%, and contain at least 23% milkfat.²

Cheese Product – A processed cheese that does not meet the maximum moisture content of 43% and/or the 47% minimum milkfat standards of processed cheese.²

Cholesterol – A sterol present in all animal tissues that when ingested by humans, turns into a soft, fatty, wax-like substance in the bloodstream. It is necessary in the production of cell membranes and some hormones, but too much cholesterol in the blood is a major risk for coronary heart disease (which leads to heart attack) and for stroke. There is no evidence for a dietary requirement for cholesterol.^{1, 6}

Chronic Diseases – such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes—are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. These diseases account for seven of every ten deaths and affect the quality of life of 90 million Americans. Although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly health problems, they are also among the most preventable. Adopting healthy behaviors such as eating nutritious foods, being physically active and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or control the devastating effects of these diseases.¹

Combination Food – A single serving of a food item that contains two or more of the required meal components (e.g., pizza, chef salad).



Dietary Fiber – Typically refers to nondigestible carbohydrates from plant foods such as legumes (e.g., peas and beans), oats, barley, some fruits and fruit juices (e.g., prunes, plums and apples), some vegetables (e.g., broccoli, carrots and celery), nuts, seeds and whole grains.¹

Discretionary Calorie Allowance – The calories remaining in a person’s energy allowance after he/she has consumed adequate calories from healthful foods, i.e. foods in low-fat or no added sugar forms. These “left-over” calories can be “spent” on forms of foods that are not the most nutrient dense (e.g., whole milk rather than fat-free milk) or may be additions to foods (e.g., salad dressing, sugar, butter).¹

Heart Disease – A narrowing of the small blood vessels that supply blood and oxygen to the heart (coronary arteries).¹

Monounsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFAs) – Are liquid at room temperature and are found in canola, olive and peanut oils. MUFAs lower total cholesterol, lower bad cholesterol (LDL) and also raise good cholesterol (HDL). These are healthy fats.⁴

Nutrient-Dense Foods – Foods that provide substantial amounts of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients and relatively fewer calories.¹ Nutrient-dense foods are forms of foods that are lean or low in solid fats and without added solid fats, sugars, starches, or sodium and that retain naturally-occurring components such as fiber.

Ounce Equivalent – In the grains food group, the amount of a food counted as equal to a one ounce slice of bread; in the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts food group, the amount of food counted as equal to one ounce of cooked meat, poultry, or fish.¹

Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (PUFAs) – Are usually liquid at room temperature. Safflower, sunflower, corn and soybean oils contain the highest amounts of PUFAs. PUFAs lower total cholesterol in the blood and lower the bad cholesterol. However, they also lower the good cholesterol. Overall, they are healthy fats.⁴

Portion Size – The amount of a food consumed in one eating occasion; can consist of multiple servings.¹

Processed Cheese – Food prepared by mixing one or more cheeses, with the aid of heat, for manufacturing with an emulsifying agent. The cheese is then poured into molds to solidify into a homogeneous plastic mass and is later packaged. The final product can have a maximum moisture content of 43% and must have at least 47% milkfat.²

Processed Meat – A meat product containing at least 30% meat, where the meat has undergone processing other than boning, slicing, dicing, mincing or freezing, either as a single meat or in combination with other ingredients or additives. Processed meats have been cured, smoked, dried, canned, dehydrated and/or combined with chemicals and/or enzymes. Examples include sausage, bacon, deli meats, hot dogs, bologna, salami, pepperoni, etc.³

Saturated Fats – Are solid at room temperature like butter, stick margarine, shortening and the fat in cheese and meat. Some vegetable oils (e.g., coconut and palm oil) contain mostly saturated fats. These are unhealthy fats that raise cholesterol in the blood, so use them sparingly, if at all. ⁴

Serving Size – A standardized amount of a food, such as a cup or an ounce, used in providing dietary guidance or in making comparisons among similar foods.¹

Sweet Grain – A grain food that customarily contains a significant proportion of calories from sugar. Includes: doughnuts, Danishes, cakes, cupcakes, pies, cookies, brownies, toaster pastries, commercially-prepared muffins/quick breads, sweet rolls, granola bars, and grain fruit bars.

Trans Fats – Are found naturally in some foods but mainly come from partially hydrogenated fats in commercially-prepared baked goods like crackers and cookies. Trans fats raise cholesterol in the blood just like saturated fat does, so try to limit or avoid them entirely. They are unhealthy fats.⁴

Whole Grains – Foods made from the entire grain seed, usually called the kernel, which consists of the bran, germ and endosperm. If the kernel has been cracked, crushed or flaked, it must retain nearly the same relative proportions of bran, germ and endosperm as the original grain in order to be called whole grain.¹

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1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005. <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/default.htm>. Accessed May 28, 2010.
 2. Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. Title 21, Part 133. http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title21/21cfr133_main_02.tpl Accessed August 13, 2010.
 3. Food Standards New Zealand Australia. Food Standards Guide, 2001. http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/_srcfiles/Meat_0801.pdf. Accessed June 11, 2010.
 4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2008. <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/paguide.pdf>. Accessed June 11, 2010.
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 6. American Heart Association. What is Cholesterol? <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3046103> Accessed June 30, 2010.

Feeding Infants & Children



Current CACFP Daily Meal Pattern – Infants

Meal Component	Birth through 3 months	4 through 7 months	8 through 11 months
BREAKFAST – Serve the following 3 components:			
Breast Milk or Formula	4 – 6 fl oz.	4 – 8 fl oz.	6 – 8 fl oz.
Infant Cereal	None	0 – 3 Tbsp	2 – 4 Tbsp
Fruit or Vegetable	None	None	1 – 4 Tbsp
LUNCH or SUPPER – Serve the following 4 components:			
Breast Milk or Formula	4 – 6 fl oz.	4 – 8 fl oz.	6 – 8 fl oz.
Fruit or Vegetable	None	0 – 3 Tbsp	1 – 4 Tbsp
Infant Cereal	None	0 – 3 Tbsp	2 – 4 Tbsp
Meat or Meat Alternate (choose one)			
Lean meat, poultry, fish, egg yolk, cooked beans or peas	None	None	1 – 4 Tbsp
Cheese	None	None	½ – 2 oz.
Cottage cheese	None	None	1 – 4 oz.
SNACK – Serve the following 2 components:			
Breast Milk or Formula	4 – 6 fl oz.	4 – 6 fl oz.	2 – 4 fl oz.
Grain or Bread (choose one)			
Bread	None	None	0 – ½ slice
Crackers	None	None	0 – 2 crackers

If you participate in CACFP, you must comply with this meal pattern for reimbursement.

Recommended CACFP Daily Meal Pattern – Infants

This meal pattern was not reimbursable by CACFP at the time of publication.

Age	Meal	Breast Milk/Infant Formula	Meats, vegetables, fruits, and infant cereals (complementary foods)
0 through 5 months	All feedings	4–6 oz. breast milk or infant formula per feeding	No solid foods
6 through 11 months	Breakfast	6–8 oz. breast milk or formula	1–4 TBSP meat, fish, poultry, or egg yolk OR 1–4 TBSP infant cereal PLUS 1–2 TBSP vegetable OR 1–2 T fruit*
	Lunch/Supper	6–8 oz. breast milk or formula	1–4 TBSP meat, fish, poultry or egg yolk OR 1–4 TBSP infant cereal PLUS 1–2 TBSP vegetable OR 1–2 TBSP fruit*
	Snack	2–4 oz. breast milk or formula	1–2 TBSP vegetable OR 1–2 TBSP fruit* PLUS ½ slice of bread OR 2 crackers

NOTES:

- *No fruit juice for infants under 12 months of age.
- At 6 months, introduce these foods one at a time, starting with meat or infant cereal, followed by vegetables, fruits, and bread or crackers in amounts and types that are developmentally-appropriate.
- Do not serve any type of cow’s milk, foods mixed with milk (such as milk with cereal, milk in mashed potatoes), or milk-based products (yogurt, milk, cottage cheese) until 1 year of age. Begin transitioning to cow’s milk at 1 year of age.

IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2011. *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Aligning Dietary Guidance for All*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Infant Feeding

Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the ideal food for infants. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant's life. During this time, no other foods or beverages should be served. At six months, solid foods can be gradually introduced to an infant's diet. However, breastfeeding should continue until at least 12 months, and as long as desired by mother and baby. Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce infants' risk of developing many common illnesses and chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, ear infections, respiratory tract infections, dermatitis, and celiac disease. Infants who are breastfed are also less likely to be overweight or obese.¹ Additionally, breastfeeding promotes bonding between a mother and her infant.

As an early care and education (ECE) provider, you have a very important role in promoting and facilitating breastfeeding among the families you serve. If a mother wishes to breastfeed, work with her to develop a system to ensure that an ample supply of breast milk is available while the infant is in your care. This includes having a refrigerator/freezer available for breast milk storage and/or a designated private space for mothers to pump or breastfeed. Breast milk should be clearly labeled with each infant's name and the date on which it was expressed. This ensures that an infant receives only his/her own mother's breast milk and that the breast milk is safe for consumption.

It is very important to familiarize yourself with the safe storage and preparation of breast milk. Below are some helpful tips and guidelines:

- Never microwave breast milk! It is best to defrost breast milk either in the refrigerator overnight, by running under warm water, or by setting it in a container of warm water. Thawed breast milk should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze unused milk.
- If an infant doesn't finish the bottle of breast milk within one hour, throw out the rest. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the milk and make the infant sick if he/she drinks it later.
- At room temperature, a bottle of breast milk can safely stay out for 3 – 4 hours.
- Breast milk can be safely stored in the refrigerator for 48 – 72 hours.
- Breast milk can be safely stored in the freezer for up to six months.
- Always store breast milk in the back of the refrigerator or freezer, as this is the coldest spot.

Infant Formula

If breastfeeding is not possible or desired, iron-fortified infant formula is an acceptable alternative. As with breast milk, formula should be clearly labeled with the infant's name. Never switch an infant's formula without consultation with his/her parents/caregivers, as this could cause an adverse reaction. It is very important to familiarize yourself with the safe storage and preparation of infant formula. Below are some helpful tips and guidelines:

- Always follow the directions on the label carefully.
- If an infant doesn't finish the bottle of formula within one hour, throw out the remainder. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the formula and make the infant sick if he/she drinks it later.
- To prevent waste and save time, mix a large batch of formula and divide it into bottles that you can refrigerate and use throughout the day.
- At room temperature, prepared infant formula can safely stay out for up to two hours.
- If warmed, prepared infant formula can safely stay out at room temperature for up to one hour.
- Prepared infant formula can be safely stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.

Solid/Complementary Foods

At around six months, infants may be slowly introduced to solid foods if they show signs that they are developmentally ready. These include:

- The absence of tongue thrust reflex (baby's tongue doesn't automatically push food back out of his mouth)
- Good head and neck control
- Opening their mouths when food comes toward them
- Doubling of birth weight
- An increased demand for breast milk or formula that continues for several days

When solid foods are introduced, the AAP recommends that single-ingredient foods be given one at a time. You should wait at least two to three days between offering new foods, so that it will be easier to identify the food if the infant experiences an adverse reaction (i.e., allergy or intolerance). For most children it doesn't matter what the first foods are—whole grain cereals, or pureed vegetables, fruits and meats. Breastfed babies may benefit from baby foods made with meat, as these increase iron and zinc absorption.

ECE providers should not introduce new solid foods without first consulting an infant's parents/caregivers.

1 American Academy of Pediatrics (2012). Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. *Pediatrics*, 129(3):e827–e841. Accessed on January 7, 2013 at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/02/22/peds.2011-3552.full.pdf+html>

Infants: Beverages



Age

Birth through 3 months

Recommended

- Breast milk (preferred)
- Iron-fortified infant formula

Not Recommended

- Any other foods or beverages at this age

4 through 7 months

- Breast milk (preferred)
- Iron-fortified infant formula

- Food or drink other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula in a bottle unless medically necessary
- Cow's milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent beverages like soy or rice milk
- 100% fruit and vegetable juice
- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners, sweetened iced teas, punch, etc.
- Artificially sweetened beverages including diet soft drinks, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

8 through 11 months

- Breast milk (preferred)
- Iron-fortified infant formula
- Water with no added sweeteners

Rationale

Why is juice not recommended for infants until 12 months of age or older?

- Fruits and vegetables, rather than juice, are preferable because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.

Why should no food or drink other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula be served in a bottle?

- Cereals or other foods added to a bottle do not help infants sleep through the night.
- Addition of cereals or other foods to a bottle can cause choking.
- This practice deprives infants of the opportunity to learn to regulate their food intake.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are high in calories and sugar and low in key nutrients.
- Breast milk or iron-fortified formula and water provide all of the nutrition and hydration that infants need. Infants do not need the added sugar in sugary beverages.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with:
 - Overweight or obesity
 - Calcium deficiency because sugary beverages displace milk
 - Tooth decay

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues. Signs of hunger in infants may be sucking noises or sucking on fist or fingers, fussiness, or crying. Signs of fullness may be sealing the lips together, decreasing the amount of sucking, spitting out or refusing the nipple, or pushing or turning away from the breast or bottle.

Age	Item	Meals	Snacks
Birth through 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breast milk (preferred) ■ Iron-fortified infant formula 	4-6 oz.	
4 through 7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breast milk (preferred) ■ Iron-fortified infant formula 	Approximately 4-8 oz.	4-6 oz.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Water with no added sweeteners 	Small amount can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. Water can be used for practicing cup use.	
8 through 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breast milk (preferred) ■ Iron-fortified infant formula 	Approximately 6-8 oz.	2-4 oz.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Water with no added sweeteners 	Small amount can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. Water can be used for practicing cup use.	



Infants:

Fruits & Vegetables

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth through 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breast milk (preferred) ■ Iron-fortified infant formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Other foods at this age
4 through 7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A variety of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered. All should be mashed, strained, or pureed to prevent choking. ■ Fruits and vegetables should be served plain, with no added fat, honey, sugar, or salt. ■ Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Homemade pureed fruits or vegetables ● Commercially-prepared baby fruits ● Commercially-prepared baby vegetables ● Fresh or frozen fruit ● Fresh or frozen vegetables ● Canned fruits (in 100% juice or water) ● Canned vegetables, low-sodium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Added fat, honey, sugar, or salt ■ 100% fruit and vegetable juices ■ Fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners (e.g., cocktails, punches, etc.) ■ Food or drink other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula in a bottle unless medically necessary ■ Pre-mixed, commercially-prepared fruits or vegetables with more than one food item (e.g., fruit with cereal, vegetables with meat. Mixtures of fruits and vegetables only are fine.) ■ Pre-mixed, commercially-prepared desserts (e.g., infant smoothies, puddings, etc.) ■ Fried or pre-fried vegetables and fruits
8 through 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A variety of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered. ■ All should be soft, or cooked until soft, and cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking. ■ Corn should be cooked and pureed before serving. ■ Fruits and vegetables should be served plain, with no added fat, honey, sugar, or salt. ■ Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fresh or frozen fruits ● Fresh or frozen vegetables ● Canned fruits (in 100% juice or water) ● Canned vegetables, low-sodium 	

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following are a choking hazard to children under 12 months:

- Dried fruit and vegetables
- Raw vegetables
- Cooked or raw whole corn kernels
- Hard pieces of raw fruit such as apple, pear, or melon
- Whole grapes, berries, cherries, melon balls, or cherry or grape tomatoes

Rationale

Why serve fruits and vegetables?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables weekly.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They help children to develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Why no commercially-prepared mixtures of fruits or vegetables and another meal component?

- In commercially-prepared mixtures, it is difficult to figure out how much of each meal component the mixture contains. There may not be enough of a required component; therefore, it cannot be reimbursed by the CACFP. Mixtures of peas and



chicken cannot be reimbursed, for example, but mixtures of fruits and/or vegetables can because they are currently counted as one meal component in CACFP (e.g., apples and squash, or pears and blueberries).

- Mixtures may contain a new food that the child has not tried and may cause an allergic reaction. If a child has been introduced to all foods in the mixture, it is fine to serve; however, it will not be reimbursed if it contains two or more meal components.

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues.

Age	Item	Meals
Birth through 3 months	Fruits and/or vegetables	None
4 through 7 months	Fruits and/or vegetables	0–3 Tbsp
8 through 11 months	Fruits and/or vegetables	1–4 Tbsp

Infants: Grains & Breads

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth through 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breast milk (preferred) ■ Iron-fortified infant formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Other foods at this age
4 through 7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Iron-fortified infant cereals ■ Make at least half of grains whole grains (as possible, given that infants are still being introduced to cereals). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commercially prepared cereal mixtures
8 through 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Iron-fortified infant cereals ■ Make at least half of grains whole grains. ■ All foods should have zero grams of trans fat ■ Commercially-prepared, age-appropriate baked snacks (such as teething biscuits) are allowed for snack time only. ■ Try to offer items (cereals, crackers, baked goods, etc.) that have no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grains and cereals that have more than 6 grams of sugar per serving, as labeled ■ Commercially prepared cereal mixtures ■ Baked goods that are high in sugar and/or fat (such as cookies, granola bars, cupcakes, donuts, cinnamon buns, etc.)

Rationale

Why serve whole grains?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half of grain servings whole grains.
- Whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber, several B vitamins and minerals.
- Children and adults should eat about 14g of fiber for every 1,000 calories consumed. Diets high in fiber have a number of beneficial effects, including lowering the risk for heart disease and preventing constipation.

- Choosing foods that are free of added sugars helps people meet their nutrient needs without eating too many calories, sugars and fats. Added sugars supply calories but few or no nutrients.
- Limiting cereals to 6g of sugar (1.5 tsp) or fewer will help to keep added sugars low in children's diets.

Why no commercially-prepared cereal mixtures?

- Mixture may contain a new food that the child has not tried and may cause an allergic reaction.
- Portions of the food components in the mixture are not specified.

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues.

Age	Item	Meals	Snacks
Birth through 3 months	■ Grains	None	None
4 through 7 months	■ Iron-fortified infant cereal	0–3 Tbsp	—
8 through 11 months	■ Iron-fortified infant cereal	2–4 Tbsp	—
	■ Bread	—	½ slice
	■ Crackers	—	2 crackers

Infants: Meats & Meat Alternates

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth through 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breast milk (preferred) ■ Iron-fortified infant formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Other foods at this age
4 through 7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pureed meats or beans with no added sugar, fat or salt (not reimbursable by CACFP until 8 months of age) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fried foods ■ Pre-fried baked foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks ■ Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon and sausage ■ Nuts and seeds (choking hazard for children this age)* ■ Pre-mixed, commercially-prepared meals ■ Added fat, honey, sugar or salt
8 through 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lean meats (beef, veal, and/or pork) ■ Skinless poultry (chicken, turkey) ■ Fish ■ Cooked beans and peas (legumes) ■ Egg yolk ■ Meats and meat alternates should be soft, pureed, ground, mashed or finely chopped to prevent choking ■ Foods should have zero grams of trans fat 	

*If using nuts and seeds, serve them ground or finely chopped in a prepared food.

Rationale

Why are meats and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, and eggs offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair and maintain body tissues.
- Nuts, nut butters and seeds are good sources of unsaturated fat, which promotes cardiovascular health.
- Minimizing trans fat consumption reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Portion Size

Age	Item	Meals
Birth through 3 months	■ Meats & meat alternates	None
4 through 7 months	■ Chicken, meat, egg, cooked beans or peas*	1–4 Tbsp*
8 through 11 months	■ Chicken, meat, egg, cooked beans or peas	1–4 Tbsp
	■ Cottage cheese	1–4 oz.
	■ Cheese	½ oz. – 2 oz.

* Not reimbursable by CACFP until 8 months of age

Current CACFP Daily Meal Pattern – Children

Food Component	Ages 1 – 2	Ages 3 – 5	Ages 6 – 12
BREAKFAST – Serve all 3 components (meat/meat alternate is optional)			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Fruit or Vegetable	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grain or Bread			
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal – cold, dry	¼ cup	⅓ cup	¾ cup
Cereal – hot, cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Pasta, noodles or grains	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Meat or Meat Alternate	<i>(Best Practice—optional, not reimbursed by CACFP at the time of publication)</i>		
Lean meat, poultry or fish	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Cheese	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Cottage cheese	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Large egg	½ egg	½ egg	½ egg
Peanut butter or other nut/seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Yogurt, plain or flavored	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
LUNCH or SUPPER – Serve all 4 components			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Fruit or Vegetable: Serve 2 or more separate and identifiable fruit/vegetable dishes.	¼ cup total	½ cup total	¾ cup total
Grain or Bread (choose one)			
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Grain or Pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Cereal – cold, dry	¼ cup	⅓ cup	¾ cup
Cereal – hot, cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Meat or Meat Alternate (choose one)			
Lean meat, poultry or fish	1 oz.	1 ½ oz.	2 oz.
Alternate protein product	1 oz.	1 ½ oz.	2 oz.
Cheese	1 oz.	1 ½ oz.	2 oz.
Cottage cheese	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup
Large egg	½ egg	¾ egg	1 egg
Cooked dry beans/peas	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup
Peanut butter or other nut/seed butters	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	½ oz.	¾ oz.	1 oz.
Yogurt, plain or flavored	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup

Food Component	Ages 1 – 2	Ages 3 – 5	Ages 6 – 12
SNACK – Select 2 of the 4 components			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Fruit or Vegetable	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Grain or Bread (choose one)			
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Grain or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Cereal – cold, dry	¼ cup	⅓ cup	¾ cup
Cereal – hot, cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Meat or Meat Alternate (choose one)			
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Alternate protein product	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Cheese	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Cottage cheese	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Large egg	½ egg	½ egg	½ egg
Cooked dry beans/peas	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Peanut butter or other nut/seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	½ oz.	½ oz.	1 oz.
Yogurt, plain or flavored	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup

Recommended CACFP Daily Meal Pattern – Children

	Food Group	Serving Number	Range of Serving Size (vary by age group)
Breakfast	Fruit or non-starchy vegetable	1	¼ to ½ cup
	Grain/bread	1	½ to 3 ounce equivalent
	Lean meat/meat alternate	1	½ to 2 ounce equivalent (3 times weekly)
	Milk	1	½ to 1 cup
Lunch/Supper	Fruit	1	¼ to ½ cup
	Vegetable	2	⅛ to ½ cup
	Grain/bread	1	½ to 2 ½ ounce equivalent
	Lean meat/meat alternate	1	½ to 2 ½ ounce equivalent
	Milk	1	½ to 1 cup
Snack (choose 2 food groups per snack)	Fruit	2 per week	½ to 1 cup
	Vegetable	2 per week	⅛ to 1 cup
	Grain/bread	2 per week	½ to 2 ounce equivalent
	Lean meat/meat alternate	2 per week	½ to 1 ounce equivalent
	Milk	2 per week	½ cup

Please note that the shaded boxes are best practice recommendations, but are not reimbursed through the CACFP as of the date of this publication.

Institute of Medicine (2011). *Report Brief: Child and Adult Care Food Program: Aligning Dietary Guidance for All*. Retrieved on January 20, 2013 from <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/Child-and-Adult-Care-Food-Program-Aligning-Dietary-Guidance-for-All.aspx>

Comparison of Current and Recommended CACFP Requirements

You can make all of these changes now! Reimbursement will not increase until the new rules are in place.

Eating Occasion	Current Requirements	Recommended Requirements
All	Must meet daily pattern	Must meet daily and weekly pattern to provide more flexibility and better alignment with the Dietary Guidelines
Breakfast	3 meal components	4 or 5 meal components
Lunch or Supper	4 meal components	5 meal components
Snack	Any 2 of 4 components	Variety specified for the week. <i>Choice between 2 small snacks or 1 enhanced snack.*</i>
Meal Component		
Fruit	Fruits and vegetables are combined as a category	Fruits are a separate category, and servings are increased; juice is not provided for infants and is limited for children; fruits containing added sugars are limited.
Vegetable		Vegetables are a separate category from fruit, and servings are increased; must provide variety including dark green leafy, bright yellow/orange, legumes; sodium content is limited; starchy vegetables are limited.
Grain/bread	Enriched or whole grain, proportions not specified	At least half must be whole grain rich, additional whole grains are encouraged, grain products high in solid fats and added sugars are limited to control calories and saturated fat, high sodium grains are also limited.
Meat/meat alternate	None at breakfast	Included in weekly breakfast pattern three times a week to provide balance to meal but flexibility through the week; some types are limited to help control calories, solid fat and sodium.
Milk	Any type of fluid milk	Must be non-fat or low-fat (1%) for children over 2 years of age. Flavored milk must be non-fat and is allowed only for at-risk afterschool programs. <i>For children over 2 years of age and adults, non-fat or low-fat yogurt may be used as a substitute for milk or as a meat alternate no more than once per day.*</i>
Food Component		
Energy	No requirement	Calories are controlled by limiting foods high in solid fats and added sugars.
Micronutrients	No standard specified by regulation	Meal patterns are designed to achieve, for protein and most micronutrients, DRI targets consistent with a low prevalence of inadequacy.
Fats	No restriction	Label must state zero trans fat (if applicable); food specifications limit highly processed and high-fat meats and foods.
Sodium	No restriction	No salt at the table; encouragement to prepare foods with less salt. Food specifications limit some sources of sodium.

**This substitution (in italics) may not be made until the new CACFP rules are officially in place.*

IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2011. *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Aligning Dietary Guidance for All*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Children 1 through 2 Years: Beverages



Recommended

- 12 to 23 months: whole milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk
- 24+ months: fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk
- Water with no added sweeteners

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than one age-appropriate serving per day. Juice may be eliminated entirely if desired.

Not Recommended

- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners (i.e. juice drinks or cocktails, punch, etc.)
- Artificially-sweetened beverages including diet sodas, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

Rationale

Why whole milk for children aged 12 through 23 months?

- Whole milk provides some fats that are necessary for early growth and brain and spinal cord development.

Why fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk for children aged 2 years and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends serving fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- Fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Why limit juice?

- The AAP recommends limiting juice to one serving a day.

- Whole fruits and vegetables are preferred because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.
- Excessive juice consumption is associated with overweight or obesity, tooth decay and diarrhea.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Juice drinks, sports drinks and soft drinks are generally high in calories and sugar and low in nutrients.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with overweight or obesity, calcium deficiency (because sugary beverages displace milk), and tooth decay.

Why no diet beverages or artificial sweeteners?

- While diet and artificially-sweetened beverages have few calories, they may displace the intake of more nutritious drinks such as 1% or fat-free milk that children need in order to grow.

Portion Size

Age	Item	Meals	Snacks
12 through 23 months	Water	As much as desired, any time	
	Whole milk	½ cup (4 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)
	100% juice	No more than ¼ cup (one serving) per day	
24+ months	Water	As much as desired, any time	
	Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk	½ cup (4 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)
	100% Juice	No more than ½ cup (one serving) per day	

Children 1 through 2 Years: Fruits & Vegetables



Recommended

- A variety of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at every meal
- Fresh or frozen fruit (cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking)
- Fresh or frozen vegetables (cut into bite-size pieces and cook to prevent choking)
- Canned fruits (in 100% juice or water)
- Canned vegetables, no- or low-sodium

Limit

- 100% fruit and/or vegetable juices to no more than one age-appropriate serving per day. Juice may be eliminated entirely if desired.
- Added fat, sugar, or salt

Not Recommended

- Dried fruit or vegetables for children under four (choking hazard)
- Fruit-based drinks with added sugars (i.e. juice drinks or cocktails, punch, etc.)
- Fried or pre-fried vegetables or fruits (e.g. French fries, tater tots)

Rationale

Why serve fruits and vegetables?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables weekly.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They help children to develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Fruits and vegetables	½ cup (breakfast)* ¼ cup (lunch/supper)*	½ cup*
100% juice	No more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	

*Start with this age-appropriate serving. If children are still hungry, offer another age-appropriate serving of fruits or vegetables.

Children 1 through 2 Years: Grains & Breads



Recommended

- Make half of grain servings whole grains*
- Grain foods that have more than 3 grams of fiber per serving, as labeled
- Foods should have zero grams of trans fat
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain bread
- Whole grain cereal
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal
- Bulgur
- Quinoa

Limit

- Added fat, sugar or salt

Not Recommended

- Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving, as labeled
- Sweet grains (cakes, cupcakes, donuts, Danishes, cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, granola bars, cookies, commercially-prepared muffins, etc.)

*To determine if a product is a whole grain, look on the ingredients list. A whole grain should be the first ingredient listed, or the first ingredient after water. Examples include whole wheat flour (not just “wheat flour”), whole grain corn, whole cornmeal, brown rice, oats or whole oats, etc.

Rationale

Why serve whole grains?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half of grain servings whole grains.
- Whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber, several B vitamins and minerals.
- Children and adults should eat about 14g of fiber for every 1,000 calories consumed. Diets high in fiber have a number of beneficial effects, including lowering the risk for heart disease and preventing constipation.
- Choosing foods that are free of added sugars helps people meet their nutrient needs without eating too many calories, sugars and fats.
- Added sugars supply calories but few or no nutrients.
- Discretionary calorie allowance for children 2 – 5 years of age allows for only 4 – 5 tsp of added sugars each day.
- Limiting cereals to 6g of sugar (1.5 tsp) or fewer will help to keep added sugars low in children’s diets.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Bread items (bread, rolls, bagels, etc.)	½ slice	½ slice
Cereals, hot or cold	¼ cup (2 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)
Pasta, noodles or grains	¼ cup (2 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)

Children 1 through 2 Years: Meat & Meat Alternates



Recommended

- Lean meats (beef, veal, and/or pork)
- Skinless poultry (chicken, turkey)
- Fish
- Cooked beans and peas (legumes)
- Nut butters
- Eggs
- Yogurt[†]
- Cheese[†]
- Cottage cheese[†]
- Meats and meat alternates should be cut into bit-size pieces to prevent choking
- Foods should have zero grams of trans fat

Limit

- Added fat, sugar or salt

Not Recommended

- Fried foods
- Pre-fried baked foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon and sausage
- Chicken or turkey with the skin
- Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, albacore tuna (high in mercury)
- Processed cheese food or cheese product
- Nuts and seeds (choking hazard for children under four)*

*If using nuts and seeds, serve them ground or finely chopped in a prepared food. [†]Fat-free or 1% low-fat for children two and older

Rationale

Why are meats and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, and eggs offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair and maintain body tissues.
- Nuts, nut butters and seeds are good sources of unsaturated fat, which promotes cardiovascular health.
- Dairy foods (e.g., cheese and yogurt) are good sources of protein and calcium.
- Minimizing trans fat consumption reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Lean meat, poultry or fish	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Alternate protein product	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Cheese	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Cottage cheese	¼ cup (2 oz.)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Large egg	½ egg	½ egg
Cooked, dry beans or peas	¼ cup (2 oz.)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Nut or seed butters	2 Tbsp	1 Tbsp
Nuts and seeds	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Yogurt	½ cup (4 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)

Children 3 through 5 Years: Beverages



Recommended

- Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk
- Water with no added sweeteners

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than one age-appropriate serving per day. Juice may be eliminated entirely if desired.

Not Recommended

- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners (i.e. juice drinks or cocktails, punch, etc.)
- Artificially-sweetened beverages including diet sodas, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

Rationale

Why fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk for children aged 2 years and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends serving fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- Fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Why limit juice?

- The AAP recommends limiting juice to one serving a day.
- Whole fruits and vegetables are preferred because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.

- Excessive juice consumption is associated with overweight or obesity, tooth decay, and diarrhea.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are generally high in calories and sugar and low in nutrients.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with overweight or obesity, calcium deficiency (because sugary beverages displace milk), tooth decay

Why no diet beverages or artificial sweeteners?

- While diet and artificially-sweetened beverages have few calories, they may displace the intake of more nutritious drinks such as fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk that children need in order to grow.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Water	As much as desired, any time	
Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk	¾ cup (6 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)
100% juice	No more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	

Children 3 through 5 Years: Fruits & Vegetables



Recommended

- A variety of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at every meal
- Fresh or frozen fruit*
- Fresh or frozen vegetables*
- Canned fruits (in 100% juice or water)
- Canned vegetables, no- or low-sodium
- Dried fruits and vegetables for children four and older

**For children under four, cut into bite-size pieces and/or cook to prevent choking*

Limit

- 100% fruit and/or vegetable juices to no more than one age-appropriate serving per day. Juice may be eliminated entirely if desired.
- Added fat, sugar, or salt

Not Recommended

- Dried fruit or vegetables for children under four (choking hazard)
- Fruit-based drinks with added sugars (i.e. juice drinks or cocktails, punch, etc.)
- Fried or pre-fried vegetables or fruits (e.g. French fries, tater tots)

Rationale

Why are fruits and vegetables important?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables weekly.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They help children to develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Fruits and vegetables	½ cup*	½ cup*
100% juice	No more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	

*Start with this age-appropriate serving. If children are still hungry, offer them another age-appropriate serving of fruits or vegetables.

Children 3 through 5 Years: Grains & Breads



Recommended

- Make half of grain servings whole grains*
- Grain foods that have more than 3 grams of fiber per serving, as labeled
- Foods should have zero grams of trans fat
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain bread
- Whole grain cereal
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal
- Bulgur
- Quinoa

Limit

- Added fat, sugar or salt

Not Recommended

- Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving, as labeled
- Sweet grains (cakes, cupcakes, donuts, Danishes, cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, granola bars, cookies, commercially-prepared muffins, etc.)

*To determine if a product is a whole grain, look on the ingredients list. A whole grain should be the first ingredient listed, or the first ingredient after water. Examples include whole wheat flour (not just “wheat flour”), whole grain corn, whole cornmeal, brown rice, oats or whole oats, etc.

Rationale

Why serve whole grains?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half of grain servings whole grains.
- Whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber, several B vitamins and minerals.
- Children and adults should eat about 14g of fiber for every 1,000 calories consumed. Diets high in fiber have a number of beneficial effects, including lowering the risk for heart disease and preventing constipation.
- Choosing foods that are free of added sugars helps people meet their nutrient needs without eating too many calories, sugars and fats.
- Added sugars supply calories but few or no nutrients.
- Discretionary calorie allowance for children 2 – 5 years of age allows for only 4 – 5 tsp of added sugars each day.
- Limiting cereals to 6g of sugar (1.5 tsp) or fewer will help to keep added sugars low in children’s diets.
- Minimizing trans fat consumption reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Bread items (bread, rolls, bagels, etc.)	½ slice	½ slice
Cereals, cold	⅓ cup (2.5 oz.)	⅓ cup (2.5 oz.)
Cereals, hot	¼ cup (2 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)
Pasta, noodles or grains	¼ cup (2 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)

Children 3 through 5 Years: Meats & Meat Alternates



Recommended

- Lean meats (beef, veal, and/or pork)
- Skinless poultry (chicken, turkey)
- Fish
- Cooked beans and peas (legumes)
- Nut butters
- Eggs
- Fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- Fat-free or reduced-fat cheese
- Fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese
- Meats and meat alternates should be cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking
- Foods should have zero grams of trans fat

Limit

- Added fat, sugar or salt

Not Recommended

- Fried foods
- Pre-fried baked foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon and sausage
- Chicken or turkey with the skin
- Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, albacore tuna (high in mercury)
- Processed cheese food or cheese product
- Nuts and seeds (choking hazard for children under four)*

*If using nuts and seeds for children under four, serve them ground or finely chopped in a prepared food.

Rationale

Why are meats and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, and eggs offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair and maintain body tissues.
- Nuts, nut butters and seeds are good sources of unsaturated fat, which promotes cardiovascular health.
- Dairy foods (e.g., cheese and yogurt) are good sources of protein and calcium.
- Minimizing trans fat consumption reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Lean meat, poultry or fish	1 ½ oz. (3 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Alternate protein product	1 ½ oz. (3 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Cheese	1 ½ oz. (3 Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Cottage cheese	¾ cup	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Large egg	¾ egg	½ egg
Cooked, dry beans or peas	3 oz. (6 Tbsp)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Nut or seed butters	3 Tbsp	1 Tbsp
Nuts and seeds	¾ oz. (1 ½ Tbsp)	½ oz. (1 Tbsp)
Yogurt	¾ cup (6 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)

Children 6 Years and Older: Beverages



Recommended

- Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk
- Water with no added sweeteners

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than one age-appropriate serving per day. Juice may be eliminated entirely if desired.

Not Recommended

- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners (i.e. juice drinks or cocktails, punch, etc.)
- Artificially-sweetened beverages including diet sodas, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

Rationale

Why fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk for children aged 2 years and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends serving fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- Fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Why limit juice?

- The AAP recommends limiting juice to serving a day.
- Whole fruits and vegetables are preferred because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.
- Excessive juice consumption is associated with overweight or obesity, tooth decay and diarrhea.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are generally high in calories and sugar and low in nutrients.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with overweight or obesity, calcium deficiency (because sugary beverages displace milk), and tooth decay.

Why no diet beverages or artificial sweeteners?

- While diet and artificially-sweetened beverages have few calories, they may displace the intake of more nutritious drinks such as 1% or fat-free milk that children need in order to grow.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Water	As much as desired, any time	
Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk	1 cup (8 oz.)	1 cup (8 oz.)
100% juice	No more than $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 oz.) per day	

Children 6 Years and Older: Fruits & Vegetables



Recommended

- A variety of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at every meal
- Fresh or frozen fruit
- Fresh or frozen vegetables
- Canned fruits (in 100% juice or water)
- Canned vegetables, no- or low-sodium
- Dried fruits and vegetables

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than one age-appropriate serving per day. Juice may be eliminated entirely if desired.
- Added fat, sugar, or salt

Not Recommended

- Fruit-based drinks with added sugars (i.e. juice drinks or cocktails, punch, etc.)
- Fried or pre-fried vegetables or fruits

Rationale

Why are fruits and vegetables important?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables weekly.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They help children to develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Fruits and vegetables	¾ cup*	¾ cup*
100% juice	No more than ¾ cup (6 oz.) per day	1 cup (8 oz.)

*Start with this age-appropriate serving. If children are still hungry, offer them another age-appropriate serving of fruits or vegetables.

Children 6 Years and Older: Grains & Breads



Recommended

- Make half of grain servings whole grains*
- Grain foods that have more than 3 grams of fiber per serving, as labeled
- Foods should have zero grams of trans fat
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain bread
- Whole grain cereal
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal
- Bulgur
- Quinoa

Limit

- Added fat, sugar or salt

Not Recommended

- Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving, as labeled
- Sweet grains (cakes, cupcakes, donuts, Danishes, cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, granola bars, cookies, commercially-prepared muffins, etc.)

* To determine if a product is a whole grain, look on the ingredients list. A whole grain should be the first ingredient listed, or the first ingredient after water. Examples include whole wheat flour (not just “wheat flour”), whole grain corn, whole cornmeal, brown rice, oats or whole oats, etc.

Rationale

Why serve whole grains?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half of grain servings whole grains.
- Whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber, several B vitamins and minerals.
- Children and adults should eat about 14g of fiber for every 1,000 calories consumed. Diets high in fiber have a number of beneficial effects, including lowering the risk for heart disease and preventing constipation.
- Choosing foods that are free of added sugars helps people meet their nutrient needs without eating too many calories, sugars and fats.
- Added sugars supply calories but few or no nutrients.
- Discretionary calorie allowance for children 6 years of age and older allows for only 4 – 6 tsp of added sugars each day.
- Limiting cereals to 6g of sugar (1.5 tsp) or fewer will help to keep added sugars low in children’s diets.
- Minimizing trans fat consumption reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Portion Size

Item	Meals	Snacks
Bread items (bread, rolls, bagels, etc.)	1 slice	1 slice
Cereals, cold	¾ cup (6 oz.)	¾ cup (6 oz.)
Cereals, hot	½ cup (4 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)
Pasta, noodles or grains	½ cup (4 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)

Children 6 Years and Older: Meats & Meat Alternates

Recommended

- Lean meats (beef, veal, and/or pork)
- Skinless poultry (chicken, turkey)
- Fish
- Cooked beans and peas (legumes)
- Nuts and seeds
- Nut butters
- Eggs
- Fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- Fat-free or reduced-fat cheese
- Fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese
- Meats and meat alternates should be cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking
- Foods should have zero grams of trans fat

Limit

- Added fat, sugar or salt

Not Recommended

- Fried foods
- Pre-fried baked foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon and sausage
- Chicken or turkey with the skin
- Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, albacore tuna (high in mercury)
- Processed cheese food or cheese product

Rationale

Why are meats and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, and eggs offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair and maintain body tissues.
- Nuts, nut butters and seeds are good sources of unsaturated fat, which promotes cardiovascular health.
- Dairy foods (e.g., cheese and yogurt) are good sources of protein and calcium.
- Minimizing trans fat consumption reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Portion Size


Item	Meals	Snacks
Lean meat, poultry or fish	¼ cup (2 oz.)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Alternate protein product	¼ cup (2 oz.)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Cheese	¼ cup (2 oz.)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Cottage cheese	½ cup (4 oz.)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Large egg	1 egg	½ egg
Cooked, dry beans or peas	½ cup (4 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)
Nut or seed butters	¼ cup (4 Tbsp)	2 Tbsp
Nuts and seeds	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)	1 oz. (2 Tbsp)
Yogurt	1 cup (8 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)

General Guidance



Role Modeling

From earliest infancy, children learn through their interactions with parents/guardians and early care and education providers. Young children naturally want to do what you do. Working with children and families every day gives you a unique opportunity to influence positive health behaviors. You can do many things to help children develop healthy eating and physical activity habits, and being a good role model is where it begins. Remember that children pick up on attitudes and behaviors. They will learn from you which foods to eat and which to reject, so make sure your comments about the food served are positive. Mealtime is a great way to help children develop positive attitudes about healthy foods, learn appropriate mealtime behavior, and improve communication skills. Use the following tips to help you model healthy habits:

- Eat healthy foods together. Let children see you enjoying fruits, vegetables and whole grains at meals and snack time.
 - Be willing to try new foods with the children. Children will be more inclined to taste an unfamiliar food if a trusted adult is eating it also. Compare experiences and talk about how the food looks, smells, and tastes.
 - Make positive comments about healthy eating—encourage children to taste all foods, especially new ones!
 - Always praise children when they eat their fruits and vegetables or at least give them a try. Praise serves as positive reinforcement and makes it more likely that kids will repeat this behavior again in the future.
 - Adopt *family-style dining*, in which all food is placed in serving bowls on the table and children are encouraged to serve themselves alone or with help from an adult. This helps children think about their own hunger and fullness cues and learn how to make healthy choices. It's also a great time to teach children about appropriate serving sizes and encourage them to try unfamiliar foods.
- 
- Make meals and snack time positive, cheerful and unhurried events. Children should learn to chew their food completely. Our bodies need time to realize that they've had enough to eat, and this is especially true for children's growing bodies. Modeling these behaviors and taking time to enjoy a leisurely meal teaches children the importance of mealtime and proper nutrition.
 - When eating with children, make sure you're consistent in your messages by eating only what they're also allowed to eat. Children are quick to pick up when something isn't "fair," so don't create a double standard.
 - Seize the teachable moments during meals and snack time. Instead of watching TV while eating, engage children in conversation about healthy habits. Discuss where the foods you're eating come from and why they're good for both adults and kids.
 - Allow children to observe you choosing healthy foods over less nutritious alternatives (e.g., sweets and high-fat snacks). Then tell them why you chose the apple over the cookie or brownie.

Family-Style Meals

Using family-style dining in your early care and education program supports independence, social skills, healthy eating and more. Children who are given the opportunity to actively participate in mealtime learn and practice important skills like passing and serving food and drinks, table manners, preparing for meals and cleaning up. They are encouraged to try new foods and to serve themselves appropriate portions. Use the below guidance to plan for family-style dining in your program.

Mealtime Routine Sample

1. Call for helpers — children with daily jobs
2. Transition activity — song
3. Bathroom and hand wash break
4. Children sit at the table as the food is placed on the table
5. Teachers sit and eat with children
6. Children and teachers clean up
7. Transition — children choose quiet books or puzzles as others finish eating

Family-Style Mealtime Checklist

Mealtime routine

- Teachers' routines allow for food to be prepared and ready at the designated mealtime.

Appropriately sized bowls and serving utensils

- Food is served in bowls of appropriate size that children can lift and pass.
- Serving bowls are of appropriate material so they do not conduct heat and are not too hot to pass.
- Small size scoops, one-piece plastic tongs, and short-handled hard plastic serving spoons are used. Serving utensils should align with serving size recommendations for age and food group.

Mealtime expectations to review with children

- We eat together at the table.
- We all come to the table at the same time.
- We wait until everyone is ready before we begin our meal.
- We serve ourselves and pass food to each other.
- We use inside voices.



Passing food practice for children

- Pass with both hands.
- Keep food over the table when passing it.
- Hold the bowl by the side to keep fingers out of food.

Serving utensils practice for children: try this for a small group activity or set up a learning center in classroom

- Practice with scoops, tongs, and short-handled hard plastic serving spoons.

Pouring practice for children: set up water table or learning center for practice in classroom

- Pretend practice.
- Practice with dry liquid such as sand or beans.
- Practice with water.
- Practice with water and pouring into child-size cups.

Cleanup practice for children: try this in dramatic play or as a small group activity

- Pretend cleanup with sponge or cloth.
- Pretend floor cleanup with mini-mop or cloth.
- Practice cleanup of table and floor with water.

Hungry or Full?

Most infants and young children can figure out when they are full and will stop eating if permitted. Follow the division of responsibility when feeding: “It’s your job to provide, and children’s job to decide.” Over the course of the week, infants and children will eat as much as they need to grow. You can help them eat just the right amount by following these easy strategies:

For infants

- Look for hunger cues. Infants have different ways of showing they are hungry, but common hunger cues include rooting, making sucking noises, or trying to put a fist in their mouth.
- When the infant cries, look to see what else could be bothering her before immediately feeding. An infant who cries may not be hungry. A need for sleep, affection or a diaper change may also be the cause.
- When the infant becomes distracted, and sucking stops or becomes less frequent, take the bottle out and see if he still roots for it. The infant could just be using the bottle as a pacifier after he has fulfilled his hunger needs.
- Look for milk running out of the infant’s mouth. An infant may let the bottle stay in her mouth even after she is full.
- It is not necessary to finish off a bottle, container of food or food on the plate. Even when there is an ounce left, if an infant is full, let him stop eating. If you are worried about wasting breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula, start with smaller amounts and add more if the infant is still hungry.



For toddlers and older children

- Little tummies need little portions. Just like adults, when there is a large amount of food on the plate, children will eat it. Therefore, start small and ask them if they are hungry before serving or allowing second servings. This will also reduce food waste and save money!
- Serve family-style — children will learn to put the right amount on their plates from the start.
- Create a positive eating environment by listening when a child says she is full. Discourage the “clean your plate” habit. A toddler may not say she is full, but she may start playing, become distracted, shake her head “no,” close her mouth, or refuse to finish the food on her plate.
- Sit with the children and let them see you eat when you are hungry and stop eating when you are full, even if there is food on your plate. Explain what you are doing.
- Complaints of being hungry, especially when a child has just eaten, may be due to other triggers such as boredom, TV advertising or seeing another person eating. Help the child move on to a different fun activity.

Picky Eaters

It is natural for children to be cautious with new foods. It can take up to 10–15 tries—actually putting the food in their mouths—before they may come to like it. Some children are especially cautious about trying new foods, while others use food as a way to be in control.

Use these strategies to create a positive environment and minimize struggles when trying new foods:

For infants

- Don't be discouraged by a frown. Infants naturally prefer salty and sweet tastes, so for some fruits and vegetables it may take up to 10–15 tries for a baby to accept the new food. Don't give up.
- When offering a new food, serve the infant a food he/she is familiar with and likes. You could try alternating bites between the new food and the familiar food.

For toddlers and older children

- Create a routine that everyone should try and taste new foods offered at your program. Encourage all children to take at least one bite of new foods. If a child is adamantly against it, don't force the issue.
 - Put a very small portion on the plate to try (like two peas). Young children may be concerned that they won't like the new food, so help them by putting only a small amount on their plates—it looks less overwhelming.
 - Always offer healthy foods or create a policy that requires parents to provide well-balanced meals that align with MyPlate and/or CACFP recommendations.
 - Avoid rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind. Especially avoid forcing a child to finish the “healthy foods” to get to his dessert or sweets—this can make the healthy food seem like punishment and force the child to eat when he is full.
- Offer desserts rarely so children do not expect them at every meal. When children come to expect dessert, they may not eat the healthier foods or they may see desserts as a reward for eating healthy food. By not having dessert as a regular option, you minimize this struggle.
 - When introducing a new food, make it a game or lesson. Remember, it can take 10 to 15 tries for a child to accept a new food. Try offering the new food outside the meal time. You can make it a classroom lesson and then have children who are interested in trying the new food take a taste and share their perceptions. This creates a desirability to try the new food.



Choking Hazards and Allergy Warning

The following foods are considered choking hazards for children **under four years of age** if served whole or in chunks. Use these simple changes to make them safe options. Some foods cannot be safely altered, so it's recommended they not be served at all.

Choking Hazard	Make It Safe By...
Nuts and seeds	Chopping finely; serving chopped or ground in prepared foods
Hot dogs	Cutting in quarters lengthwise, then cut into smaller pieces
Whole grapes	Cutting in half lengthwise
Raisins	Cooking in food
Chunks of meat or cheese	Chopping finely
Hard fruit chunks (like apples)	Chopping finely, cutting into thin strips, steaming, mashing, or pureeing
Raw vegetables	Chopping finely, cutting into thin strips, steaming, mashing, or pureeing
Peanut butter	Spread thinly on crackers or mix with applesauce and cinnamon and spread thinly on bread
Choking Hazard	DO NOT SERVE
Dried fruits or vegetables	Do not serve
Popcorn*	Do not serve

* Foods that are not reimbursable

ACTION STEP: Be sure all foods are cut into bite-size pieces, steamed or mashed. Encourage chewing completely before swallowing to ensure safety.

Food Allergies

Because food allergies are common in children, it is important to be aware of the ingredients in all foods before serving.

The eight most common allergens are

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts*
- Tree nuts*
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Wheat

*Note: Tree nuts, peanuts and nut butters are excellent sources of protein and healthy fats for growing children, are reimbursable meat alternate options and are strongly encouraged if feasible for your program.

ACTION STEP: If a child has a food allergy, a doctor's note must be kept on file stating the allergy and any appropriate substitutions. Be sure to speak with all parents/guardians about children's food allergies. If allergies are severe, ask for a list of foods their child is permitted to eat.

A woman with long dark hair and a young girl with long brown hair are smiling and looking down at a white bowl filled with green leafy salad. They are both holding silver knives and appear to be cutting or preparing the salad. The woman is wearing a grey and white plaid shirt, and the girl is wearing a bright yellow short-sleeved shirt. In the background, a bottle of olive oil is visible on a kitchen counter. The overall atmosphere is warm and focused on healthy meal preparation.

Menu Planning & Meal Preparation

Tips for Transitioning Kids to Healthier Foods

Many young children are picky eaters and prefer to eat simple, familiar foods. However, childhood is an important time that shapes food preferences and lifelong health habits. As an early care and education provider, you have the unique opportunity to introduce children to a variety of nutritious foods to make sure they grow up strong and healthy. While you may encounter small challenges along the way, the tips below for transitioning kids to healthier foods are sure to make the task less daunting.

- Transition foods after a summer, winter or spring break. Children are less likely to notice a difference if they've been away for awhile.
 - Transition to new foods or ingredients slowly and gradually. Instead of going directly from whole milk to fat-free, first serve 2% for a few weeks, then 1% (low-fat), before finally arriving at fat-free milk. You can also try mixing whole and fat-free and gradually reducing the amount of whole milk as kids adjust to the taste.
 - Be sure to introduce only one new food at a time and allow kids to adjust to the change.
 - Encourage all kids to taste food every time it's served, but let them know that they don't have to eat a whole serving if they don't like it. They can just "try it." Make it a group event.
 - Introduce new foods in fun and creative ways. For example, freeze small batches of mixed chopped fruit in small cups or ice cube trays, add a stick, and voilà – a delicious frozen treat that kids are sure to enjoy!
- Involve children in preparing meals and snacks created from new foods they are learning about. Children are more likely to try and enjoy food that they have helped prepare.
 - Teach children where the food they're eating comes from. This may be comforting for picky eaters and allows them to learn about how food is made or grown. Talk about the food with children during mealtime, and encourage them to share how they like it.
 - Always provide plenty of praise and encouragement when kids try new foods to reinforce this positive behavior. Praising children at the table who are trying the new food may encourage the more hesitant children as well.
 - "Sneak in" healthier ingredients. For example, cauliflower can go undetected when pureed and mixed in with mashed potatoes. As kids adjust to the taste, you can serve cauliflower on its own.



How to Read a Food Label

Serving Size and Servings Per Container

- Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually eating. If you are eating more than one serving, you need to multiply the calories by the number of servings.

Calories Per Serving

- Low - 40 calories or less per serving
- High - 400 or more calories per serving
- First check the calories and then check the nutrients to see what you will be getting from the foods you are eating.

Sodium

- Important to look for less sodium (<5% is low, and >20% is high) in order to reduce the risk of high blood pressure.
- Snack items should have no more than 200mg of sodium per serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1 (1 cup, 30 grams)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	Calories from Fat 18
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 210mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	6%
Calcium	
Iron	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 8	Carbohydrate 4 Protein 4

Fats

- Look for foods low in saturated and trans fat, and cholesterol. Most fats should be poly or monounsaturated.
- Food should have no more than 35% of its calories from fat and no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters.
- All foods should have less than 0.5g of trans fat.

Sugars

- Look for foods low in added sugars. Read the ingredient list and make sure that sugar is not one of the first three items on the list.
- Names for added sugars include: sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, molasses, and fructose.
- A food should have no more than 35% of its calories from total sugars.

Choosing Healthy Options in Each Food Group

Planning a menu can be hard. Trying to find foods that meet recommendations and your budget is a challenging task! Use the suggestions below to choose healthy options from each food group when planning menus:



Food Component	Healthy Options
Grains and Breads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whole grain bread (rolls, breadsticks) ■ Whole grain pita ■ Whole grain mini-bagels ■ Whole grain English muffins ■ Whole grain pancake or waffle mix ■ Whole grain or corn tortillas ■ Brown rice ■ Whole grain couscous ■ Oatmeal ■ Low sugar cereal (less than 6 grams of sugar per serving) ■ Rice cakes ■ Whole grain crackers ■ Graham crackers ■ Baked tortilla or corn chips ■ Pretzels
Meat Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lean and very lean ground meats (80–95% lean) ■ Lean and very lean ground chicken or turkey (80–95% lean) ■ Lean cuts of beef, ham, lamb, pork or veal ■ Boneless, skinless chicken and turkey ■ Fish (e.g., salmon, trout, flounder, tilapia, tuna or cod) ■ Canned tuna packed in water ■ Real cheeses (e.g., cheddar, provolone, parmesan, Gouda, mozzarella, Swiss or ricotta) ■ Low-fat real cheeses (e.g., cheddar, provolone, parmesan, Gouda, mozzarella, Swiss or ricotta) ■ Cottage cheese (low-fat or fat-free) ■ Yogurt (low-fat or fat-free, plain or flavored) ■ Nuts and seeds ■ Beans ■ Hummus ■ Eggs
Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fresh—See the “Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables List” for fresh suggestions ■ Canned fruit in 100% juice or water (if in syrup, drained and rinsed) ■ Canned vegetables without added salt or fat ■ Frozen fruits and vegetables without added salt, sugar or fat ■ Unsweetened or no sugar added applesauce ■ Salsa
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1% (low-fat) ■ Fat-free <p style="margin-left: 200px;">} For children age two and older</p>

Seasonal Fruits & Vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables are a delicious, healthy part of meals and snacks. While most produce is available year-round, it can be expensive when it is not purchased in season. Fruits and vegetables also taste better when purchased during their natural growing season. The chart below shows which fruits and vegetables grow best in the fall, winter, spring, and summer. When preparing food at your program, keep this list in mind and use seasonally-appropriate ingredients to save money. If a recipe calls for a vegetable that is not in season, replace it with one from this chart that is. You can also use this chart to teach children about different fruits and veggies!



<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
September, October, November	December, January, February	March, April, May	June, July, August
Apples	Avocados	Asparagus	Apricots
Broccoli	Broccoli	Avocados	Basil
Brussels sprouts	Brussels sprouts	Basil	Beans
Cabbage	Cabbage	Beans	Beets
Chinese cabbage	Chinese cabbage	Beets	Blackberries
Cauliflower	Cauliflower	Berries	Blueberries
Celery Root	Celery root	Broccoli	Boysenberries
Chicory	Chicory	Cabbage	Carrots
Cranberries	Dates	Chinese cabbage	Cherries
Cucumbers	Fennel	Cucumbers	Collards
Dates	Grapefruit	Lettuce: head or iceberg	Corn
Eggplant	Greens	Mangoes	Cucumbers
Fennel	Lemons	Okra	Dates
Grapes	Wild mushrooms	Sweet oranges	Figs
Greens	Mandarin oranges	Papayas	Grapes
Lettuce: head or iceberg	Sweet oranges	Peas	Green beans
Leaf lettuce	Pears	Chili peppers	Limes
Mushrooms	Spinach	Sweet peppers	Mangoes
Nuts	Sweet potatoes	Radishes	Melons
Okra	Tangerines	Rhubarb	Nectarines
Mandarin oranges	Turnips	Shallots	Okra
Pears		Spinach	Peaches
Chili peppers		Summer squash	Pears
Sweet peppers		Turnips	Chili peppers
Persimmons			Sweet peppers
Pomegranates			Plums
Pumpkin			Raspberries
Quince			Summer squash
Shallots			Tomatoes
Spinach			Watermelon
Winter squash			
Star Fruit			
Sweet potatoes			
Turnips			

Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Accessed August 10, 2010 <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov>

Healthy Food Substitutions

Making your menu healthier doesn't always require big changes. It can be easy! Adjusting just one or two ingredients can reduce the fat and sugar content of most meals and snacks. More importantly, many substitutions are so subtle that children won't even notice a difference! Changing the way food is prepared, like switching from frying to baking, is also an effective and simple way to cut calories and fat (see *Healthy Cooking Methods*).

Use the chart below for ideas on healthy substitutions. It organizes foods into categories by CACFP food groups (which may not be how you're used to seeing foods grouped). Please note that many of the foods in the first column are not reimbursable and/or do not meet recommendations. While most foods in the second column are reimbursable, some—such as those in the “Condiments” section—are not. You may even find that some healthier options are less expensive than their less healthy counterparts. Either way, switching to healthier ingredients will greatly benefit the health and well-being of the children in your care!



Instead of this...	Try this healthier option!
MILK	
Whole milk or 2% milk	■ Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk [for cooking/baking and children aged two and older]
GRAINS & BREADS	
White bread	■ Whole grain bread, pita, roll, etc.
White rice	■ Brown rice
Bagel	■ Whole grain mini bagel
Flour tortilla	■ Corn or whole grain tortilla
Pasta	■ Whole grain pasta
Croissant	■ Whole grain roll, English muffin or mini-bagel
Sugary boxed cereal	■ Whole grain boxed cereal with at least 3 grams of fiber and no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving
Instant sweetened oatmeal	■ Plain instant oats with fruit and/or nuts
FRUITS & VEGETABLES	
Adding salt to flavor cooked vegetables	■ A mixture of herbs or spices like garlic powder, onion powder, oregano, basil, lemon pepper, etc.*
Creamy sauces	■ Lemon juice
Fruit pie	■ Baked fruit with raisins
Fruit canned in heavy syrup	■ Fruit canned in 100% juice or water (if canned in syrup, drained and rinsed)
Dried fruit, sweetened	■ Dried fruit, unsweetened ■ Fresh fruit, fruit canned in 100% juice or water (if canned in syrup, drained and rinsed)
French fries	■ Oven baked potato or sweet potato wedges with skin intact

Instead of this...	Try this healthier option!
MEATS & MEAT ALTERNATES	
Ground beef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean and very lean ground beef (90% lean or greater) Lean ground turkey or chicken Textured vegetable protein*
Bacon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked turkey, chicken or pork strips Turkey bacon ^{CN} Spiral ham
Sausage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean ground turkey 95% fat-free sausage ^{CN} Lean turkey sausage ^{CN} Soy sausage links or patties*
Chicken nuggets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked chicken breast
Fish sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked fish fillets
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced-fat, part-skim, low-fat, or fat-free cheese
Yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat or fat-free yogurt
Ice cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat or fat-free frozen yogurt Low-fat or fat-free ice cream* Frozen fruit juice products* or sorbet*
Cream cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat or fat-free cream cheese*
CONDIMENTS * Please note that most condiments are not reimbursable	
Whipped cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chilled, whipped evaporated skim milk* Nondairy, fat-free or low-fat whipped topping made from polyunsaturated fat* Low-fat or fat-free yogurt
Mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free or low-fat mayonnaise* Fat-free or low-fat salad dressing, whipped* Fat-free or low-fat yogurt, plain
Salad dressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free or low-fat commercial dressings* Homemade dressing made with unsaturated oils, water, and vinegar, honey or lemon juice*
Sour cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free or low-fat sour cream* Fat-free or low-fat yogurt, plain ½ cup fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese blended with 1½ tsp lemon juice
Vegetable dips, commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hummus; low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt
SOUPS	
Cream soups, commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broth-based or skim milk-based soups, commercial Fat-free or low-fat cream soups, commercial
Cream or whole milk in soups or casseroles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pureed vegetables Evaporated skim milk*
BAKING & COOKING	
Evaporated milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaporated skim milk*
Butter, margarine or oil to grease pan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooking spray or a tiny amount of vegetable oil rubbed in with a paper towel*
Butter or oil in baked goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural applesauce for half of butter, oil or shortening
Refined, all-purpose flour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half whole wheat flour, half all-purpose flour
Sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the amount by half and add spices like cinnamon, cloves, all-spice or nutmeg*
Salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the amount by half (unless it's a baked good that requires yeast) Herbs, spices, fruit juices or salt-free seasoning mixes*

* Foods that are not reimbursable

^{CN} Foods that require a Child Nutrition label

Healthy Cooking Methods²

Preparation and cooking methods make a big difference in determining the nutritional value of a recipe. Use the following easy cooking methods to make everyday dishes healthier.

1. **Baking** – Baking can be used for almost any type of food including meat, fruits and vegetables, mixed dishes (i.e., casseroles) and baked goods such as bread or pies. Place the food in a dish, either covered or uncovered, and allow the hot air from the oven cook it.
2. **Braising** – Cooking slowly in a covered container with a small amount of liquid or water. The cooking liquid may be used for a sauce.³
3. **Broiling** – Cooking meats, poultry, seafood, or vegetables by placing on a broiler rack in oven below the heat, allowing fat to drip away.
4. **Grilling** – Cooking foods over direct heat on a grill, griddle or pan. Fat can be removed as it accumulates.
5. **Microwaving** – Microwaving can be a fast and easy way to cook food if it is done correctly. Cover the food with a lid or plastic wrap. Loosen the lid or wrap so that steam can escape. Stir or rotate the food mid-way through cook time so that it is evenly cooked.⁴
6. **Poaching** – Cooking delicate foods like eggs or fish either partially or completely in liquid (such as water or broth) at temperature between 140° and 180°F.
7. **Roasting** – Cooking meat, poultry, and seafood larger than single portions by dry heat, uncovered in an oven. It is a great way to use marinades, herbs and spices.
8. **Sautéing** – Sautéing is a good method for vegetables that are tender and high in moisture such as mushrooms, tomatoes and zucchini. The ingredients are cooked in a small amount of oil or margarine at a very high heat until tender.
9. **Steaming** – A great, healthy way to cook vegetables that produces little to no loss in flavor or moisture. Cut into small, even-size pieces. Fill a pot or pan with 1–2 inches of water or broth, set to medium-high heat, and wait until liquid begins to produce steam. Add the vegetables, cover, and let the steam surround and cook the vegetables. Generally, vegetables are done steaming when they become slightly soft (yet still crunchy) and vibrant in color. To enhance taste, seasoning (e.g., herbs, chicken stock) can be added to the water.²
10. **Stir frying** – Cooking quickly over very high heat in a wok or skillet. Cut all ingredients the same size so that they cook evenly. With a small amount of vegetable or canola oil, keep the food in constant motion by stirring and tossing. Great for large or small batches of meats, seafood, vegetables (fresh, frozen, or precooked) combinations.



2 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service. (June 2009). *USDA Recipes for Child Care*.

3 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service. Accessed August 12, 2010. *Cooking A World of New Tastes*. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/worldtastes03Seg2.pdf>.

4 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Accessed August 12, 2010. *Cooking Safely in the Microwave Oven*. Retrieved from http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Cooking_Safely_in_the_Microwave.pdf.

Engaging Children in the Kitchen

Involving children in preparing meals is an easy way to encourage their growing independence and help them get excited about trying new foods! Children are more likely to try a new or unusual food if they helped prepare it. They will also take pride in their culinary skills and may encourage others to taste what they have made. See the list below for suggestions on age-appropriate activities.^{5,6}

2 year olds

- Rinsing vegetables and fruits
- Tearing lettuce or greens
- Snapping green beans
- Making “faces” out of pieces of vegetables and fruit
- Handing items to adult to put away (e.g., after grocery shopping)
- Throwing waste in the trash
- Wiping off tables, chairs and counters

3 year olds:

All of the 2 year old activities plus:

- Adding ingredients
- Stirring
- Scooping or mashing potatoes
- Spreading peanut butter or other spreads
- Kneading and shaping dough
- Helping assemble foods (e.g., pizza)
- Naming and counting foods



4 year olds:

All of the 2 and 3 year old activities plus:

- Peeling eggs and some fruits and vegetables (e.g., oranges and bananas)
- Setting the table
- Measuring dry ingredients
- Helping make sandwiches and salads
- Mashing soft fruits, vegetables and beans

5 year olds:

All of the 2, 3, and 4 year old activities plus:

- Measuring liquids
- Cutting soft fruits with a plastic knife
- Cracking eggs
- Using an egg beater
- Reading a recipe out loud

5 United States Department of Agriculture, MyPyramid.gov. <http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/HealthyHabits/PickyEaters/kitchenactivities.html>. Accessed June 9, 2010.

6 United States Department of Agriculture and Nutrition Service. *Maximizing the message: Helping moms and kids make healthier food choices*. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/Files/Guidebook.pdf#xml=http://65.216.150.153/texis/search/pdfhi.txt?query=role+modeling&pr=FNS&prox=page&rorder=500&rprox=500&rdfreq=500&rfreq=500&rlead=500&rdepth=0&sufs=0&order=r&cq=&id=4bc8cea611>. Accessed June 9, 2010.

Policy Support



Sample Policies

Having written policies can support your work to improve children's nutrition and healthy habits in your early care and education program, and help to make positive changes sustainable. Policies should be communicated to staff and families on an annual basis. See below for some sample policies.

For Program and Staff Handbooks

Breastfeeding¹

At *(name of program)*, we support breastfeeding mothers and babies by:

- Providing a private, clean and comfortable place for mothers to breastfeed or express milk. Mothers are also welcome to breastfeed in classrooms or other public spaces.
- Providing refrigerator storage of breast milk and ensuring that each child's bottles are labeled with his/her name, the date, and the contents of the container.
- Training staff to appropriately handle and store breast milk.
- Feeding based on each baby's schedule as well as hunger and fullness cues.
- Timing feedings to accommodate breastfeeding mothers. For example, if they want to breastfeed baby at pick-up, we will not offer a bottle directly beforehand.
- Refraining from supplementing with formula or solid foods without parental permission.
- Displaying visual support of breastfeeding families.
- Connecting families with community support, if they desire it.
- Providing reasonable and flexible break time to accommodate associates who are breastfeeding or expressing milk.

General²

At *(name of program)*, we support children's healthy eating by:

- Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating only healthy foods in the presence of the children.
- Providing nutrition education at least three times per year, to teach children how to make healthy choices.
- Gently encouraging children to try healthy foods and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
- Observing and supporting hunger and fullness cues.
- Serving only healthy foods and beverages that meet best practice recommendations.
- Making water clearly visible and available to children at all times, indoors and outdoors.
- Following healthy celebration guidelines.
- Providing nutrition education for our staff at least one time per year.
- Refraining from using food as a reward or punishment.
- Sitting with children at the table and eating the same meals and snacks.
- Encouraging, but not forcing, children to eat healthy foods.

At *(name of program)*, we support our associates' health by:

- Serving only healthy foods that meet best practice recommendations at meetings and for staff meals.
- Limiting less healthy treats to one or two options at staff celebrations.
- Ensuring that our environment (vending machines, etc.) supports healthy eating.
- Connecting staff to community resources to support healthy eating.

For Family Handbooks

At *(name of program)*, we support breastfeeding mothers and babies by:¹

- Providing a private, clean and comfortable place for you to breastfeed or express milk. You are also welcome to breastfeed your baby in his/her classroom or other public space.
- Providing refrigerator storage of breast milk. Please be sure to label your child's bottles with his/her name, the date, and the contents of the container.
- Training staff to appropriately handle and store breast milk.
- Feeding based on your baby's schedule as well as hunger and fullness cues.
- Timing feedings based on your preference. For example, if you want to breastfeed your baby at pick-up, we will not offer a bottle directly beforehand.
- Refraining from supplementing with formula or solid foods without your permission.
- Displaying visual support of breastfeeding families.
- Connecting you with community support, if you desire it.

At *(name of program)*, we support your child's healthy food choices by:²

- Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating only healthy foods in the presence of the children.
- Providing nutrition education at least three times per year, to teach children how to make healthy choices.
- Gently encouraging children to try healthy foods and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
- Observing and supporting hunger and fullness cues.
- Serving only healthy foods and beverages that meet best practice recommendations.

- Making water clearly visible and available to children at all times, indoors and outdoors.
- Following healthy celebration guidelines.
- Providing nutrition education for our staff at least one time per year.
- Refraining from using food as a reward or punishment.
- Sitting with children at the table and eating the same meals and snacks.
- Encouraging, but not forcing, children to eat healthy foods.

Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at *(name of program)* ask for your support:

- For packed meals from home, please provide:
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Whole grain cereals, crackers, breads, pasta, etc.
 - Protein such as lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, cooked beans or peas, nut butters, eggs, yogurt or cheese.
 - Milk
- Please refrain from sending:
 - Pre-fried and highly processed meats (e.g., chicken nuggets, hot dogs, etc.)
 - Chips and similar high-fat snacks
 - Cookies, candy and similar sugary desserts
 - Sugary drinks (e.g., sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, etc.)
- For celebrations and holiday parties, please provide healthy foods (especially fruits and vegetables). A list of recommended age-appropriate foods will be provided.

1 Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers Resource Kit. Retrieved on May 7, 2013 from <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/Childcare/BFFChildCare.pdf>

2 Benjamin, Sara. Preventing Obesity in the Childcare Setting: Evaluating State Regulations. Retrieved on May 9, 2013 from http://cfm.mc.duke.edu/wysiwyg/downloads/State_Reports_Flnal.pdf

Family Tip Sheets



Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants from Birth through 3 Months

What to Feed Your Baby

- Feed your baby either breast milk or iron-fortified formula only for the first 6 months of life. Even after starting solid foods, breastfeeding and formula feeding should continue until 12 months of age. Unless breastfeeding continues, whole milk should be served after 12 months of age.
- Starting and continuing to breastfeed can be challenging. Don't give up! If you need support or have questions, call a local lactation consultant or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in your area. For more information on breastfeeding contact:
 - WIC toll-free at 1-800-222-2189
 - Toll-free National Women's Health Helpline at 1-800-994-9662
 - Your state breastfeeding coalition. Find it at: <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Coalitions/CoalitionsDirectory/tabid/74/Default.aspx>
- Many infants will need to receive a daily Vitamin D supplement, which is necessary to ensure healthy bone growth and development. Ask your health care provider about the amount of Vitamin D needed for your infant.

Signs of Hunger

Babies should be fed whenever they show you they are hungry. Look for these signs:

- Rooting: a reflex in newborns that makes them turn their head toward a breast or bottle to feed
- Sucking on fingers or a fist
- Moving, licking or smacking of lips
- Fussing or crying
- Excited arm and leg movements

Signs of Fullness

It's not necessary for your baby to finish a bottle or container of food. If she shows signs that she is full and there is food left, allow her to stop eating. Look for these signs:

- Sealing lips together, decreasing sucking, spitting out or refusing the nipple, or pushing or turning away from the breast or bottle
- Milk begins to run out of the baby's mouth



Safety and Storage of Breast Milk

- It is best to defrost breast milk either in the refrigerator overnight, by running under warm water, or by setting in a container of warm water. Thawed breast milk should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze unused milk.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of breast milk within one hour, throw out the rest. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the milk and make your infant sick if he drinks it later.

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines

Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	3-4 hours
Refrigerator	48-72 hours
Freezer	6 months

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants from Birth through 3 Months

Safety and Storage of Formula

- Always follow label directions carefully.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of formula within 1 hour, throw out the remainder. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the formula and make your infant sick if she drinks it later.
- To prevent waste and save time, mix a large batch of formula and divide it into bottles that you can refrigerate and use throughout the day.

Formula Storage Guidelines

Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	2 hours
Room Temperature	1 hour if warmed
Refrigerator	24 hours

How Much to Feed Your Baby

Understand your role and your baby's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer breast milk or formula at regular times; your baby's job is to decide how much to eat.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about feeding your baby.

How Much to Feed Your Baby

If breastfeeding	On demand
If iron-fortified infant formula*	4 – 6 fluid ounces per feed
Daily Formula Feeding Amounts by Age*	
1 month	14 – 20 fluid ounces per day
2 months	20 – 28 fluid ounces per day
3 months	26 – 32 fluid ounces per day

* Formula intake should be adequate to support appropriate weight gain as determined by your infant's doctor.

Reminder: Never use a microwave to heat a bottle of breast milk or formula.



Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

Breast Milk and Formula

- Feed your baby either breast milk or iron-fortified formula only for the first 6 months of life. Even after starting solid foods, breastfeeding and formula feeding should continue until 12 months of age. Unless breastfeeding continues, whole milk should be served after 12 months of age.
- Starting and continuing to breastfeed can be challenging. Don't give up! If you need support or have questions, call a local lactation consultant or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in your area. For more information on breastfeeding contact:
 - WIC toll-free at 1-800-222-2189
 - Toll-free National Women's Health Helpline at 1-800-994-9662
 - Your state breastfeeding coalition. Find it at: <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Coalitions/CoalitionsDirectory/tabid/74/Default.aspx>
- Many infants will need to receive a daily Vitamin D supplement, which is necessary to ensure healthy bone growth and development. Ask your health care provider about the amount of Vitamin D needed for your infant.

Solid Foods

- Around 6 months your baby will begin to show signs that he is ready for solid foods. Signs include:
 - Absence of tongue thrust reflex
 - Good neck and head control
 - Increased demand for breast milk or formula that continues for a few days
- Offer single-ingredient foods first and wait 2 – 3 days between each new food. This makes it easier to identify the offending food if he experiences a bad reaction (i.e., allergy).



- Introduce iron-fortified rice cereal first, followed by iron-fortified oat or barley cereal.
- Offer different fruits and vegetables. They should be:
 - Puréed, mashed or strained to prevent choking
 - Served plain without added fat, sugar, honey or salt
- It may take multiple tries (5 – 20) before your baby accepts a new food. Don't get discouraged!

Choking Hazards

Do not feed children younger than four years of age round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

The following foods are choking hazards:

- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of cheese or meat (e.g., hot dogs)
- Whole grapes, chunks of hard fruit (e.g., apples) and raw vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Ice cubes
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy, chewing gum

*Never leave an infant unattended while she/he is eating.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

Signs of Hunger

Babies should be fed whenever they show you they are hungry. Look for these signs:

- Rooting: a reflex in newborns that makes them turn their head toward a breast or bottle to feed
- Sucking on fingers or a fist
- Moving, licking or smacking of lips
- Fussing or crying
- Excited arm and leg movements

Signs of Fullness

It's not necessary for your baby to finish a bottle or container of food. If she shows signs that she is full and there is food left, allow her to stop eating. When making a meal, offer the correct amount of food for her age and offer more only if she is still hungry and engaged in eating. Look for these signs of fullness:

- Sealing lips together, decreasing sucking, spitting out or refusing the nipple, or pushing or turning away from the breast or bottle
- Milk begins to run out of the baby's mouth

Safety and Storage of Breast Milk

- It is best to defrost breast milk either in the refrigerator overnight, by running under warm water, or by setting in a container of warm water. Thawed breast milk should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze unused milk.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of breast milk within one hour, throw out the rest. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the milk and make your infant sick if he drinks it later.

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines

Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	3-4 hours
Refrigerator	48-72 hours
Freezer	6 months

Safety and Storage of Formula

- Always follow label directions carefully.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of formula within 1 hour, throw out the remainder. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the formula and make your infant sick if she drinks it later.
- To prevent waste and save time, mix a large batch of formula and divide it into bottles that you can refrigerate and use throughout the day.

Formula Storage Guidelines

Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	2 hours
Room Temperature	1 hour if warmed
Refrigerator	24 hours

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

How Much to Feed Your Child

Understand your role and your child's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer healthy foods at regular times; your child's job is to decide whether and how much to eat.

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/ SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve both components	Serve all 3 components	
1. Breast Milk or Formula	4 – 8 fl oz	4 – 8 fl oz	4 – 6 fl oz
2. Fruit or Vegetable	None	0 – 3 Tbsp	None
3. Grain or Bread	0 – 3 Tbsp	0 – 3 Tbsp	None
Infant Cereal	None	None	None
Bread	None	None	None
Crackers	None	None	None

How Much to Feed Your Baby

If breastfeeding	On demand
If iron-fortified infant formula*	4 – 8 fluid ounces per feed
Water with no added sweeteners	If desired, small amounts can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified formula

Daily Formula Feeding Amounts by Age*

4 through 7 months	26 – 32 fluid ounces per day
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* Formula intake should be adequate to support appropriate weight gain as determined by the infant's doctor.

6 oz
serving →

Reminder: Never use a microwave to heat a bottle of breast milk or formula.



Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper: Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

Grain/Bread

Infant Cereal –
1.5 Tbsp serving shown



Fruit/Vegetable

1.5 Tbsp serving shown, puréed



Lunch/Supper
shown on 8" plate.
Add breast milk or
formula to complete the
meal requirements.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 8 through 11 Months

Breast Milk and Formula

- Feed your baby either breast milk or iron-fortified formula only for the first 6 months of life. Even after starting solid foods, breastfeeding and formula feeding should continue until 12 months of age. Unless breastfeeding continues, whole milk should be served after 12 months of age.
- Starting and continuing to breastfeed can be challenging. Don't give up! If you need support or have questions, call a local lactation consultant or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in your area. For more information on breastfeeding contact:
 - WIC toll-free at 1-800-222-2189
 - Toll-free National Women's Health Helpline at 1-800-994-9662
 - Your state breastfeeding coalition. Find it at: <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Coalitions/CoalitionsDirectory/tabid/74/Default.aspx>
- Many infants will need to receive a daily Vitamin D supplement, which is necessary to ensure healthy bone growth and development. Ask your health care provider about the amount of Vitamin D needed for your infant.

Solid Foods

- Encourage your baby to begin feeding herself simple finger foods during meals and snacks (e.g., small pieces of banana; cooked, cut carrots; soft cheese, etc.).
- Offer single-ingredient foods first and wait 2 – 3 days between each new food. This makes it easier to identify the offending food if she experiences a bad reaction (i.e., allergy).
- It may take multiple tries (5 – 20) before your baby accepts a new food. Don't get discouraged!
- If she seems interested, begin using a cup (i.e., "sippy" cup) around eight months of age.
 - Start with water (with no added sweeteners)
- Offer different fruits and vegetables. They should be:
 - Cooked and/or cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking
 - Served plain without added fat, sugar, honey or salt

- You can also introduce:
 - Iron-fortified infant cereal
 - Lean beef, veal, and/or pork*
 - Skinless chicken and/or turkey*
 - Cooked beans and peas

* For children under age four, meats, beans and peas should be soft, puréed, ground, mashed or finely chopped to prevent choking.

Choking Hazards

Do not feed children younger than four years of age round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

The following foods are choking hazards:

- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of cheese or meat (e.g., hot dogs)
- Whole grapes, chunks of hard fruit (e.g., apples) and raw vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Ice cubes
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy, chewing gum

*Never leave an infant unattended while she/he is eating.

Signs of Hunger

Babies should be fed whenever they show you they are hungry. Look for these signs:

- Rooting: a reflex in newborns that makes them turn their head toward a breast or bottle to feed
- Sucking on fingers or a fist
- Moving, licking or smacking of lips
- Fussing or crying
- Excited arm and leg movements

Signs of Fullness

It's not necessary for your baby to finish a bottle or container of food. If he shows signs that he is full and there is food left, allow him to stop eating. When making a meal, offer the correct amount of food for his age and offer more only if he is still hungry and engaged in eating. Look for these signs of fullness:

- Sealing lips together, decreasing sucking, spitting out or refusing the nipple, or pushing or turning away from the breast or bottle
- Milk begins to run out of the baby's mouth

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 8 through 11 Months

Safety and Storage of Breast Milk

- It is best to defrost breast milk either in the refrigerator overnight, by running under warm water, or by setting in a container of warm water. Thawed breast milk should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze unused milk.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of breast milk within one hour, throw out the rest. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the milk and make your infant sick if he drinks it later.

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines	
Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	3-4 hours
Refrigerator	48-72 hours
Freezer	6 months

Safety and Storage of Formula

- Always follow label directions carefully.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of formula within 1 hour, throw out the remainder. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the formula and make your infant sick if she drinks it later.
- To prevent waste and save time, mix a large batch of formula and divide it into bottles that you can refrigerate and use throughout the day.

Formula Storage Guidelines	
Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	2 hours
Room Temperature	1 hour if warmed
Refrigerator	24 hours

How Much to Feed Your Baby

Understand your role and your baby's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer breast milk or formula at regular times; your baby's job is to decide how much to eat.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about feeding your baby.

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve all 3 components	Serve all 4 components	Serve both components
1. Breast Milk or Formula	6 – 8 fluid oz	6 – 8 fluid oz	2 – 4 fluid oz
2. Fruit or Vegetable	1 – 4 Tbsp	1 – 4 Tbsp	None
3. Grain or Bread			
Infant Cereal	2 – 4 Tbsp	2 – 4 Tbsp	None
Bread	None	None	0 – 1/2 slice
Crackers	None	None	0 – 2 crackers
4. Meat or Meat Alternate (protein source)	None	1 – 4 Tbsp	None
Lean meat, poultry/fish, egg yolk, cooked beans or peas			
Cheese	None	1/2 – 2 oz	None
Cottage cheese	None	1 – 4 oz	None

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 8 through 11 Months

How Much to Feed Your Baby

If breastfeeding	On demand
If iron-fortified infant formula*	6 – 8 fluid ounces per feed
Water with no added sweeteners	If desired, small amounts can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified formula

Daily Formula Feeding Amounts by Age*

8 through 11 months	26 – 32 fluid ounces per day
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* Formula intake should be adequate to support appropriate weight gain as determined by the infant's doctor.



7 oz
serving
shown



7 oz
serving
shown in a
7 oz cup

Reminder: Never use a microwave to heat a bottle of breast milk or formula.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 8 through 11 Months

Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper for Ages 8 through 11 Months

Grain/Bread

Infant Cereal –
3 Tbsp serving shown

Meat/Meat Alternate

2 Tbsp serving shown –
puréed, mashed or finely chopped



Fruit/Vegetable

2 Tbsp serving shown –
puréed, mashed or finely chopped



Lunch/Supper
shown on 8" plate.
Add breast milk or
formula to complete the
meal requirements.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

Developing Healthy Eating Habits

- Start with age-appropriate servings, as listed in the chart on the next page.
- Teach her to eat slowly. Ask if she is still hungry before allowing her to serve herself more food. Taking the time to decide if she is hungry or full will help her pay attention to important cues from her body.
- Avoid requiring your child to clean his plate. Help him learn to eat based on how hungry he is, not on how much food is still on his plate.
- Understand your role and your child's. Your job is to offer a variety of healthy foods at regular meal times; her job is to decide what and how much to eat.
- Be a positive role model. Sit with your child and let him observe you eat a healthy, balanced diet. Serve yourself appropriate portions and try “new” foods. Explain what you are doing.
- Pay attention to your toddler's hunger cues. She may not say that she is full, but may start playing, become distracted, shake her head “no,” close her mouth or refuse to finish the food on her plate.
- Complaints of being hungry, especially when a child has just eaten, may be due to other triggers such as boredom, TV advertising or seeing another person eating.
- Given healthy servings, most toddlers sense when they are full and will stop eating if you let them. The amount of food a toddler eats may change from day to day, but a healthy child will generally consume just the right amount of food to nourish his body.

Trying New Foods

It is natural for your toddler to be cautious with new foods. It may take 5 – 20 tries before he will come to like it. Minimize the struggles of introducing new foods by:

- Alternating bites between a new food and a food your child is familiar with and likes.
- Encouraging children to try new foods. Begin by putting a very small portion on your child's plate (e.g., two peas). However, do not force her to finish more than she wants.
- Avoiding rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with food. Especially avoid forcing a child to finish the “healthy foods” to get dessert or sweets—this can make the healthy food seem like punishment and cause him to eat when he is full.

How Much to Feed Your Child

Understand your role and your child's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer healthy foods at regular times; your child's job is to decide whether and how much to eat.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about feeding your toddler.

Choking Hazards

Do not feed children younger than four years of age round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

The following foods are choking hazards:

- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of cheese or meat (e.g., hot dogs)
- Whole grapes, chunks of hard fruit (e.g., apples) and raw vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Ice cubes
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy, chewing gum

*Never leave a young child unattended while she/he is eating.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/ SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve first 3 components	Serve all 4 components	Select 2 of the 4 components
1. Milk, fluid (Age 1, whole; Age 2, fat-free or 1% low-fat)	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
2. Fruit or Vegetable	1/4 cup	Serve 2 or more separate fruit/vegetable dishes: 1/4 cup total (2 Tbsp each)	1/2 cup
3. Grain or Bread			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1/2 slice
Grain or Pasta	—	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Cereal – Dry	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Cereal – Hot	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
4. Meat or Meat Alternate (protein source)			
Lean meat, poultry/fish	1/2 oz	1 oz	1/2 oz
Cheese	1/2 oz	1 oz	1/2 oz
Cottage cheese	2 Tbsp	1/4 cup	2 Tbsp
Large egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg
Cooked dry beans/peas	—	1/4 cup	2 Tbsp
Peanut butter/other nut/seed butters	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	1 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1/2 oz
Yogurt, plain or flavored	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/4 cup

Age-Appropriate Drink Servings for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years



Milk

4 oz (1/2 cup) serving shown in a 9 oz cup:

- Whole milk for age 1
- Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) for age 2



Juice

4 oz (1/2 cup) serving shown in a 9 oz cup –100% juice

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

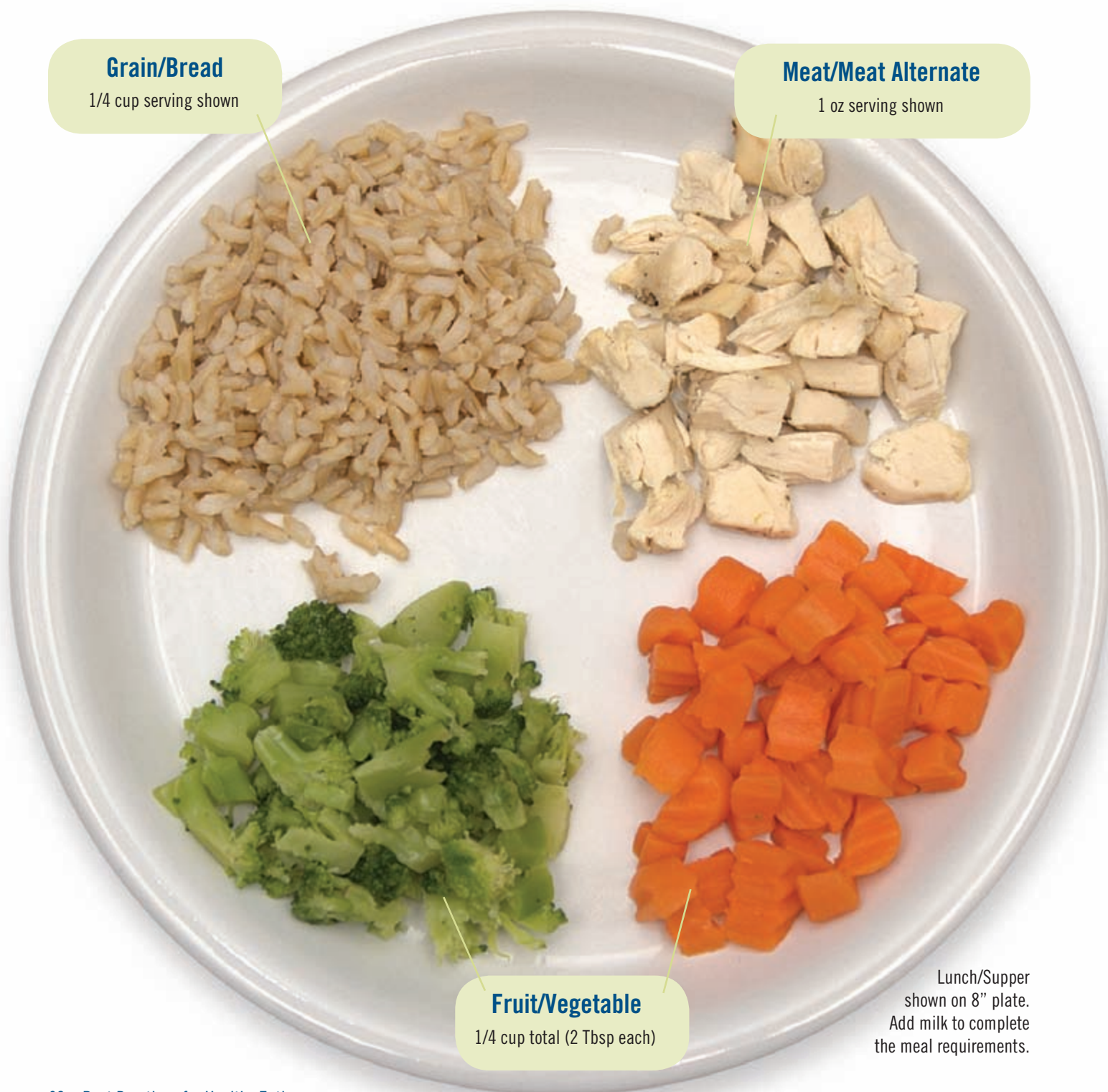
Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

Grain/Bread

1/4 cup serving shown

Meat/Meat Alternate

1 oz serving shown



Fruit/Vegetable

1/4 cup total (2 Tbsp each)

Lunch/Supper
shown on 8" plate.
Add milk to complete
the meal requirements.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 3 through 5 Years

Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits

- Start with age-appropriate servings, as listed in the chart on the next page.
- Teach him to eat slowly. Ask if he is still hungry before allowing him to serve himself more food. Taking the time to decide if he is hungry or full will help him pay attention to important cues from his body.
- Avoid requiring your child to clean her plate. Help her learn to eat based on how hungry she is, not on how much food is still on her plate.
- Understand your role and your child's. Your job is to offer a variety of healthy foods at regular meal times; his job is to decide what and how much to eat.
- Be a positive role model. Sit with your child and let her observe you eat a healthy, balanced diet. Serve yourself appropriate portions and try “new” foods. Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full, even if there is food left on your plate. Talk about what you are doing.
- Pay attention to your preschooler's cues. He may not say that he is full, but may show it by starting to play, becoming distracted, shaking his head “no,” pushing food around on his plate or simply refusing to eat.
- Complaints of being hungry, especially when a child has just eaten, may be due to other triggers such as boredom, TV advertising or seeing another person eating.
- Given healthy servings, most children can sense when they are full and will stop eating if you let them. The amount of food a preschooler eats may change from day to day, but a healthy child will generally consume just the right amount of food to nourish her body.

Trying New Foods

It is natural for preschoolers to be cautious about trying new foods; but remember that by and large, they should eat what the rest of the family is eating. If you are eating and enjoying a variety of healthy foods, they won't want to be left out.

- When offering a new food, feed a familiar food with the new one, alternating bites between each.
- Some children are less likely than others to try new things. It may take her 5 – 20 times of trying a new food before she will like it. Don't give up!
- Encourage your child to try new foods—at least one bite. Begin by putting a small amount on his plate (e.g., two peas). However, do not force him to finish more than he feels comfortable eating.
- Model trying new foods. Try a new fruit or vegetable and talk about how it looks, smells and tastes.
- Avoid rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind. Especially avoid forcing your child to finish the “healthy foods” to get dessert or sweets—this can make the healthy food seem like punishment and force her to eat when she is full.
- Offer desserts rarely so he does not expect one at every meal.

How Much to Feed Your Child

Understand your role and your child's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer healthy foods at regular times; your child's job is to decide whether and how much to eat.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about feeding your child.

Choking Hazards

Do not feed children younger than four years of age round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

The following foods are choking hazards:

- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of cheese or meat (e.g., hot dogs)
- Whole grapes, chunks of hard fruit (e.g., apples) and raw vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Ice cubes
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy, chewing gum

*Never leave a young child unattended while she/he is eating.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 3 through 5 Years

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/ SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve first 3 components	Serve all 4 components	Select 2 of the 4 components
1. Milk, fluid (Fat-free or 1% low-fat)	3/4 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
2. Fruit or Vegetable	1/2 cup	Serve 2 or more separate fruit/vegetable dishes: 1/2 cup total (1/4 cup for each)	1/2 cup
3. Grain or Bread			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1/2 slice
Grain or Pasta	—	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Cereal – Dry	1/3 cup	1/3 cup	1/3 cup
Cereal – Hot	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
4. Meat or Meat Alternate (protein source)			
Lean meat, poultry/fish	1/2 oz	1 1/2 oz	1/2 oz
Cheese	1/2 oz	1 1/2 oz	1/2 oz
Cottage cheese	2 Tbsp	3/8 cup (1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp)	2 Tbsp
Large egg	1/2 egg	3/4 egg	1/2 egg
Cooked dry beans/peas	—	3/8 cup (1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp)	2 Tbsp
Peanut butter/other nut/seed butters	1 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	1 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	1/2 oz	3/4 oz	1/2 oz
Yogurt, plain or flavored	1/4 cup	3/4 cup	1/4 cup



Milk

6 oz (3/4 cup) serving
shown in a 9 oz cup:

- Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk



Juice

4 oz (1/2 cup) serving in a
9 oz cup –100% juice

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 3 through 5 Years

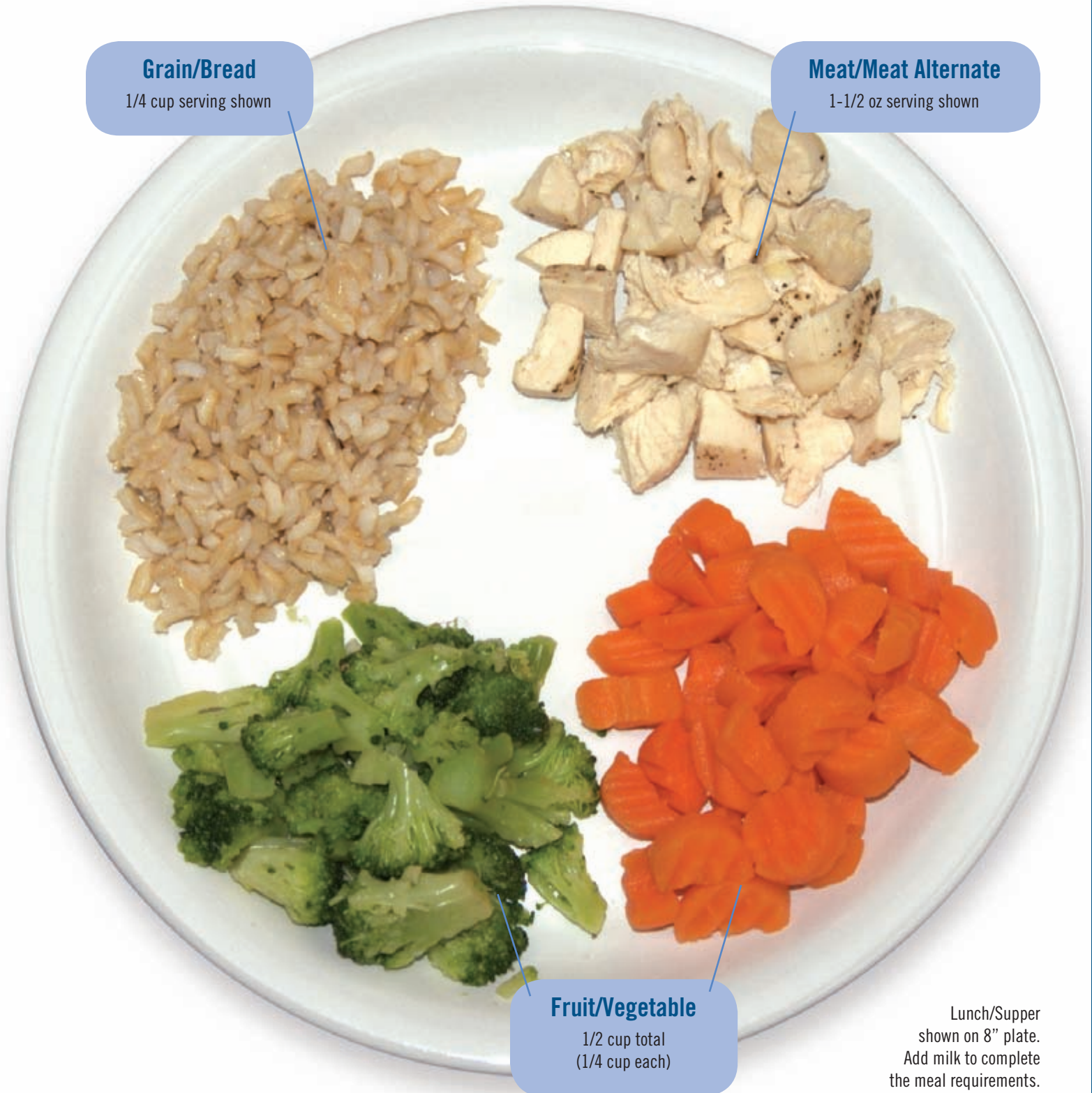
Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper for Preschoolers Ages 3 through 5 Years

Grain/Bread

1/4 cup serving shown

Meat/Meat Alternate

1-1/2 oz serving shown



Fruit/Vegetable

1/2 cup total
(1/4 cup each)

Lunch/Supper
shown on 8" plate.
Add milk to complete
the meal requirements.

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Children Ages 6 through 12 Years

Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits

- Start with age-appropriate servings, as listed on the chart below.
- Teach him to eat slowly. Ask if he is still hungry before allowing him to serve himself more food. Taking the time to decide if he is hungry will help him pay attention to important cues from his body.
- Create a positive eating environment by making meal times relaxed, fun and free of power struggles.
- Avoid requiring your child to clean her plate. Help her learn to eat based on how hungry she is, not by how much food is still on her plate.
- Understand your role and your child's. Your job is to offer a variety of healthy foods at regular meal times; his job is to decide what and how much to eat.
- Be a positive role model. Sit with your child and let her observe you eating a healthy, balanced diet. Serve yourself appropriate portions and try “new” foods. Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full, even if there is food left on your plate. Talk about what you are doing.
- Complaints of being hungry, especially when a child has just eaten, may be due to other triggers such as boredom, TV advertising, or seeing another person eating.
- Discourage eating meals in front of the TV or computer. Eating during screen time is a distraction and can keep a child from noticing he is full. This may cause him to eat more than he normally would.
- When offering a new food, feed a familiar food with the new one, alternating bites between each.
- Avoid rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind. Especially avoid forcing her to finish the “healthy foods” to get dessert or sweets—this can make the healthy food seem like punishment and cause her to eat when she is full.
- Offer desserts rarely so he does not expect one at every meal.

How Much to Feed Your Child

Understand your role and your child's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer healthy foods at regular times; your child's job is to decide whether and how much to eat.

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/ SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve first 3 components	Serve all 4 components	Select 2 of the 4 components
1. Milk, fluid (Fat-free or 1% low-fat)	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
2. Fruit or Vegetable	1/2 cup	Serve 2 or more separate fruit/vegetable dishes: 3/4 cup total (1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp each)	3/4 cup
3. Grain or Bread			
Bread	1 slice	1 slice	1 slice
Grain or Pasta	—	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Cereal – Dry	3/4 cup	3/4 cup	3/4 cup
Cereal – Hot	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
4. Meat or Meat Alternate (protein source)			
Lean meat, poultry/fish	1 oz	2 oz	1 oz
Cheese	1 oz	2 oz	1 oz
Cottage cheese	2 Tbsp	1/2 cup	2 Tbsp
Large egg	1/2 egg	1 egg	1/2 egg
Cooked dry beans/peas	—	1/2 cup	1/4 cup
Peanut butter/other nut/seed butters	2 Tbsp	4 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Yogurt, plain or flavored	1/2 cup	1 cup	1/2 cup

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Children Ages 6 through 12 Years

Age-Appropriate Drink Servings for Children Ages 6 through 12 Years



Milk

8 oz (1 cup) serving
shown in a 9 oz cup:

- Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk

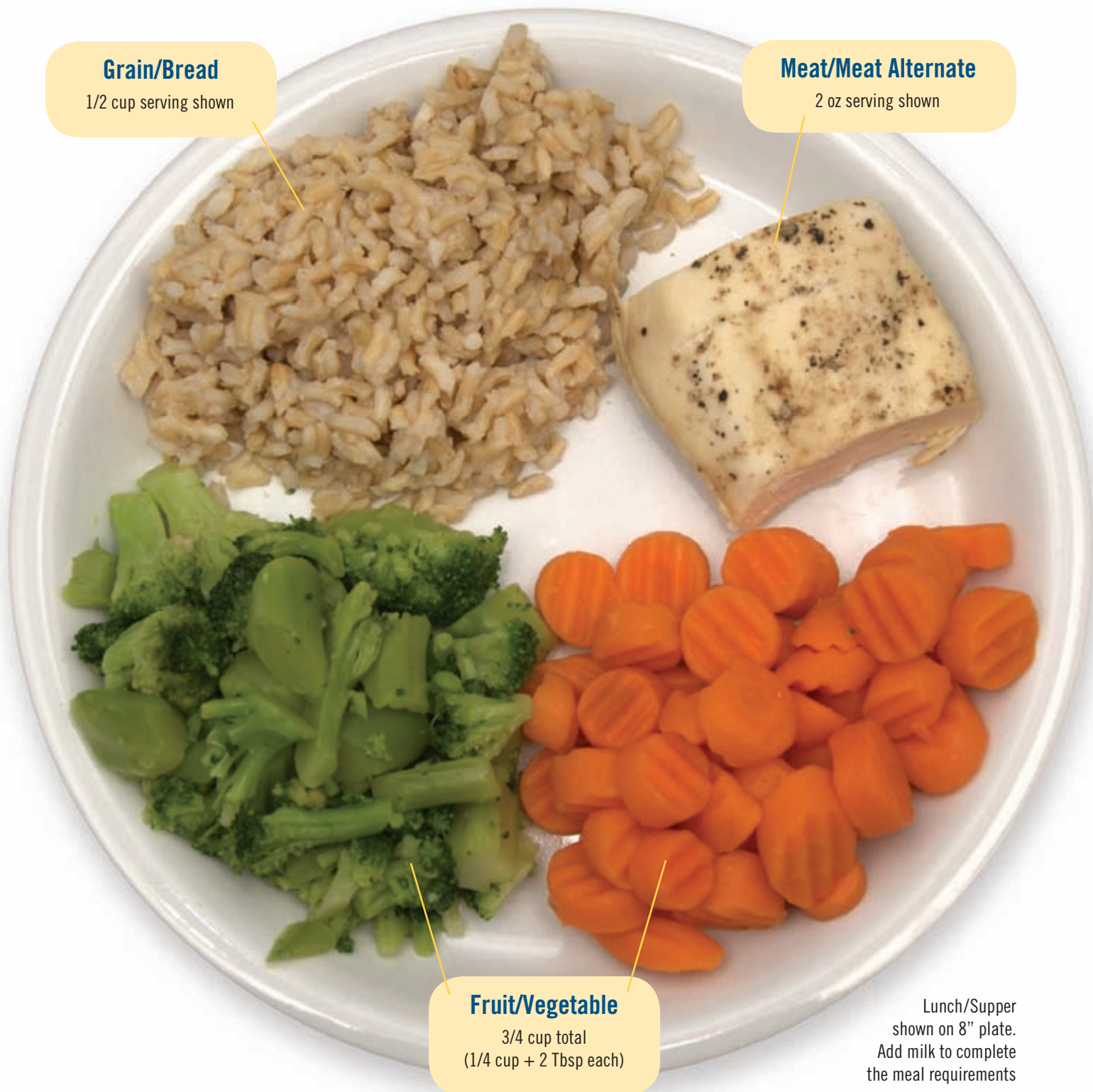


Juice

6 oz (3/4 cup) serving
in a 9 oz cup –100% juice

Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Children Ages 6 through 12 Years

Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper for Children Ages 6 through 12 Years



Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in Feeding

Parents provide *structure, support* and *opportunities*. Children choose *how much* and *whether* to eat from what the parents provide.

The Division of Responsibility for Infants:

- The parent is responsible for *what*
- The child is responsible for *how much* (and everything else)

The parent helps the infant to be calm and organized and feeds smoothly, paying attention to information coming from the baby about timing, tempo, frequency and amounts.

The Division of Responsibility for Toddlers through Adolescents

- The parent is responsible for *what, when, where*
- The child is responsible for *how much* and *whether*

Parents' Feeding Jobs:

- Choose and prepare the food
- Provide regular meals and snacks
- Make eating times pleasant
- Show children what they have to learn about food and mealtime behavior
- Not let children graze for food or beverages between meal and snack times

Fundamental to parents' jobs is to trust children to decide *how much* and *whether* to eat. If parents do their jobs with *feeding*, children will do their jobs with *eating*.

Children's Eating Jobs:

- Children will eat.
- They will eat the amount they need over time. Some days may be more—some days less.
- They will learn to eat the food their parents eat.
- They will grow predictably.
- They will learn to behave well at the table.



Recommendations At-A-Glance

	Recommended	Limit	Not Recommended
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water without flavoring or additives Fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk, plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice 2% milk, plain Fat-free or 1% flavored milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole milk, plain or flavored 2% milk, flavored Regular or diet sodas Sweetened teas, lemonade and fruit drinks with less than 100% juice Sports drinks and energy drinks
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables without added fat, sugar or salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables with added fat, sugar or salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried vegetables (e.g., French fries)
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits packed in 100% juice or water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice Fruits with added fat, sugar or salt Dried fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits canned in heavy syrup Fried fruits
Dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free or low-fat yogurt Fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese Fat-free or part-skim real cheese Fat-free or low-fat cream cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced-fat yogurt or cottage cheese Reduced-fat real cheese Reduced-fat cream cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole milk Full-fat yogurt Full-fat cottage cheese Full-fat real cheese Full-fat cream cheese Cheese food or cheese product
Grains and Breads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-grain breads, pitas and tortillas Whole-grain pasta Brown rice Cereals and grains with 6 or fewer grams of sugar and 3 or more grams of fiber per serving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White bread and pasta Taco shells French toast, waffles, and pancakes Biscuits Low-fat granola Whole grain, low-fat muffins and crackers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doughnuts, muffins, croissants, and sweet rolls Biscuits Full-fat granola Sweetened, low-fiber cereals Crackers made with hydrogenated oils (trans fats)
Meats and Meat Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra-lean ground beef Beef or pork that has been trimmed of fat Chicken and turkey without skin Tuna canned in water Fish and shellfish Beans, split peas, and lentils Tofu and soy products Nuts (for children over 4) Egg whites and egg substitutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean ground beef Turkey and chicken with skin Broiled hamburgers Ham, Canadian bacon Low-fat hot dogs Tuna canned in oil Whole eggs cooked without added fat Peanut-butter Nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried/pre-fried meats (e.g. fried chicken, chicken nuggets, fish sticks) Hot dogs, bologna and other lunch meats, bacon, pepperoni, and sausage Beef and pork that has not been trimmed of its fat Ribs, bacon Fried fish and shellfish Whole eggs cooked with added fat
Sweets and Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air-popped or low-fat popcorn (for children over 4) Whole grain pretzels Whole grain crackers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frozen 100% juice bars Fat-free, low-fat or light frozen yogurt or ice cream Whole grain fig bars Animal and graham crackers Baked chips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cookies, cakes, and pies Candy Chips Buttered popcorn Full-fat ice cream Water ice and popsicles
Condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ketchup Mustard Fat-free salad dressing Fat-free mayonnaise Fat-free sour cream Vinegar Herbs and spices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oils Low-fat/light salad dressings Low-fat/light mayonnaise Low-fat/light sour cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter, lard, and margarine Salt Pork gravy Creamy salad dressing (full-fat) Mayonnaise or tartar sauce (full-fat) Sour cream (full-fat) Cheese or cream sauces and dips

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

To support your child in making healthy eating choices, we are teaching him/her about where food comes from, how it is prepared, and encouraging him/her to try new foods.

Today your child:

Learned something new about a food. It was _____

Participated in preparing food for a meal or snack by _____

Tasted a new food. It was _____

You can reinforce these lessons at home by asking your child what he/she learned and how you can make healthy choices as a family; letting him/her help in meal preparation and pick out new fruits and vegetables to try as a family. Remember it may take anywhere from 10–15 tries of a food before your child decides to eat it! Encourage your child to participate in meal planning and preparation to help him/her establish healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Thank you!

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

To support your child in making healthy eating choices we are teaching him/her about where food comes from, how it is prepared, and encouraging him/her to try new foods.

Today your child:

Learned something new about a food. It was _____

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Thank you!

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