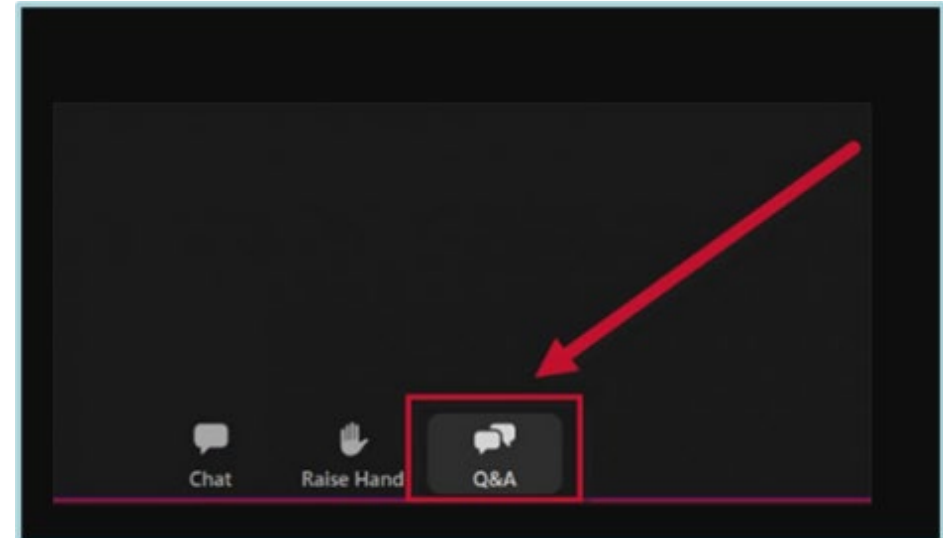


CACFP Thinking Thursdays - Family Style Meals in CACFP for GSRP

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Welcome to Thinking Thursdays!

- Participants are muted
- Enter your questions into the Q&A, not the Chat
- CACFP staff will answer questions in the Q&A






Glad you could join us!

- Thinking Thursdays presentations are posted on the CACFP Training page.
- Visit michigan.gov/mde/services/food/cacfp, click on Training then scroll toward the bottom and click on the Thinking Thursdays link.
- Certificate will be emailed if you attend the entire webinar.
- Upcoming Thinking Thursdays: Oct. 16, 2025

Let Us Know Who You Are!

I work for a...

- Childcare center
- Family childcare home/sponsor
- At-risk afterschool care center
- Adult day care center
- Sponsoring organization
- Emergency shelter
- School food authority



Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
 - Understand the basics of the Child and Adult Care Food Program
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the meal patterns for preschool age children
 - Demonstrate how to properly serve family style meals
 - Understand key CACFP record keeping requirements



Pre-Test

1. True/False: Meal attendance is the same as daily attendance.
2. Is family style meal service required for GSRP?
3. Do you need to offer all components with family style meal service?
4. True/False: Meal attendance can be taken any time during the day.
5. True/False: Milk is required to be served with meals.
6. True/False: Whole grains must be served at every meal.

What is CACFP?





- A voluntary, federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults.
- Federally funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
 - For non-residential child and adult care only.
- Administered by:
- Michigan Department of Education

Preschool Meal Pattern in NSLP/SPB

- For children enrolled in preschool programs in a **school setting**
- Used for GSRP, Head Start, and Tuition Based PreK students
- To be a reimbursable meal in NSLP/SBP, when serving family style, students must **select at least a ¼ cup of vegetables, fruit, or both.**
- Most, if not all of our preschools within schools follow this NSLP/SBP meal patterns due to Michigan School Meals.
- Must claim AM or PM snack under CACFP, so school districts would claim snacks
- [Serving School Meals to Preschoolers \(azureedge.net\)](http://azureedge.net) Handout

Serving School Meals to Preschoolers

Preschool meals served through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (NSLP and SBP) are designed to meet the nutritional needs of young children. Children receive meals that follow the preschool meal pattern if they are a student in the preschool age/grade group. There are two age groups under the preschool meal pattern: children 1 through 2 years old (1–2 years), and children 3 through 5 years old (3–5 years). Types of milk and minimum serving sizes for some meal components are different for the two age groups. By following the preschool meal pattern, your school can help young children eat the types and amounts of foods that best support their growth and development.

Preschool Meal Pattern				
	Breakfast		Lunch	
	1–2 years	3–5 years	1–2 years	3–5 years
 Milk	½ cup (4 fl oz)	¾ cup (6 fl oz)	½ cup (4 fl oz)	¾ cup (6 fl oz)
 Fruits	¼ cup	½ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup
 Vegetables			⅛ cup	¼ cup
Optional: A second, different vegetable may be served in place of fruit at lunch.				
 Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

CACFP Meal Pattern

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM MEAL PATTERNS

- CACFP meal pattern is used for GSRP in childcare centers. This meal pattern varies slightly from the NSLP meal pattern for preschoolers.
- No requirement to take any specific meal component, but all should be encouraged.
- AM/PM snacks (during the school day) would be claimed under CACFP.

LUNCH AND SUPPER

Meal Pattern for Children and Adults

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 ² (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)	Adult
Food Components and Food Items¹	Minimum Quantities				
Fluid milk ³	4 fl oz	6 fl oz	8 fl oz	8 fl oz	8 fl oz ⁴
Meats/meat alternates Edible portion as served:					
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Tofu, soy products, or alternate protein products ⁵	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Cheese	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Large egg	½	¾	1	1	1
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp	4 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened ⁶	4 oz or ½ cup	6 oz or ¾ cup	8 oz or 1 cup	8 oz or 1 cup	8 oz or 1 cup
The following may be used to meet no more than 50 percent of the requirement: Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds, as listed in program guidance, or an equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternates (1 oz of nuts/seeds = 1 oz of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish)	½ oz eq = 50%	¾ oz eq = 50%	1 oz eq = 50%	1 oz eq = 50%	1 oz eq = 50%
Vegetables ^{7,8}	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits ^{7,8}	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Grains (oz eq) ^{9,10,11}	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq



Breakfast Requirements

Must offer all 3 components for a reimbursable breakfast for Family Style Meal Service:

- Milk: 6 oz (must be unflavored, fat-free or 1%)
- Veg and/or fruit: ½ cup
- Grain: ½ oz eq = 1 serving (e.g. ¾ cup puffed cereal, ½ cup flakes or rounds cereal)



Lunch or Supper Requirements

- Must offer all 5 components for a reimbursable meal for Family Style Meal Service:
 - Milk: 6 oz (must be unflavored, fat-free or 1%)
 - Meat/Alternate 1.5 oz
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ large egg
 - Cooked dry beans $\frac{3}{8}$ cup
 - Peanut butter 3TB
 - Yogurt 6 oz
 - Veg and/or fruit: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup each)
 - Grains: $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq (e.g. $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pasta, $\frac{1}{2}$ slice bread)



Snack Requirements

Must offer 2 of 5 components for a reimbursable snack for Family Style Meals:

- Milk: 4 oz
- Meat/Alternate: 1/2 oz
- Veg and/or fruit: 1/2 cup
- Grains: 1/2 oz eq.



Additional Meal Pattern Requirements

CACFP

- Added sugar requirement starts October 1, 2025:
 - Breakfast cereals: must contain no more than 6 grams of **added sugars per dry ounce**
 - Yogurt: must contain no more than 12 grams of **added sugars per 6 ounces** (2 grams of added sugars per ounce)
- One whole grain-rich serving per day must be served daily for CACFP.

NSLP

- At least 80% of the weekly servings need to be whole grain rich and the remaining servings (20%) are enriched. But you can serve all grains as whole grain-rich.

BOTH PROGRAMS

- Grain based desserts are NOT creditable.
- **Water**
 - Must be offered and available throughout the day
 - It does not take the place of milk at meal and snack times
 - Not a reimbursable component



Grain-Based Desserts (GBD)

- GBDs are not allowed in either program!
- GBDs are not creditable even if they are whole grain-rich

- **Common examples of GBD (NOT creditable):**

- Toaster pastries
- Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars
- Fruit-filled rolls/bars/cookies

- **NOT GBD (creditable):**

- Muffins
- Crackers, all types
- Banana/zucchini/other quick breads

Quiz: Meal Pattern Questions

1. How many components are required at breakfast?
2. True/False: If your program is run under the NSLP/SBP, you must serve every child at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit or vegetable for meal to be claimed.
3. What type of milk is allowable for preschoolers (ages 3-5)?
4. Are granola bars acceptable in CACFP and NSLP?

Family Style Meals

- GSRP requirement
- “Best Practice” in CACFP and Head Start
- Encouraged, but not **REQUIRED** to take all components – for childcare centers, claiming under CACFP

What Is Family-Style Meal Service (FSMS)?

- All foods and beverages are placed on the table in community serving containers/pitchers.
- Children serve themselves with the assistance of their teacher.
- Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat.
- Children and adults sit and eat together, while enjoying meaningful conversations.
- If desired, children take second portions.



Food Portions

- **Food portions** must meet the minimum USDA meal pattern requirements regardless of how they are served to the children.
- Steps to provide enough food for each child:
 - Calculate at least the minimum amount of food needed per child.
 - Suggest preparing about 5-10% extra for spillage, contamination or second helpings.
 - Mark fill lines on cups (4 oz for snacks, 6 oz for lunch/supper)
 - Teachers and aides should help the children serve themselves.



Adult Portions

- Teachers will need to model family style meals with children, so food portions need to be included for teachers.
- Full meals for teachers must be counted and paid for by GSRP funding.
- If only sampling the meal, a single meal can be counted and shared between teachers.

Why is Family Style best? Children Benefit!

- Gives children a sense of control over what they eat
- Provides a safe place to try and experience new foods
- Learn and practice new skills by participating in meal time routine
- Builds relationships between adults and children
- Learn their body's fullness and satiety cues
- Develops healthy eating habits and portion-size awareness
- Promotes table manners and turn taking skills
- Preschoolers love to serve themselves! Success builds competency and self esteem.



Myth or Fact?

“Our meals/snacks come pre-portioned from caterer or vendor, so we cannot serve family style.”

Myth: ask the vendor or caterer to deliver the food in serving bowls or containers. If not feasible, have the children pass the food that is not pre-plated so they can still practice some aspects of family style meal service.



Myth or Fact?

“Children will serve themselves too much/too little food.”

- **Myth:** Children can be guided to follow their hunger and fullness cues. This is a benefit of family style meals: it allows children to control what and how much they want to eat.
- To encourage children to take appropriate portions for their age, use serving utensils that provide the amount needed for one serving.
 - **Example:** Required serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit – use a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup scoop, ladle or measuring cup



How Do I Make Sure I'm Providing Enough Food for Each Child?

- Calculate for a Single Age Group
- Example:
 - Happy Day Child Care wants to offer diced peaches at lunch to the GSRP classroom. This classroom has twelve students in class today.
- Multiply the minimum amount of food by the number of children at the meal or snack.
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruit for lunch is required for 3-5 year olds
- $12 \text{ students} \times .25 \text{ cup} = 3 \text{ cups diced peaches} + \text{extra for spills, 2}^{\text{nd}} \text{ helpings, etc.}$



FSMS Food Service Process

Before mealtimes begin:

- Supply items needed to help set the table
- Provide multiple sets of child-sized serving utensils
- Place on table all foods that meet the meal pattern – no holding back milk or fruit
- Pass new bowl when contaminated or emptied
- Fill pitchers half full to reduce risk of spills



FSMS Adults: Mealtime Routine & Roles

- Demonstrate table setting, how to use utensils and handle serving dishes
- Model by serving themselves a child's portion and passing dishes to the right
- Introduce new foods and help serve food and beverages, as needed
- Try all foods with enthusiasm
- Assure no food is held back, including milk
- Respect a child's decision to decline a food
- Honor a child's hunger and fullness cues



Remember Meals from a Child's View

- Naturally want to try new foods when they are offered on a regular basis
- Want to feel in control of their eating
- Respond well to support and encouragement from adults
- May eat different amounts of food from day to day



Offering Foods & Second Helpings

- For CACFP/GSRP/HS requirements, children are to be offered nutritious, balanced meals/snacks
- Children may accept or reject foods
- Adults are to encourage but not force
- Children do not have to “Clean their Plate” to have second servings
- Teachers are to work one on one with children who take too little or too much
- Teachers and aides should help the children serve themselves.

*REMINDER: For meals claimed under the NSLP/SBP, children must take a ¼ cup of fruit or vegetable.



Life is Messy – Clean it up!

- Avoid reprimanding or criticizing children for spills - life happens!
- “The children drop the food on the floor, spill the milk on the table, or don’t eat enough”
 - Children do spill...which provides us an opportunity to learn self-care skills and care of our environment by cleaning up spills together.
- Teaches the art of forgiveness , “no worries, we can all help, we all make mistakes.”



Pouring

- Use child-sized pitchers with lids and pouring spouts to build confidence and competency
- Teach children how to pour through activity outside of mealtimes
 - E.g., pour water into cups, sand into a sandbox, dry beans into a bowl
 - Tip! If a child's cup is larger than the portion size required by the meal pattern, add a line on the outside of the cup to show where to fill.
 - For example, a 3-year-old must be offered at least 6 fluid ounces (3/4 cup) of milk at lunch: mark a line at 6 fl. oz. (3/4 cup) on each child's cup so they can see when to stop pouring.
- **If an adult pours the beverage, the portion must be the required minimum amount.**



Safety First: Standing While Eating

- Some children will attempt to stand and move while eating.
- Standing can increase the risk of choking.
- Always beware of foods that may be choking hazards for young children too.
- **Children must be seated at the table for the meal to be reimbursable.**



Mealtime Conversations Scenario

“When the cook gives you the bowl of pasta salad with broccoli to place on the table, you say to the children, *“Darn, I don’t like broccoli.”*”

What could we say about this bowl of pasta salad that would be encouraging?



Adult Behavior: Negative Influences

- Pressuring children to eat
 - Bribing and rewarding children to eat
 - Restricting specific foods
 - Speaking negatively about foods
 - Making negative facial expressions towards certain foods
 - Hold back food such as milk to avoid spillage
- *Be aware of personal bias



Force or Pressure

When children are forced to eat they are more likely to:

- Overeat and not listen to their hunger cues
- Develop a dislike for the food or flavor
- Reduce their desire to try other foods because of the negative experience
- Using food as a reward or punishment is NOT allowed



Family Style Quiz

Scenario 1

- Play & Learn Child Care served spinach at lunch and provided the full required minimum amount in the serving bowl for each of the three children at the table.
 - Johnny did not put any on his plate.
 - Mya put some on her plate.
 - Finn put the full minimum amount on his plate. None of them ate everything they put on their plates.
- Are all three meals reimbursable?



Answer

- Yes!
- All three of the meals are reimbursable.
- The child care site must provide enough food so that each child has the option to take the full minimum serving amount of food, if they wish.
- They are not required to take or eat the full amount for the meal or snack to be reimbursable under CACFP.



Family Style Quiz

1. True/False: You can place only the vegetable on the table, then later in the mealtime, offer milk.
2. True/False: Children should be allowed to choose whether they drink the milk offered.
3. True/False: A teacher's role is to serve each child the meal components.
4. True/False: If an adult is pouring milk for children at lunch, it must be $\frac{3}{4}$ cup poured.



Key CACFP Record Keeping Requirements

- Special Dietary Needs
- POS meal attendance
- Menus
- Resources:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/food/sntp/training/online-training-modules#cacfp>

- CACFP: Recordkeeping for Sponsoring Organizations
- CACFP: Recordkeeping for Independent Centers



Disability vs. Preferences

- **Special Dietary Needs:** disability must be written documentation, signed by a health professional, does NOT need to meet meal pattern requirements to receive reimbursement
- **Preferences:** must meet meal pattern to be reimbursement (e.g. almond milk without a healthcare professional signature would not be allowed to be claimed)
- MDE documents available for use:
 - Formula/Food Sign Off Statement
 - Fluid Milk Substitution Form
 - Special Diet Statement/Form
 - Creditable Non-Dairy Beverages/Milk Substitutes



Special Diet Statement vs. Fluid Milk Substitution Form

Special Diet Statement

- Used for: Milk and other food substitutions
- Participant has a disability or medical condition
 - The meals/snacks **will not** meet meal pattern requirements
 - Meal/snack is claimable as long as a medical professional's guidelines are followed
- Participant is requesting accommodations due to religious, cultural or parent preference
 - Substitutions **MUST** meet meal pattern requirements
 - Milk substitution be nutritionally equivalent to cow's **MUST** milk

Fluid Milk Substitution Form

- Used for: Milk substitutions only
- Participant is drinking something other than milk, due to a parent preference
- Substitution **MUST** be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk
 - **ALL** nutrient categories must be the cow's milk equivalent

Point of Service (POS) Meal Attendance

- Required monthly documentation used to support the monthly claim for reimbursement
- Different from Daily Attendance Records
- POS means meal attendance **MUST** be taken during the actual meal service.
- Must be taken by child's name.
- **POS Meal Attendance is the only way that meal attendance is permitted to be taken in the CACFP.**

POS Best Practices/Tips

Edit Checks

- Have a second person double-check meal count consolidation totals. Errors in this area are common and can be costly in terms of under or over-claiming!
- It is NEVER okay to recreate meal attendance based on memory or using attendance records!



POS/Menu Quiz

1. True/False: For GSRP classrooms, you can take meal counts by counting up all the children and putting the total on the tally sheet.
2. True/False: You can take meal counts after all children have finished eating.
3. True/False: Oat and almond milk are allowed as part of a reimbursable meal without written documentation from an approved health professional.



Menu Planning

GSRP

- Menu planning saves time, money and is part of the MiLeap regulations (**R 400.8330**)
- Menus must be planned in advance, dated, and **made available** to parents. Food substitutions must be noted on the menus the day the substitution occurs.

CACFP

- Requires menus to be posted and substitutions to be made on all menus
- Must be dated
- Must list what was actually served
- Must be posted to public



Post-Test

1. True/False: Meal attendance is the same as daily attendance.
2. Is family style meal service required for GSRP?
3. Do you need to offer all components with family style meal service?
4. True/False: Milk is required to be served with meals.
5. True/False: Whole grains must be served at every meal.

Resources

Meal Patterns: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets>

Visual Examples of Meal Patterns: https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/CACFP_Posters_Serve_Tasty_ages3-5.pdf

CACFP Crediting Handbook: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/crediting-handbook>

Family Style Meals with Children – Operator Booklet: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/CACFP-Family-Style-Meal-ServiceOperator-Booklet.pdf>

Additional Trainings:

[CACFP: Family-Style Meal Service:](https://mdoe.state.mi.us/mdedocuments/NutritionTrainingFiles/CACFP-FamilyStyleMealService/index.html#/)

<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/mdedocuments/NutritionTrainingFiles/CACFP-FamilyStyleMealService/index.html#/>

[CACFP: Creditable Menus:](https://mdoe.state.mi.us/mdedocuments/NutritionTrainingFiles/CACFP-CreditableMenus/index.html#/#/)

<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/mdedocuments/NutritionTrainingFiles/CACFP-CreditableMenus/index.html#/#/>

Thank you for joining!

CACFP – www.michigan.gov/cacfp

GSRP – www.michigan.gov/gsrp

Questions?

Enter your questions into the Q&A box

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