

Offer versus Serve in At-Risk Afterschool Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Effective October 1, 2017, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) final rule, *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, allows offer versus serve (OVS) for ages 6-18 in at-risk afterschool programs. OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack.

CACFP at-risk afterschool centers that choose to implement OVS must notify the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) prior to implementation. CACFP menus and meal service must follow the CACFP OVS requirements.

If a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) sponsor operates the CACFP at-risk afterschool meals program and follows the NSLP meal pattern, the NSLP OVS requirements apply. The NSLP OVS requirements are different from the CACFP OVS requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Offer Versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Food Components and Food Items

The determination of reimbursable meals under OVS is based on the child's selection of the full serving of a minimum number of food components (lunch and supper) or food items (breakfast).

- A **food component** is one of the food groups that comprise a reimbursable meal. The breakfast meal pattern requires three components (milk, vegetables and fruits, and grains). The lunch/supper meal pattern requires five components (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates).
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, a hamburger on a whole-grain bun is one food item that contains two components (grains and meat/meat alternates). A ½-cup serving of applesauce and a ½-cup serving of blueberries are two food items from the fruits component.
- The **full serving** is the minimum required amount in the CACFP meal patterns.



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CACFP menus may provide the required food components as single food items (such as chicken, pasta, fruit, and vegetables) or combination foods. Combination foods contain more than one food component, such as sandwiches, pizza, and smoothies made with yogurt and pureed fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains component) and cheese (meat/meat alternates component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as burritos and pizza) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or a turkey sandwich).

OVS Requirements

For a reimbursable breakfast with OVS, the at-risk afterschool center must offer the full serving of at least four different food items and children must select the full serving of at least three food items. For a reimbursable lunch with OVS, the at-risk afterschool center must offer the full serving of at least one food item from each of the five food components (milk, vegetables, fruits, grains, and meat/meat alternates) and children must select the full serving of at least three components.

Signage

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



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OVS at Breakfast

The CACFP at-risk afterschool center must offer the full serving of at least four food items from the three food components. Children must select the full serving of at least three food items for a reimbursable meal. Children can decline any one food item. Table 1 summarizes the requirements for OVS at breakfast.



| Table 1. OVS breakfast requirements for at-risk afterschool centers | |
|--|---|
| At-risk afterschool center must offer at least four food items from three food components ¹ | Child must select |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milk. 1 cup (unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free) ² 2. Vegetables/fruits, ½ cup 3. Grains, 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq)³ 4. Meat/meat alternates (1 ounce) or additional serving of vegetables/fruits (½ cup) or additional serving of grains (1 oz eq) ^{3,4} | At least three different food items (can decline any one food item) |
| <p>¹ Each food item must provide the full serving required by the CACFP breakfast meal pattern.</p> <p>² The USDA’s <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk.</p> <p>³ Grains must meet the required weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in <i>Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</i> or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s <i>Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</i>.</p> <p>⁴ The fourth food item may be a meat/meat alternate item, a different vegetable or fruit item, or a different grain item.</p> | |

Breakfasts in at-risk afterschool centers must meet the criteria below to be reimbursable under OVS.

- Breakfast menus must include the full serving (the required amount in the CACFP breakfast meal pattern) of at least four different food items. Breakfast menus cannot include two servings of the same food item. For example, a breakfast menu that offers a serving of milk, a serving of banana, and two servings of toast (such as one slice of enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and one slice of whole-wheat bread) is not reimbursable because the two servings of toast are the same food item (grains).
- Larger servings of the same component count as only one food item for OVS. For example, 1 cup of strawberries counts as one food item (vegetables/fruits). A 3-ounce whole-wheat bagel or two servings of whole-grain toast each count as one food item (grains).

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- If the breakfast menu offers the full serving of a component as two separate food items, children must take both food items to count as one food item for OVS. The examples below illustrate this requirement.
 - The CACFP breakfast meal pattern for ages 6-18 requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. If the breakfast menu offers $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sliced peaches and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pineapple tidbits, children must select both food items to count as one food item (vegetables/fruits).
 - The CACFP breakfast meal pattern for ages 6-18 requires 1 oz eq of the grains component. If the breakfast menu offers $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq of whole-grain cereal and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq of a whole-grain muffin, children must select both food items to count as one food item (grains component).
- Amounts less than a full serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For example, a selection of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cantaloupe does not count as a food item because the full serving for the vegetables/fruits component at breakfast is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.
- Children may decline any one of the four food items, including milk.
- If the breakfast menu includes four food items, two of which are in a combination food, children cannot decline the combination food. For example, a breakfast menu includes a whole-grain muffin, milk, and a yogurt-fruit smoothie (combination food that contains meat/meat alternates and vegetables/fruits). Children must select the smoothie (two food items) and one other food item for a reimbursable breakfast.



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Examples of OVS at breakfast

Tables 2 and 3 show examples of OVS at breakfast for ages 6-18 in at-risk afterschool centers.

| Table 2. Sample breakfast menu with four food items | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| CACFP meal pattern for OVS | Planned menu | Food items |
| Grains (G), 1 oz eq | Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces | 1 G ¹ |
| Vegetables and Fruits (VF), ½ cup | Strawberries, ½ cup | 1 VF |
| Milk (M), 1 cup | Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Meat/Meat Alternate (MMA) (1 ounce) or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 oz eq) | Orange slices, ½ cup | 1 VF |
| Children must select the full serving of at least three different food items | | |
| Child selects | Full food items | Reimbursable meal? |
| Strawberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M) | 2 | No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 VF and 1 M). |
| Bagel (1 G) Strawberries (1 VF) | 2 | No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF). |
| Bagel (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 2 | No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 M). |
| Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 VF and 1 M). |
| Bagel (1 G) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M). |
| Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Bagel (1 G) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 VF and 1 G). |
| ¹ Larger servings of the same food count as only one food item for OVS. | | |

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Table 3. Sample breakfast menu with five food items

| CACFP meal pattern for OVS | Planned menu | Food items |
|---|--|--|
| G, 1 oz eq | Whole-wheat toast, 1-ounce slice | 1 G |
| VF, ½ cup | Cantaloupe slices, ½ cup Blueberries, ½ cup | 2 VF |
| M, 1 cup ¹ | Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup | 1 M |
| MMA (1 ounce) or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 oz eq) | Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons | 1 MMA |
| Children must select the full serving of at least three different food items | | |
| Child selects | Full food items | Reimbursable meal? |
| Toast (1 G) Peanut butter (1 MMA) Blueberries (1 VF) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 M/MA, and 1 VF). |
| Toast (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M). |
| Toast (1 G) Peanut butter (1 MMA) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 M). |
| Swiss cheese (1 MMA) Cantaloupe slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M/MA, 1 VF and 1 M). |
| Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M). |
| Blueberries (1 VF) Cantaloupe slices (1 VF) Peanut butter (1 MMA) | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 VF and 1 M/MA). |
| Toast, 2 slices (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) | 2 | No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF). Two servings of the same food count as only one food item. |

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OVS at Lunch and Supper

The CACFP at-risk afterschool center must offer the full serving of all five food components. Children must select the full serving of at least three components for a reimbursable meal. Table 4 summarizes the OVS requirements for lunch and supper.



Table 4. OVS lunch and supper requirements for at-risk afterschool centers

| Center must offer five components ¹ | Child must select |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milk, 1 cup (unflavored low-fat, unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free) ² 2. Fruits, ¼ cup 3. Vegetables, ½ cup 4. Grains, 1 oz eq ³ 5. Meat/meat alternates, 2 ounces | <p>At least three food components (can decline any two food components)</p> |
| <p>¹ Each food component must provide the full serving required by the CACFP meal pattern. ² The USDA’s <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk. ³ Grains must meet the required weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in <i>Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</i> or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s <i>Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</i>.</p> | |

Lunches and suppers in at-risk afterschool centers must meet the criteria below to be reimbursable under OVS.

- Each lunch and supper must include the full serving (the required amount in the CACFP meal pattern) of the five lunch/supper components. For information on the CACFP meal patterns, refer to the CSDE’s [Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- Larger servings of the same food count as only one food component. For example, 1 cup of broccoli counts as only one food component (vegetables). Two 1-ounce slices of whole-grain bread (2 oz eq) count as only one food component (grains).

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- If the menu offers the full serving of a component as two separate food items, participants must take both food items to credit as one component for OVS. The examples below illustrate this requirement.
 - The CACFP lunch meal pattern requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables component. If the lunch menu offers $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of corn, children must select both food items to count as the full vegetables component.
 - The CACFP lunch/supper meal pattern requires 1 oz eq of the grains component. If the menu offers $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq of brown rice and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq of whole-wheat roll, children must select both food items to count as the full grains component.
- Amounts less than the full serving do not count as a food component for OVS. For example, a selection of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of broccoli does not count as the vegetables component because the full serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.
- Children may decline any one or two food components, including milk.
- If a combination food contains three or more food components, children cannot decline the combination food. For example, a menu offers spinach lasagna made with cheese (meat/meat alternates component), lasagna noodles (grains component), spinach and tomato sauce (vegetables component) served with apple slices (fruits component) and milk. Children must select the lasagna (three components) for a reimbursable meal.

Examples of OVS at lunch and supper

Tables 5 and 6 show examples of OVS at lunch and supper.



OVS in At-Risk Afterschool Centers in the CACFP

Table 5. Sample lunch/supper menu 1

| CACFP meal pattern | Planned menu | | Meal pattern contribution |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| MMA 2 ounces | Turkey, 2 ounces | | 2 ounces MMA |
| G, 1 oz eq | Whole-wheat bread, 2 ounces | | 2 oz eq G ¹ |
| V, ½ cup | Broccoli florets, ½ cup | | ½ cup V |
| F, ¼ cup | Cantaloupe slices, ¼ cup | | ¼ cup F |
| M, 1 cup | Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup | | 1 cup M |
| Children must select the full serving of at least three different food components | | | |
| Child selects | Food items | Full food components | Reimbursable meal? |
| Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) | 1 | 2 | No. The selected meal contains only two components (MMA and G). |
| Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M) | 2 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and M). |
| Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F) | 2 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and F). |
| Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V) | 2 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and V). |
| Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three components (V, F, and M). |
| Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes. The selected meal contains four components (MMA, G, V, and M). |
| Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes. The selected meal contains four components (MMA, G, F, and M). |
| ¹ Larger servings of the same food count as only one food component for OVS. | | | |

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Table 6. Sample lunch/supper menu 2

| CACFP meal pattern | Planned menu | | Meal pattern contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|--|
| MMA 2 ounces | Meat sauce, 2 ounces of cooked hamburger | | 2 ounces MMA |
| G, 1 oz eq | Spaghetti, 1 cup | | 2 oz eq G ¹ |
| V, ½ cup | Tossed garden salad, 1 cup | | ½ cup V ² |
| F, ¼ cup | Fruit salad, ½ cup | | ½ cup F |
| M, 1 cup | Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup | | 1 cup M |
| Children must select the full serving of at least three different food components | | | |
| Child selects | Food items | Full food components | Reimbursable meal? |
| Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) | 2 | 2 | No. The selected meal contains only two components (G and MMA). |
| Spaghetti (G) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three components (G, F, and M). |
| Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Tossed salad (V) Milk (M) | 4 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains four components (G, MMA, V, and M). |
| Salad (V) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains two components (V, F, and M). |
| Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains three components (G, MMA, and M). |
| Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Fruit salad (F) | 3 | 3 | Yes. The selected meal contains two components (G, MMA, and F). |
| <p>¹ Larger servings of the same food count as only one food component for OVS.</p> <p>² Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.</p> | | | |

OVS in At-Risk Afterschool Centers in the CACFP

Resources

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_CACFP.pdf

Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Guide_CACFP_Meal_Patterns.pdf

Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/CACFP_Meal_Pattern.pdf

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPOfferVersusServe.pdf>

USDA Final Rule (81 FR 24347): CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516>

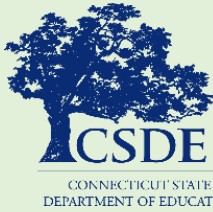
USDA Final Rule Corrections (81 FR 75671): Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/01/2016-26339/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/offer-versus-serve-and-family-style-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

OVS in At-Risk Afterschool Centers in the CACFP



For more information on the CACFP adult meal patterns, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages or contact the CACFP staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This handout is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/AtRisk/OVS_At_Risk_CACFP.pdf.

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