

Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs

Module 8: Meal Service for Preschoolers

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
School Year 2023-24
December 2023

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Preschool Meal Pattern Training Modules

1. Introduction to Training	5. Meat/Meat Alternates Component
2. Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns	6. Fruits Component and Vegetables Component
3. Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12	7. Grains Component
4. Milk Component	8. Meal Service for Preschoolers

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/How-To>
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Module Topics

- Allowable types of meal service
- Classroom meals
- Offer versus serve (OVS) considerations
- Water availability during meal service
- Resources



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Allowable Types of Meal Service

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Allowable Types of Meal Service

- Pre-plated meal service
- Cafeteria-style meal service
- Family-style meal service
- Combination-style meal service



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Pre-plated Meals

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Pre-plated Meal Service

- Staff pre-plate minimum portion of each component
- Best practices
 - Prepare plates and cups before children are seated
 - Measure required servings with appropriate serving utensils
 - Provide training and guidance on required servings to all staff



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Document/Forms Section of Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs

- Menu Forms
- Production records



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#MenuFormsPreschoolers>

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Cafeteria-style Meal Service



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Cafeteria-style Meal Service

- Food service staff serve meal components
- Children may self-serve some foods, e.g., milk or fruit
- Some young children may need assistance with carrying their tray



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Family Style Meal Service



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Family-style Meal Service

- USDA recommends for ages 3-4



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Family-style Meal Service

- Allows children to serve themselves from communal platters or bowls of food with assistance from supervising adults
- Helps children develop healthy eating habits



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Requirements for Reimbursable Meals with Family Style

- Minimum portions for each child and supervising adults
- Supervising adults encourage full portions during meal
- Child must take $\geq \frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetable/fruit



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Best Practices for Family Style

- Place components in communal bowls or dishes on table before children are seated
- Use appropriately sized bowls, dishes, and serving utensils for children to serve themselves
- Serve milk in child-sized pitchers
- Have staff sit with children and assist with serving



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Written Procedures for Family Style

- Required
- Must indicate how SFA implements family-style meal service
- Must provide assurances that all meals will comply with preschool meal pattern requirements




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Written Procedures for Family Style

- Must share with all staff and supervising adults involved in implementing family-style meal service
- Maintain on file for CSDE's Administrative Review




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Five Required Areas for Written Procedures for Family Style

1. SFA will prepare minimum serving for each required component
 - Supervising adults will offer minimum serving of each required component to each child at table




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Five Required Areas for Written Procedures for Family Style

2. Reimbursable meals will be monitored by a trained supervising adult who sits with children at each table




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Five Required Areas for Written Procedures for Family Style

3. Supervising adults will determine meal counts at point of service

- SFA will claim preschool meals based on meal counts



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Five Required Areas for Written Procedures for Family Style

4. Prevent overt identification of children's meal eligible status during family-style meal service



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Five Required Areas for Written Procedures for Family Style

5. Conduct and document adequate training for all supervising adults

- Preschool meal patterns
- Meal counting
- Civil rights

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Civil-Rights-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs#schools>




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Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-In-School-Nutrition-Programs#MealServicePreschoolers>

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Combination-style Meal Service



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Combination-style Meal Service

- Combines pre-plated meal service and family-style meal service
- Good option when meal contains foods that cannot be easily or safely passed in common serving dishes

Ensure supervising adults understand and meet requirements


Preschool lunch menu for ages 3-4	
Turkey sandwich Vegetable soup Garden salad Diced peaches Low-fat milk, unflavored	
Pre-plated	Family style
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetable soup Milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turkey sandwich Garden salad Diced peaches

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Allowable Types of Meal Service

- Pre-plated meal service
- Cafeteria-style meal service
- Family-style meal service
- Combination-style meal service



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Considerations for Classroom Meals


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Staff Must Understand and Follow USDA Requirements

- Food service staff
- Non-food service staff, e.g., teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable classroom staff

Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for classroom meals




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Requirements for Classroom Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/MealCount/Requirements_Classroom_Meals_NSLP_SBR.pdf

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Accurate Meal Counts at Point of Service

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Point of Service

The point where the child receives a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal

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Accurate Meal Counts at Point of Service

- Designated staff determine meal counts at point of service
- Must prevent overt identification

Staff training is critical




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Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Counting-and-Claiming-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

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Offer versus Serve (OVS) Considerations

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OVS

A provision that allows students in grades K-12 to decline some of the offered foods in reimbursable meals

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OVS Considerations

- Not allowed for preschoolers
- Exception for co-mingled meal service at lunch/breakfast
 - All meal pattern requirements for older grades also apply to preschoolers
 - Must implement OVS for preschoolers

Preschoolers co-mingled with grades K-5 at lunch



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More Guidance on Co-mingled Meals



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Module 2: Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns



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Water Availability During Meal Service



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Potable Water

Drinking water that comes from surface and ground sources and is treated to levels that meet state and federal standards for consumption

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Potable Water Must Be Available During Meal Service

1. No restrictions
2. No charge
3. Unflavored




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Important Considerations for Offering Water

- Water is not part of reimbursable meals or ASP snacks
- Students are not required to take water
- Cannot promote or offer water as alternative selection to fluid milk throughout food service area

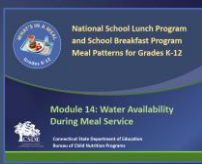


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Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs



Module 14: Water Availability During Meal Service

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

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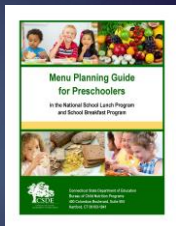
Meal Service Resources

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Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf

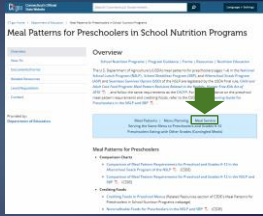
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Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs

- Meal Service for Preschoolers section



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#MealServicePreschoolers>

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USDA Resource

Serving School Meals to Preschoolers

English and Spanish




<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers>

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Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources_Preschool_Meal_Patterns.pdf

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Questions?

Contact the school nutrition programs staff

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CNstaff/countyassign.pdf>

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Thank you for participating!

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

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