

Meal Service Requirements

This manual section provides guidance to Institutions and their sponsored centers and/or day care homes on the following meal service requirements:

1. [Meal Service Types in CACFP](#)
2. [Meal Reimbursement](#)
3. [Meal Service Time Requirements](#)
4. [Meals Consumed Offsite](#)
5. [Food Provided by Parents/Guardians](#)
6. [Meal Service During Unanticipated School and Day Care Closures](#)
7. [Creating Safe and Supportive Environments for Breastfeeding Mothers](#)
8. [Menu Pattern Requirements and Food Substitutions](#)
9. [Sanitation](#)
10. [Meal Service Styles](#)
11. [Prohibition of Separation by Gender During Meal Service](#)
12. [Meal Count Requirements](#)

Meal Service Types in CACFP

Institutions shall serve one or more of the following meal types:

1. Breakfast
2. Morning (AM) snack
3. Lunch
4. Afternoon (PM) snack
5. Supper
6. Late night snack

Institutions may only claim reimbursement for the meal types specified in the Institution's approved site or provider application packets in MyIdahoCNP.

Meal Reimbursement

Child care centers, Head Start programs, outside-school-hour centers, family day care homes, and adult day care centers may not claim reimbursement for more than two meals and one snack or one meal and two snacks provided daily to each participant.

Emergency shelters may be approved to claim up to three reimbursable meals; breakfast, lunch, and supper, or two meals and one snack to each child daily on weekdays and weekends. Only meals served in congregate meal settings are eligible for reimbursement.

Meals which are consumed in private family quarters in an emergency shelter are not reimbursable.

**Exception for Infants' Meals Served in 'Private Family Quarters'
Within an Emergency Shelter**

Meals provided for infants from birth through age 11 months but served outside the congregate setting may be claimed if the shelter:

1. Provides all of the required components to the infant's parent or guardian;
and
2. Maintains records documenting that meals met the meal pattern requirements.

At-risk afterschool care centers may claim for reimbursement only one At-risk afterschool snack and one At-risk afterschool meal per child per day. An At-risk afterschool care center that provides care to a child under another component of CACFP during the same day may not claim reimbursement for more than two meals and one snack, or one meal and two snacks, per child per day, including the At-risk afterschool snack and the At-risk afterschool meal.

Meal Service Time Requirements

State agencies may require any Institution or facility to allow a specific amount of time to elapse between meal services or require that meal services not exceed a specified duration.

Meals that are claimed for reimbursement must be served at traditional meal times. SDE defines traditional meal times within the ranges indicated below:

1. Breakfast shall not begin after 9:30 a.m.;
2. Lunch: 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.;
3. Supper: 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., exception is in At-Risk Afterschool programs, supper must be served after the school school day which may occur before 4:00 p.m.;
4. Meal service duration may be up to 1 hour. When the meal service is longer than one hour, the Institution must check the multiple shifts box by the meal service times in the site or provider application to indicate the meal service is served in shifts.
5. Meals and snacks should be timed to allow hunger to develop between meal services. For all meal services except breakfast, the start time must be at least 2 hours after the previous meal service start time when snacks are served;
6. If a snack is not served between breakfast and lunch, there must be 3 hours between the start time of breakfast to the start time lunch;
7. If a snack is not served between lunch and supper, there must be at least 4 hours between the start time of lunch to the start time of supper;
8. The last meal service must begin no later than 30 minutes before the facility closing; and
9. No meal services may be served outside of the facility operating days and hours.

INFANT MEAL SERVICE TIMES

For infants in care, an infant's meal service time is the start of the meal service time approved in the center or homes MyIdahoCNP application to the start of the next meal service time, with one exception for the first approved meal served and the last approved meal served. For the first meal served the start time may be when the facility opens. For the last meal served the end time may be when the facility closes.

On the next page is an example of a facility's (center or home) hours of operation and approved meal times, that meet the meal service time requirements listed above for children in care. The example also shows how infant meal times are determined based on the approved meal service times in a site or provider application in MyIdahoCNP and the facilities hours of operation.

Meal Service Times for Children and Infants

Example: Facility Hours of Operation and Approved Meal Times

Hours of Operation: 6:00 am - 7:00 pm			
Children Approved Meal Times		Infant Meal Service Times	
Breakfast:	7:00 am - 8:30 am (multiple shifts)	Breakfast:	6:00 am - 9:30 am
AM Snack:	9:30 am - 10:00 am	AM Snack:	9:30 am - 11:30 am
Lunch:	11:30 am - 1:00 pm (multiple shifts)	Lunch:	11:30 am - 2:30 pm
PM Snack:	2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	PM Snack:	2:30 pm - 5:00 pm
Supper:	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Supper:	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Please note in the example above, the facility breakfast and lunch meal service time are more than one hour so in the site or provider application the Institution checked the multiple shift box to indicate the meals are served in shifts. If a snack service time was more than one hour, the Institution would also check the multiple shift box. Institutions must denote in the site or provider applications the meals or snacks the centers or providers serve in shifts.

Institutions must provide each sponsored center or day care home meal service times in the site or provider applications in MyIdahoCNP. Institutions may only claim meals or snacks that are served within the approved meal service times provided to SDE in MyIdahoCNP. If the center or day care home wishes to revise their meal service times it is important the Institution updates the site or provider application in MyIdahoCNP and the updates are approved by SDE **before** the facility begins **servicing** and claiming meals or snacks in the new meal service times.

USDA has provided flexibility in meal service times for At-risk afterschool centers. Please refer to the At-Risk Afterschool Centers section of this manual for more information.

SERVING MEALS OR SNACKS IN SHIFTS

Centers and day care homes may serve meals or snacks in shifts to meet the needs of participants. The SDE understands participants do not always arrive and depart at the same time in facilities. To ensure a participant has the opportunity to receive a meal within the traditional meal service times, centers or day care homes can serve meals or snacks in shifts. A facility is serving in shifts when a meal or snack service is longer than one hour to accommodate arrival and departure times, or the number of participants, and there are short time frames during the meal service when no participants are being served.

MEAL TIME WAIVERS

Institutions may request other meal times if they are necessary to meet participants' needs. Written requests with justifications must be approved by SDE *before* meals are *served* at non-traditional times and claimed for reimbursement. Justifications must include certification that the meal times requested would not result in participants ability to receive the same meal service in more than one Child Nutrition program. For example, if the center is requesting lunch meal service prior to 11:00 am to serve PM kindergarten children, the center must certify that the children do not have access to lunch meal service at school.

Meals Consumed Offsite

Sack or picnic meals provided and supervised by the Institution or sponsored facility but served offsite may be claimed for reimbursement. To be claimed for reimbursement, meals must meet CACFP meal pattern requirements. The sack or picnic meals must have all food components of the meal served to each participant all at the same time (unitized) 226.6. Caution must be taken to ensure that potentially hazardous foods are transported, stored and served according to local public health policies.

Meals packed by the Institution and sent with a participant to eat at another location without the supervision of the Institution's personnel are not eligible for CACFP reimbursement.

The goal of CACFP is to serve nutritious meals prepared on-site, but commercially prepared foods are allowable in CACFP with proper documentation. Food purchased from a fast food establishment would fall into this category. Institutions will need to ensure that items, if purchased at a fast food establishment, are made from creditable ingredients and that the quantities served are credited properly. This can be done by having the restaurant complete a product formulation statement that the Institution then verifies to make sure it is accurate. Note: food from fast food restaurants is usually not nutritionally sound. These items tend to be higher in fat, calories, and sodium so menu planners should take this into account. SDE encourages the best practice of preparing food in the home or center that meets not only CACFP standards, but also current dietary guidelines.

Food Provided by Parents/Guardians

Generally, food provided by parents/guardians may not be counted as fulfilling meal pattern component requirements in the CACFP. Please refer to the meal pattern section of this manual for guidance on parent supplied foods for infants.

If parents provide an additional food, such as a dessert item, and the Institution provides the required components for the meal or snack, the meal may be claimed for reimbursement. Such foods should be served after the required components to help ensure that the foods in the CACFP meal pattern are eaten first and the children's nutritional needs are met before additional foods are offered. Parents/guardians cannot be required or coerced to provide any food(s) for their child who is participating in the CACFP. For information on parent supplied foods due to disabilities or non-disability reasons please see the Meal Pattern Requirement section of this manual.

Meal Service During Unanticipated School and Day Care Closures

Schools and day care programs may face unanticipated closures due to extreme weather events, natural disasters, major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or other similar causes. Unanticipated closures prevent students and children enrolled in child care from receiving the nutritious meals normally provided. FNS and SDE encourages Institutions participating in the CACFP to use the flexibilities described below to help ensure that participants do not experience a lapse in food security when extreme weather or other events force area schools or day care programs to close.

At-risk afterschool centers may continue serving meals and snacks as part of the At-risk afterschool meals component of CACFP during unanticipated school closures (7 CFR 226.17a(b)(1)). On days when schools are closed, At-risk afterschool centers that normally offer a snack and supper after school may instead choose to offer either lunch and a snack, or breakfast and a snack. These meals and snacks would be reimbursed through CACFP at the free rate.

Creating Safe and Supportive Environments for Breastfeeding Mothers

Breastmilk is recognized as the best milk for babies for countless reasons. It contains all of the vitamins and nutrients needed for the first 6 months of life. Creating environments for mothers to breastfeed their infants helps to promote healthy growth and development for the infants in care at centers and day care homes. This is an optional best practice for facilities.

Establishing a supportive breastfeeding environment for mothers in a child care facility can be made easy and a little planning can go a long way to make the transition easy for everyone. Some key steps might include:

1. Establishing a policy;
2. Providing a location; and
3. Knowing how to handle breastmilk safely

As an Institution or facility begins to create a safe and supportive environment, keep the following points in mind for each step.

ESTABLISH A POLICY

A key step to establishing a supportive breastfeeding environment is to implement a breastfeeding policy that supports mothers and protects the health of breastfed babies. A breastfeeding policy is not required but might include the following points:

1. Provide a place for breastfeeding mothers to breastfeed or express their milk;
2. Assign a refrigerator for storage of expressed breastmilk;
3. Show sensitivity to breastfeeding mothers and their babies;
4. Train all staff on handling expressed breastmilk;
5. Provide flexible breaks to accommodate staff who choose to breastfeed or express milk; and
6. Provide breastfeeding information in the child care setting.

PROVIDE A LOCATION

To create a quality breastfeeding area, designate a space for mothers. This space should be located away from restroom areas due to the high levels of bacteria. This area should feature the following characteristics:

1. Quiet, comfortable, and private;
2. Pillow to support the baby;

3. Nursing stool or stepstool to prevent strain on the back;
4. Bottled water to increase hydration; and
5. Electrical outlet for breast pumps

Mothers should also have access to a sink for handwashing and a specific refrigerated location for storing their expressed milk.

HANDLE AND STORE EXPRESSED MILK SAFELY

It is important the center or day care home discuss the breastfeeding policy for handling and storing expressed breastmilk with mothers. The facility should ask each mother to label the bottle with the child's name, date, and time the milk was expressed. Also, immediately after expressing, ask each mother to store their expressed milk in 2-4-ounce, hard plastic, labeled bottles in the back of a designated refrigerator or freezer. If stored in the refrigerator, serve fresh expressed breastmilk within 72 hours.

Child care providers shall always wash their hands for at least 20 seconds in warm, soapy water before handling the expressed milk. If the expressed milk is frozen upon receipt, thaw in the refrigerator or in a container of warm water. Then use the thawed milk within 24 hours. Never microwave expressed milk as this may create hot spots that can burn the mouth of babies. Never refreeze milk or mix unfinished milk with new milk. For more information regarding expiration dates, fresh or frozen breastmilk, or related questions, contact your local health department or WIC office for applicable health and safety regulations regarding the safe handling of expressed breastmilk.

Menu Pattern Requirements and Food Substitutions

All Institution employees who assist with the meal service and preparation of the meal must receive annual training on the meal pattern including serving portions per age group. In addition, the Institution's employees must be provided information on participant individual food substitutions due to medical or other allowable reasons. For more information on the meal pattern requirements and food substitutions please refer to the Meal Pattern Requirements section of this manual.

PROHIBITION ON USING FOODS AND BEVERAGES AS PUNISHMENTS OR REWARDS

Meals served in the CACFP meal patterns must contribute to the development and socialization of children. Institutions and facilities must not use foods and beverages as punishments or rewards. Using food as a reward for good behavior or punishment for less pleasing behaviors may have a negative effect on children's development and socialization. For example, providing children sweet treats after they put away their toys may cause them to develop unhealthy eating habits, and these habits may cause cavities, weight gain, and other health problems.

Another example is forcing children to eat all of their food before they can leave the table. This method can cause children to eat more than they need and not listen to their hunger cues, increasing their risk of becoming overweight or obese. Therefore, the meal pattern requirements do not allow the use of food and beverage as a punishment or reward.

WATER AVAILABILITY

Safe drinking water must be made available to children throughout the day, including at meal times. While water must be made available to children during meal times, it is not part of the reimbursable meal and cannot be served in lieu of fluid milk. Water can be made available to children in a variety of ways, including having cups available next to the kitchen sink faucet, having water pitchers and cups set out, or simply providing water to a child when it is requested. In recognition that the majority of the CACFP participants are very young children and may not be able to or know how to request it themselves, water must be offered to the children throughout the day as well. Offering water means asking the children whether they would like water at different times throughout the day. For very young children, this may require visual cues such as showing a cup or pitcher while verbally offering the water.

Most centers and family day care homes, obtain drinking water through a public water system. Public water systems are required to ensure that the water provided meets Federal

and State drinking water standards. However, plumbing systems within facilities also can affect the quality of the drinking water. In some instances, the plumbing systems within facilities may expose the water to contamination, including lead contamination.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates public water systems and provides resources related to safe drinking water. The EPA recommends that all child care facilities routinely test drinking water for lead and perform regular maintenance to ensure that drinking water is safe. Costs related to the purchase of potable water for consumption by CACFP participants, or water testing services, would be considered an allowable use of nonprofit food service account funds if the costs are determined to be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the CACFP.

If a center or day care home drinking water is determined to be unsafe, the centers and day care homes must make potable water available to children, as nutritionally appropriate, throughout the day and at meal times.

The above requirements to make water available and offer water throughout the day does not apply to adult day care centers; however, adult day care centers are encouraged to ensure drinking water is offered and made available to adult participants throughout the day.

Sanitation

Institutions shall ensure that in storing, preparing, and serving food, proper sanitation and health standards are met which conform to all applicable Idaho and local laws and regulations. Institutions and facilities must ensure that adequate facilities are available to store food or hold meals.

Meal Service Styles

For all meal service styles, food components must be served in sufficient amounts to meet minimum portion requirements. All components must be served together either on the table or given to each participant at the beginning of the meal. For example, milk cannot be served later in the meal than the other components.

Institutions may choose one of the following methods or a combination of methods to serve CACFP meals. All institutions should strive to serve meals family style.

FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE (RECOMMENDED)

Family style is a type of meal service which allows children and adults to serve themselves from common platters of food with the assistance of supervising adults. Family style meal service allows participants to eat together and to make food choices based on individual appetites and food preferences. It promotes mealtime as a learning experience to help participants develop positive attitudes toward nutritious foods, improve motor skills, provides opportunity to share in group eating situations and develop social skills, and to develop good eating habits. Unlike preset service methods, family style meal service can increase children's acceptance of offered foods and their willingness to try new foods. They will see other children choosing certain food items and feel a sense of control over choosing foods and how much to take. Some children may need to develop necessary skills to pass, pour and serve themselves so it is important the facilities allow time for young children to practice each skill. Institutions and facilities choosing to exercise this option must be in compliance with the following practices:

1. A sufficient amount of prepared food must be placed on each table at the same time to provide the full required portions of each of the food components for all participants at the table and to accommodate the supervising adult if they wish to eat with the children and adults;
2. Children and adults must be allowed to serve the food components themselves, with the exception of fluids (such as milk). During the course of the meal, it is the responsibility of the supervising adults to actively encourage each child and adult to serve them the full required portion of each food component of the meal pattern and to assist any participants who are not able to serve themselves. To assist the participant, the supervising adult may use the hand over hand method and assist the participant in serving themselves. Participants are allowed to make choices selecting foods and in the size of the serving. Supervising adults who choose to serve the fluids (such as milk or juice) directly to the children or adults must serve the required minimum quantity to each child or adult. For example, children 3-5 years old must

be served 6 fluid ounces of milk at breakfast, lunch and supper meals. The supervising adult(s) should offer a food component again during the course of the meal to participants who initially refused the food component or took less than the full portion. Adults should never force a child to take a food item. The meal is reimbursable as long as all food components are offered. Adult staff should model good eating habits while supervising participants at the dining table; and

3. Institutions and facilities which use family style meal service may not claim second meals for reimbursement. In addition, supervising adult meals are not reimbursable, but the cost of the meal is an allowable expense for the Institution's budget.

Unlike other types of meal services (e.g. cafeteria, pre-plated, and OVS), family style meals afford some latitude in the initial portion of food that is self-served by the participant. Additional servings of each food are readily available at each table and more can be self-served at any time.

Serving meals family style is optional and may be used in any CACFP setting. If a center or day care home chooses to serve meals family style they must comply with the above practices (7 CFR 226.26(n)).

PRE-PLATED STYLE MEAL SERVICE

In pre-plated style meal service (or also known as restaurant style meal service), all food components are portioned and served on the plate and in the cup for each participant. Minimum portion sizes of each required component must be served at the same time to each participant at the beginning of the meal (unitized).

COMBINATION PRE-PLATED AND FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE

Some Institutions find a combination of pre-plated style and family style best meets the participants' needs. Combination meal service operates as follows:

1. The full minimum required portion of one or more components are served pre-plated style to each participant. The remaining components are served on the table in communal serving dishes or pitchers adhering to all of the Family Style Meal Service requirements; and
2. All components must be offered to participants at the same time. For example, it is not acceptable to serve participants the Meat/Meat Alternate, Vegetable and Fruit components and wait for five minutes before setting the Grains and the Milk components on the table.

In this meal service style, all the rules governing each service style apply to the foods served using that method. For example, if staff pours milk into glasses, at least the minimum required amount must be poured for each child and offered when the rest of the meal components are served.

CAFETERIA STYLE MEAL SERVICE

In cafeteria style, participants select food from a cafeteria line. Food is not available at the dining table. Cafeteria meal service operates as follows:

1. Participants are served the minimum required amounts of all required components their first time through the cafeteria line; and
2. Adults must supervise the cafeteria line to ensure each participant is served at least the minimum required portions of all required food components.

OFFER VERSUS SERVE

Each adult day care center and At-risk afterschool program must offer its participants all of the required food servings as provided in the Meal Pattern Requirement section of this manual. Offer Versus Serve (OVS) is an approach to menu planning and meal service that allows participants to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or supper. Children and adults who are offered food choices are more likely to eat the foods they enjoy rather than throw the food away. OVS is only allowed in CACFP adult day care and CACFP At-risk afterschool settings for breakfast, lunch and supper meals. OVS is not allowed at snack. OVS may not be implemented at snack because there are only two required components and, therefore, there is not enough food offered to allow a child or adult to decline some foods and ensure that the snack the child or adult takes is nutritionally sufficient. Using OVS can help adult day care centers and At-risk afterschool programs reduce food waste and costs while maintaining the nutritional value of the meal that is served.

In general, OVS is not considered to be appropriate for younger children because it may interfere with the CACFP's nutrition goals and the child care center or day care home's efforts to introduce new foods to children while they are young and still developing food preferences. Therefore, OVS is only an available meal service option for the CACFP adult day care centers and At-risk afterschool programs.

Using OVS is optional. Adult day care centers and At-risk afterschool programs are not required to implement OVS. Institutions that choose to use OVS must notify SDE and document which sites will be participating in the center site applications. If an institution

chooses to use OVS, menu planners should examine participation and food selection trends to determine what and how much food to prepare. This process results in cost savings through minimizing food waste. Facilities may serve the food items and components pre-portioned or directly.

For any meal to be eligible for reimbursement, no matter what meal service type is used, all food components in the required minimum serving sizes must be offered. Below are the required food items and components that must be offered for each meal service and how many food items or food components that may be declined in OVS:

For adults in adult day care centers

One of the four food items required at breakfast may be declined:

1. One serving of fluid milk;
2. One serving of vegetable or fruit, or a combination of both; and
3. Two servings of grains, or
4. Meat or meat alternates;

Two of the five food components required at lunch may be declined:

1. Fluid milk;
2. Vegetables;
3. Fruit;
4. Grain; and
5. Meat or meat alternate.

One of the four food components required at supper may be declined:

1. Vegetables;
2. Fruit;
3. Grain; and
4. Meat or meat alternate.

In adult day care centers that are pricing programs, the price of the reimbursable meal must not be affected if an adult participant declines a food item.

The At-risk afterschool program for school age children may operate during the school year on school days and non-school days. On school days the meal and snack must be offered after the child's school day. Typically, the meal is supper and may be lunch for children that attend AM Kindergarten. On non-school days the At-risk afterschool program may serve and claim one meal and one snack per day per child as well. On these days it is the option of the

center which meal and snack service will be offered. Therefore, for OVS the meal option on non-school days may be breakfast, or lunch or supper. The center may only claim meals for reimbursement for meal services approved in their site application.

For children in At-Risk afterschool programs:

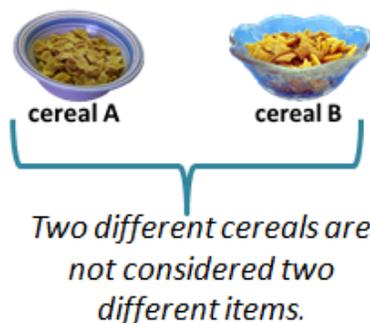
Two of the five food components required at supper or lunch may be declined:

1. Fluid milk;
2. Vegetables;
3. Fruit;
4. Grain; and
5. Meat or meat alternate.

One of the four food items required at breakfast may be declined:

1. One serving of fluid milk;
2. One serving of vegetable or fruit, or a combination of both;
3. One serving of grains;
4. One serving from meat/meat alternate or one additional serving from vegetable and fruit or grains components.

All food items offered in breakfast, lunch or supper must be different from each other. For example, while a flake cereal, such as bran flakes with raisins, and a puff cereal, such as a puffed rice cereal, are two types of cereals that are not identical, they are the same food item.



It is the child or adult's choice to select or decline a food item at breakfast and food component at lunch or supper.

A food item is a specific food offered within the food components. For example, separate ½ cup servings of broccoli and carrots are two food items that comprise one component.

A food component is one of the food groups that make up a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or supper. For example, milk, fruit, vegetable, grain and meat/meat alternate are the five components in the CACFP.

The menu planner may also menu combination foods. A combination food contains more than one food item from different food components that cannot be separated. For example, cheese pizza contains three food items from different food components—a serving of grains (crust); a serving of vegetables (tomato sauce); a serving of meat/meat alternate (cheese).

Food items selected at breakfast may be from any of the required components at the required minimum serving sizes. Adult day care centers or At-risk afterschool programs may not specify what food components a child or adult must select.

If a food item is larger than the minimum serving size, such as a 2 oz. bagel that is worth two servings for children 6-12 or 13-18 years of age, the larger bagel will only count as 1 food item under offer vs serve in CACFP. It is important to note for adult participants in Adult Day Care Centers, the 2 oz. bagel is the minimum serving size. A larger serving size for adults would be a 3 oz. bagel.



Conversely, if the food item serving size is less than the minimum serving size, the participant will need to take one more food item to have the minimum serving size needed for a component to be credited towards a reimbursable meal. For example: For children ages 6-12 or 13-18 years of age the grain serving size is 1 oz. so if the bagel is only ½ oz., the child must take two bagels to meet the grain component minimum serving size.

When using OVS, menu planners have the option to go beyond the minimum requirements. Within each component, different food items may be offered, giving children and adults many combinations for building a reimbursable meal. Offering different food items when using OVS increases the likelihood that children and adults will select foods they prefer and reduces waste.

If the menu planner offers a combination of foods of two or more food items from one food component, such as bread and rice, instructions or signs must be available to let supervisors and participants know what choices make up a reimbursable meal. The instructions and signs should let an adult participant know that they cannot select two of the same food items or components. For example, an adult participant could not select two pieces of toast and milk and have it count towards a reimbursable breakfast because only two different food items were selected. Additionally, an adult participant could not select two servings of chicken and one serving of rice and have it count towards a reimbursable lunch because only two components were selected.

It is important that before implementing OVS in your facility all employees assisting in the meal service must be trained on OVS requirements. The training must be documented with a sign in sheet and agenda. Training must be provided annually.

Prohibition of Separation by Gender During Meal Service

In general, Institutions in CACFP are not permitted to separate participants on any protected basis during the service of CACFP meals and snacks. Federal law prohibits discrimination based on gender at any educational Institution receiving Federal assistance.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROHIBITION ON GENDER-SEPARATED MEAL SERVICE

For co-educational schools and school-based sites operating in CACFP

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recognizes religious exemptions granted by the Department of Education (ED) without prior express approval. ED guidelines allow school and school-based sites to apply for an exemption when Federal law prohibiting gender separation is inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. These exemptions apply broadly to operations, including the meal service at a given site, such as a faith-based school.

Additionally, ED guidelines specifically allow for the approval of gender-separate instruction at public primary and secondary non-vocational schools that could take a variety of forms. It is important to emphasize that since the general rule is that gender separation during meal service is prohibited, a co-educational school may not use limited ED approval of gender-separate instruction to justify blanket gender separation during meal service. Limited exemptions in such situations must be expressly approved by FNS.

For other Institutions operating in CACFP.

SDE may approve exemptions allowing separation by gender during a CACFP meal service for participating Institutions, without express prior approval from FNS, in the following circumstances:

1. Meal service at religious institutions operating under the dictates of the religion with which they are affiliated.
2. Meal service at juvenile correctional facilities where combining members of the opposite gender would present a potential safety risk.
3. Meal service at facilities that fully separate by gender as part of their normal operations (for example, gender-separated summer camps).

When requesting an exemption, the CACFP operator must specify in writing which of the above listed reasons apply and why separation by gender is necessary. SDE will document all exemption requests, including the date of approval or disapproval, and if applicable, the

duration of the approval in the Institution site applications in MyIdahoCNP.

The above listed exemptions are the only acceptable bases for gender separation during CACFP meal service. Any gender separation not based on the ED and/or FNS approval processes is strictly prohibited.

On a case by case basis, situations that do not clearly fit into any of the exemptions outlined above may be considered by the SDE in direct consultation with the FNS Western Regional Office, including the FNS Civil Rights Office and appropriate FNS National Office Child Nutrition Program staff.

Meal Count Requirements

Meal count records must be maintained by the Institution and each facility for three years plus the current program year. Current meal count forms must be readily available in the serving area either on paper or electronic. Best practice is to keep meal count forms in a notebook, folder, or on a bulletin board or clipboard so that the meal service staff or provider can easily find and record meal counts. Institutions and each facility should maintain completed meal count forms and summary sheets in a file with other monthly CACFP claim records.

SDE provides meal counting forms for all types of Institutions. Institutions may create their own form but it must be approved by the SDE before it is implemented. In addition, Institutions may use a Food Service software system to maintain meal count records. If the Institution does not enter the meal counts directly into the system during the time of meal service, or for day care homes at the end of the day, and uses a paper form to maintain this information before entering the data into the software system, the Institution and each facility must maintain the hard copy record since it is a supporting document for the data entered into the software system.

Even though adult meals in child care centers, Head Start programs, At-risk afterschool centers, outside-school-hour centers, and emergency shelters are not claimed for reimbursement, centers must record the number of meals, by meal type, served to adults performing labor necessary to the food service. Each center must have a method to record these meals and may use separate columns on the meal count form to meet this requirement.

Infant meals may be recorded on the time of service meal count forms with the other children in care or may be recorded on the individual infant menu records. Information on the individual infant menu record is located in the Meal Planning and Menu Record section of this manual.

TIME OF SERVICE MEAL COUNTS

All child care centers, Head Start programs, At-risk afterschool centers, outside-school-hour centers, emergency shelters and adult day care centers must record meal counts at the “time of service.” Time of service means each meal or snack is recorded on the meal count record during the meal service when the participants receive the meal or snack. The meal service staff supervising the meal usually records the Time-of-service meal counts.

Time-of-service meal count records must be maintained for each approved meal type served to each participant and adults performing labor in food service, by name (first and last).

The following information must be recorded on time of service meal count records:

1. Center name;
2. If record is maintained by classroom, classroom name;
3. Month, Day, Year;
4. Participants first and last name;
5. Daily meals served to each participant by meal type; and
6. Daily meals served to adults performing labor necessary to food service.

Below is an example of SDE’s Daily Meal Count–Actual Count Method form available in MyIdahoCNP under Download Forms. This form meets the meal counting requirements described above.

Sponsor Name: _____ Month & Year: _____

Center/Classroom Name: _____

B- Breakfast
AM- Am Snack
L- Lunch
PM- Pm Snack
SU- Supper
LS- Late Night Snack

	MONDAY							TUESDAY							WEDNESDAY							THURSDAY							FRIDAY						
	DATE: _____							DATE: _____							DATE: _____							DATE: _____							DATE: _____						
	B	A	L	P	SU	L	S	B	A	L	P	SU	L	S	B	A	L	P	SU	L	S	B	A	L	P	SU	L	S	B	A	L	P	SU	L	S
First & Last Name																																			
1.																																			
2.																																			
3.																																			
4.																																			
5.																																			
6.																																			
7.																																			

Optional Time of Service Meal Counts for At-Risk Afterschool Centers only

At-risk afterschool centers may record meal counts at the time of service using a record to tally the meals by counting the number of participants receiving a reimbursable meal. The following information must be recorded on time of service meal count records:

1. Center name;
2. If record is maintained by classroom, classroom name;
3. Month, Day, Year;
4. Meal service type;
5. Number of participants served a reimbursable meal; and
6. Number of adults performing labor necessary to food service served a meal

Below is an example of SDE’s Daily Meal Count–At Risk Form available in MyIdahoCNP under Download Forms. This form meets the meal counting requirements described above.

Sponsor Name:																								
Center/Classroom Name:	Meal Type (circle): B L SN SU																							
Date:																								
Meals Served to Children (cross off number as each child receives a meal):																								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40					
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60					
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80					
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100					
101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120					
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140					
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160					
161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180					
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200					
201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220					
221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240					
241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260					
261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280					
281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300					
Total Children Meals +																			[1]					
Meals served to adults:																								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Total Program Adult Meals +																							[2]	

COMMON MEAL SERVICE RECORD ERRORS THAT CAN BE COSTLY

During program reviews, the SDE reviewer will carefully compare attendance records to the center time-of-service meal count records or day care home meal count records for a test month. If the SDE reviewer finds the Institution claimed reimbursement for meals that were not supported by participant attendance records, the SDE reviewer must disallow the meals. For example, if the SDE reviewer found that the Institution was reimbursed for meals when attendance records were missing arrival or departure times, the meals for the participants will be disallowed. If the disallowances are over the allowed threshold, the state agency will issue a fiscal action notice to recover the over claim.

The following attendance and meal count errors are sometimes found during program reviews or meal observations:

1. Not properly recording meal counts at the time-of-service;
2. Not recording a participant's time in or out in daily attendance records;
3. Recording a participant's time in for daily attendance before the participant arrives;
4. Recording a participant's time out in daily attendance after the participant leaves;
5. Recording participant's anticipated or estimated arrival or departure time rather than the actual time;
6. Not recording split attendance for participants who leave and return the same day;
7. Not recording arrival and departure times for staff members' children who are in care;
8. Not recording the time in and out of participants who are transported by bus or van;
9. Claiming a greater number of meals than are supported by attendance records;
10. Claiming more than two meals and one snack or two snacks and one meal per participant per day; and
11. Addition errors in consolidating meal counts when preparing the reimbursement claim.

Questions and Answers

CAN YOU PLACE WATER ON THE TABLE NEXT TO THE MILK?

It is not recommended to place water on the table next to milk. This practice implies water is a substitute for milk in the meal. Water is to be made available and offered to the children throughout the day so the children may remain hydrated. Best practices are to place water pitches or containers on a separate counter/table, maintain drinking fountains in or near the service area or place cups next to a sink.

CAN YOU OFFER MILK TO A CHILD WITH A MILK ALLERGY TWICE AND THEN IF THE CHILD DECLINES IT TWICE, STILL CLAIM THE MEAL?

If a child has a food or milk allergy an Institution should not offer them the item they are allergic to in order to claim the meal. If the allergy is not documented with a medical statement form for a disability and is for an allergy or food intolerance, there are several products available that meet the nutritional requirements for a milk substitution.

IF AN INFANT FALLS ASLEEP, MISSES LUNCH TIME AND WAKES UP CLOSER TO SNACK TIME, CAN YOU CLAIM THE MISSED LUNCH SINCE THE REIMBURSEMENT IS HIGHER FOR LUNCH THAN FOR SNACK?

Maybe. When the infant has been offered some of the required components of a meal/snack, the rest of the required food components for that meal/snack must be offered before the next scheduled meal/snack to qualify the meal for reimbursement.

For example: if the approved Lunch meal service time in the site or provider application in MyIdahoCNP is from 11:00 am – 12:00 noon, and the approved PM snack service time is from 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm, if the infant was offered all of the required lunch meal components between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm then the meal may be claimed for reimbursement.

CAN THE STATE PROVIDE A WAIVER FOR A FOSTER CHILD WHO ARRIVES LATER THAN THE MEAL TIME STATED IN THE SITE/PROVIDER APPLICATION?

No, meal time waivers are not provided to serve an individual child outside of the center's or home's approved meal times in their site/provider application in MyIdahoCNP. Meal time waivers are accepted and approved annually to meet the needs of all participants and typically are requested due to changes in facility operating hours and local school hour or meal service changes.

FOR FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE, DOES THE REQUIRED MINIMUM AMOUNT OF FOOD NEED TO BE PLACED ON THE TABLE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEAL, OR CAN THE CENTER OR CLASSROOM HAVE SOME IN RESERVE AND ADD MORE AS NEEDED?

Sufficient amounts of prepared food must be placed on each dining table at the beginning of the meal to provide the full required portions of all food components for all participants and any adults supervising and eating the meal at the table.

Family-style meal service means that the food is placed on the table for each child or adult participant to serve themselves. Participants may then select the food and the amount of each food they want. During the meal, it is the responsibility of each institution and facility to encourage each participant to accept the full required portion for each food component of the meal pattern. If minimum portions are not available for each participant, meals would be disallowed.

FOR FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE, DO CHILDREN HAVE TO TAKE THE FULL SERVING OF MILK?

Children must be able to serve themselves a full serving of milk, if they choose to do so. With family style meal service, the children choose what and how much to serve themselves. The cup provided needs to be large enough to hold the full serving of milk so the child has the option to pour the full amount if they wish. The cup should be able to adequately hold the entire serving without overflowing. For example, at lunch the full serving size for milk for a 3 to 5-year-old is six fluid ounces. An appropriately sized cup for this child would be eight fluid ounces. An eight-fluid ounce cup is large enough for the child to pour the full six ounce serving without over filling. Adults may assist the children pouring the milk by using the hand over hand method.

ARE CHILDREN REQUIRED TO STAY FOR THE ENTIRE MEAL TIME?

A child must be seated for a long enough period of time to be offered all components of the meal or snack.

CAN AN EMERGENCY SHELTER THAT ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO PREPARE AND SERVE THEIR OWN MEALS PARTICIPATE IN CACFP?

Yes, if the shelter provides the food and supervises the residents as they prepare and serve their meals, it may be eligible for CACFP. Some shelters encourage residents to prepare their own meals, to help them feel at home and assist them in transitioning to permanent housing. To be eligible for CACFP, the shelter must provide supervision to ensure that meals and snacks are served and consumed in a congregate meal setting.