

## Ideas for Meal Planning

Children depend on a well-balanced diet for proper growth and development. The food children eat furnishes them with nutrients needed for growth, health and energy!

Providing balanced meals takes thought, planning and creativity. Aside from meeting Dietary Guidelines, meals must be planned so children will want to eat.

You are a “Meal Manager.” The job you do is very important! Planning is the key to efficient management. In order to make every step run smoothly you must have good plans. Some experienced meal managers do the planning in their heads. Others prefer to write plans down and think them through.

Planning hints:

- Variety is a very important factor when planning a menu. Every food has a different composition of nutrients. It is necessary to serve different foods to assure that all nutritional requirements are met.
- Plan each meal to include a variety of color, texture, temperature, size, and shape.
- Serve foods in forms young children can manage easily, such as finger foods. Serve reasonable child-sized portions.
- Menu planning should be done with your budget in mind. Finding seasonal bargains can help stretch the budget tremendously.

Eating excessive amounts of high calorie, low nutrient foods can contribute to major health problems, like tooth decay and obesity. The pre-school years are the best years to develop good eating habits that will last a lifetime. This, in turn, can help prevent health problems into adulthood.

On the next page are lists that can help you get started. Use these as an example of the menu planning process, not for the specific foods listed. Create your own lists of varied foods and design menus using a wide variety of foods.

## **Five Easy Steps to Menu Planning**

1. List main entrees for the week for breakfast, lunch or dinner
2. List vegetables and fruits, including salads, for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Take advantage of fruits and vegetables in season.
3. Add cereal products and bread.
4. Add beverages; be sure to include required amount of milk.
5. Plan snacks last to balance your meals – especially check for foods that are good sources of vitamin A, C and iron.

# Menu Checklist

## Regulations

1.  Are CACFP meal pattern requirements met?

## Appeal

1.  Are the meals planned with good color contrast?
2.  Does the shape of the food vary?
3.  Do the meals include something crisp and something soft?
4.  Are you using some foods which are familiar to the children?
5.  Are you introducing a new nutritious food?
6.  Do the meals have foods with both mild and strong flavors?

## Nutrition

1.  Are the snacks planned to complement or balance the main meals?
2.  Are some raw fruits and vegetables used daily?
3.  Are several iron rich fruits and vegetables used daily?
4.  Is a vitamin A rich food included daily?
5.  Is a vitamin C rich food included daily?
6.  Are the children's protein needs met?
7.  Has the use of sugar been kept to a minimum?
8.  Has the excessive use of fat been avoided?

## Cost

1.  Is there a balance between low cost and high cost items?
2.  Did you use foods that are in season?

The more "Yes" answers the better the menu. You will find that a little bit of menu planning will go a long way. It will help you save money, provide more variety in the diet, improve the nutritional quality of your meals, and add some zip to the food you serve.

*Source: Romaniello C, Domelen NV, Tobler LH. Off to a Good Start. Wildwood Resources, Inc, 1992*

Adapted from "What's in a Lesson for What's in a Meal?"  
Day Nursery Food Program – Pre-approval Packet

## Breakfast

Milk	Juice or Fruit or Vegetables	Grains/Breads
Whole Milk	Tomato Juice	Muffin
2% Milk	Grape Juice	Pancake
1% Milk	Pineapple Juice	Oatmeal
Skim Milk	Hash browns	Toast
Buttermilk	Banana	French Toast
	Orange	English Muffin
	Pear	Grits
	Melon	Croissant
		Bagel
		Waffle

## Lunch/Dinner

Milk	Fruits/Vegetables <i>(choose 2)</i>	Grains/Breads	Meat/Alternate
Whole Milk	Carrot	Rye Bread	Sloppy Joe
2% Milk	Cauliflower	Corn Bread	Chili w/beans
1% Milk	Broccoli	Yeast Roll	Pork Chop
Skim Milk	Tomato	Spaghetti	Salmon Loaf
Buttermilk	Cantaloupe	Rice	Omelets
	Potato	Bread Stuffing	Tuna Casserole
	Coleslaw/Cabbage	Tortilla	Baked Chicken
	Peach	Pita Bread	Lasagna
	Plum	Pizza Crust	Chicken Salad
	Squash	Dumplings	Pot Roast
	Spinach Salad	Egg Noodles	
	Greens		
	Lima Beans		

## Snack

Milk	Fruit/Vegetables	Grains/Breads	Meat/Alternate
Whole Milk	Applesauce	Toast	Ham Cubes
2% Milk	Cucumber	Wheat Cracker	Hard-boiled Egg
1% Milk	Grape juice	Muffin	Peanut Butter
Skim Milk	Berries	Dry Cereal	Cheese
Buttermilk	Tomato juice	Bread Stick	Fish Stick
	Celery	Pumpkin Bread	Tuna Salad
	Tangerine	Biscuit	Cottage Cheese
	Banana	Graham Cracker	Pork Kabob
	Carrot	Soft Pretzel	Egg Salad
	Plum		Cold Roast Beef



### Correct Menu Procedures

During State agency reviews, field consultants find many errors dealing with menus. The following should be considered:

- ✓ Menus must indicate the dates the meals were served. Cycle menus should also have an actual date.
- ✓ Dated menus for the month must be kept as part of the monthly materials used to back up a claim for reimbursement.
- ✓ Materials to support the claim, including menus, must be saved for a minimum of three years.
- ✓ All menus must indicate age groups and portion sizes for each age group being claimed.
- ✓ Portion sizes should be written with specific units or measure such as cups, ounces, etc.
- ✓ Portion sizes for the Grains/Breads should reflect the implementation of the 10/96 new requirements and be written to indicate the number of units, cups or packages served (i.e., 1½ mini bagels, ¼ cup fish crackers, 2 packages saltine crackers).
- ✓ Menus must be written before the meal is served.
- ✓ Menus must contain all components (grain/bread, milk, fruit/vegetable, and meat/alternate) for each meal or snack claimed.
- ✓ Menus must indicate any substitutions that have been made.
- ✓ Menus are one of the documents that must be made available during a state agency review.

If you have questions regarding your menu procedure, contact Carol Markle, Sponsor Support Coordinator, at 317-232-0850 or 800-537-1142.



**CHILD & ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**

## Keep These Food Safety Rules in Mind

- Keep hot foods **HOT!** (Keep hot food at 140° F or above.)
- Keep cold foods **COLD!** (Refrigerate or chill food at 40° F or below)
- Keep frozen food in a freezer at 0° F or lower.)
- Be sure thermometers are available and use them properly.
- Cook meats such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish to proper internal temperatures. Use a meat thermometer when roasting meats. Juices should run clear and meat should not be pink.
- Do not partially cook food one day, and complete cooking the next day.
- Set conventional oven temperatures for a minimum of 325° F.
- Prepare sandwiches and salads with a minimum of handling.
- Promptly refrigerate leftovers. Divide large quantities into smaller containers or use shallow pans, for quick cooling.
- Reheat leftovers to at least 165° F.
- Maintain proper holding temperatures, 140° F or above.
- Thaw poultry and meat in a refrigerator. Use thawed roasts, steaks, and chops within three to five days. Use thawed ground beef or poultry within one or two days. Use hot dogs, ham slices, and luncheon meats within three to five days. Refreeze only if ice crystals are still present.
- Remember USDA's Two-Hour Rule: **Never leave food out at room temperature for than two hours.**
- Foods can be placed in the refrigerator hot. Do not leave at room temperature "to cool"; this practice invites bacteria and is unsafe.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, **NOT** at room temperature.
- Remember that you cannot determine food safety by sight, taste, odor, or smell. **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**
- Follow instructions exactly on how to use and clean kitchen equipment.



## Serving Size and Yield for Vegetables

Vegetable	Size and Count	Serving Size* and Yield
Carrot Sticks	Specify U.S. carrots with 1 1/8 inch medium diameter, about 7 1/2 inches in length, 6 per pound, 50 pound mesh bag.	1 stick is 4 inches long x 1/2 inch wide. 6 sticks = 1/4 cup
Cauliflower	Specify in cartons of 18-24 pounds or wirebound crates of 45-50 pounds	1 medium head = about 5 cups florets
Celery Sticks	Specify 2, 2 1/2, or 3 dozen per crate. Crates weigh 60-70 pounds net.	1 stick is 3 inches long and 3/4 inch wide. 4 sticks = 1/4 cup
Cucumbers	Specify 2-inch minimum diameter. This information will be stamped on the basket. Cucumbers will vary from 2 to 2 1/2 inches in diameter and are about 7 1/2 inches long.	
slices	1/8 inch thick slices	4 slices = 1/4 cup
sticks	cut in thirds crosswise and then each third into fourths lengthwise for sticks	1 cucumber = 12 sticks 2 sticks = 1/4 cup
Lettuce, head (Iceberg)	Specify 2 dozen heads, weight of 40-48 pounds	1 piece = 1/4 cup
leaf	Specify 2 dozen heads, weight 18 pounds	1 large leaf = 1/4 cup
Olives, ripe	Large	8 olives = 1/4 cup
Pickles, dill	Specify large size 4 to 4 3/4 inches long, 22 to 39 count per gallon	1/2 pickle = 1/4 cup
sweet	Specify small size, 2 3/4, to 3 1/2 inches long, 52 to 99 count per gallon	1 pickle = 1/4 cup
Radishes	Specify U.S. #1, 1/2 inch diameter minimum, without tops, small size 45 radishes per pound.	7 radishes = 1/4 cup
Tomato, wedge	Specify 5 x 6 size, extra large, 30 pound net per container. Tomato is 2 1/8 inches x 3 inches in diameter; 2 1/4 tomatoes per pound.	1/4 tomato = 1/4 cup
slices	Specify 6 x 7 size, slices 1/4 inch.	2 slices = about 1/4 cup
cherry	Specify standard size, reasonably uniform in size. Volume give in cups.	4 tomatoes = about 1/4 cup

\* Any serving size may be planned. For simplicity this table, and table on the next page, of serving sizes and yields for vegetables and fruits provides 1/4 cup servings of vegetables and 1/2 cup and/or 3/4 cup of fruits.



# Serving Size and Yield for Fruits

Fruit	Size and Count	Serving Size and Yield
Apple	Specify size 138 - 150 or larger. Approximately 2 1/2 inches in diameter about 4 -5 apples per pound	1 apple = about 1/2 cup
Bananas	Purchase by fingers; Institutional pack; 150 per case; 3 -4 bananas per pound	1 banana = 1/2 cup
Blueberries	Specify U.S. #1. Sold in pints, fresh.	1 pint = approximately 11 - 1/4 cups
Strawberries	Specify U.S. #1. Minimum diameter 3/4 inch; sold in quarts & pints.	1 pint = approximately 8 - 1/4 cups
Cantaloupe	Specify size 36. Medium size, 5 1/2 inches diameter, approximately 1 2/3 pounds per melon.	1/4 melon = 1/2 cup
Grapes		
with seeds		12 grapes = about 1/2 cup
seedless		18 grapes = about 1/2 cups
Nectarines	Specify size 96 (2 to 2 1/8 inches in diameter); approximately 4 per pound.	1 nectarine = about 1/2 cup
medium size	Specify size 70 and 72; approximately 3 per pound.	1 nectarine = about 1/2 cup
Oranges	Specify size 138 or 113 (California or Arizona) or size 125 (Florida or Texas)	1 orange = about 3/4 cup
Peaches	Specify size 84 (2 1/8 inches in diameter - box may state 2 to 2 1/4 inches diameter); approximately 3 1/2 to 4 peaches per pound.	1 peach = about 1/2 cup
medium size	Specify size 60 to 64 (2 1/2 inches in diameter or larger); approximately 3 per pound	1 peach = about 3/4 cup
Pears	Specify size 150 (2 1/4 to 2 3/8)	1 pear = about 1/2 cup
medium size	Specify size 120; approximately 3 per pound.	1 pear = about 3/4 cup
Plums	Specify size 4 x 5. About 8 to 10 plums per pound.	2 plums = about 1/2 cup
medium size	Specify size 4 x 4. 6 to 7 plums per pound.	2 plums = about 3/4 cup
Raisins	Specify bulk purchase or individual packages; 1 1/2 ounces each.	Yield of Bulk 2 2/3 ounces = about 1/2 cups Yield of Individual Packages 1 package (1 1/2 ounce) = about 1/2 cup
Tangerine	Specify size 176. Fruit will average 2 3/8 inches in diameter; 4 tangerines per pound.	1 tangerine = about 1/2 cup.
Watermelon	Specify average size. Melons will average about 27 pounds.	Yield in melon 1/64 wedge = about 1/2 cup.

**Note:** Where sizes are specified for fruits, they indicate number of fruit in box. The larger the number, the smaller the fruit. Any fruit that is larger than that specified may be used.

