

Meal Service Requirements



It is important for the success of the SFSP to serve nutritious meals that meet meal pattern requirements and that are appetizing to children. Careful menu planning is necessary to meet this goal.

SFSP Meal Pattern

The meal pattern requirements assure well-balanced meals and snacks that supply the kinds and amounts of foods that children require to help meet their nutrient and energy needs. The meal patterns establish the minimum portions of the various food components that must be served to each child for the participating sponsor to receive reimbursement for each meal. The meal pattern chart and other meal service resources can be found on the [SFSP Materials & Resources](#) webpage, under the *Meal Service Requirements* section and in [USDA's Nutrition Guidance manual](#).

SFSP Breakfast	SFSP Lunch/Supper	Snack
<p>Only three food components are required for a reimbursable meal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one serving of grain/bread• ½ cup serving fruit/vegetable• one 8 fl. oz serving of milk <p>If implementing Offer Verses Serve (OVS), add a 4th different item from the grain, fruit/veg, or meat/meat alternate components.</p>	<p>Four food components are required for a reimbursable meal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2-ounce serving of meat/meat alternate• one serving of grain/bread• two different sources of fruit/vegetable totaling ¾ cup• one 8 fl. oz serving of milk	<p>Two of the four food components are required for a reimbursable snack.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-ounce serving of meat/meat alternate• one serving of grain/bread• one ¾ cup serving of fruit/vegetable• one 8 fl. oz serving of milk

School food authorities may choose to use the meal patterns followed during the regular school year OR use the SFSP meal pattern. Alternately, sponsors wishing to serve smaller portion sizes for children under age 6, or if serving infants, may choose to use the CACFP meal pattern, with State agency approval.

Meal Service Requirements

In addition to serving meals that meet meal pattern requirements, sponsors must comply with the following rules when serving meals at each site:

- ✓ Serve the same meal to all children
- ✓ Ensure meals are eaten on site
- ✓ Follow local health and sanitation regulations
- ✓ Ensure all children receive a meal before any second meals are served, and before any adult meals are served.
- ✓ If served outdoors, plan for inclement weather
- ✓ Serve meals during approved mealtimes
- ✓ Meals claimed as breakfast must be served at or close to the beginning of the day and cannot be served after a lunch or supper
- ✓ For all sites (except residential camps) a minimum of one hour must elapse between the end of one meal service and the beginning of another.

When meals are not served during the approved meal service time, for a reason outside of the sponsor's control, such as a delayed meal delivery, inclement weather that delays the start of the meal service, delayed public transportation utilized by the participants, or incidents as deem appropriate by the State Agency, the sponsor may request approval to claim for these meals using the [Alternate Meal Service Time Request](#) form.

Number & Type of Meals

Sponsors of open, restricted open, and enrolled sites may serve up to two meal services per day (including snacks) in any combination other than lunch and supper, at each site location.

Camp or migrant site sponsors may serve up to three meals (including snacks) each day.

Field Trips

Sponsors must provide advance notification to the DPI of all field trips that affect the location and time of meal service. Use the online [Field Trip Notification Form](#) to report up to 10 field trips at a time. All meals taken on field trips must meet meal pattern requirements in order to be claimed for reimbursement. Additional documentation such as, production information to document that the meal pattern requirements have been met and a meal count form completed at the point of service during the field trip, are also required in order to claim meals for reimbursement. State and local health, safety, and sanitation standards must be followed. If meals served on the field trip will be served at a different time than the regular site, be sure to report the anticipated meal service time on the Field Trip Notification form. Sponsors of open sites are required to continue to operate at the approved site location during the field trip. If not possible due to lack of staffing, etc., the sponsor must notify the community of the change in meal service and provide information about alternative open sites.

Off-site Consumption of Food Items

Sponsors may allow a child to take one fruit, vegetable or grain item off-site for later consumption without prior State agency approval provided that all applicable State and local health, safety, and sanitation standards will be met, and the site has adequate staffing to properly administer and monitor the site. The fruit, vegetable or grain item taken off-site must be from the child's own meal or from a "share table".

Meal Service Options

Offer versus serve (OVS) is a concept that applies to menu planning and meal service which allows children to decline some of the food items offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack. The goals of OVS are to simplify Program administration and reduce food waste and costs while maintaining the nutritional integrity of the SFSP meals served. OVS use is limited to only sites administered by School Food Authorities (SFA). SFA sponsors electing to use the SFSP meal pattern must follow the SFSP OVS guidelines. Take a look at the [SFSP Offer Versus Serve handout](#) to review all the specific requirements of OVS.

Local Foods - Serving local foods can improve meal quality and appeal, encourage kids and teens to develop healthy eating habits, and educate them about where their food comes from. Summer is a great time to incorporate the bountiful harvest of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other local foods. Local foods span the entire meal, from fruits and vegetables to dairy, grains, meat, eggs, and beans. For more information about serving and procuring local foods visit the DPI [Farm to Summer website](#).

Family Style Meals - When serving meals family style, all the food items needed to meet the SFSP meal pattern requirements are placed in serving plates or bowls on a table for children to serve themselves. Serving family style can help children develop good eating habits through the personal example provided by supervising adults. Family style meal service is a good option for camps and closed enrolled summer meal sites. However, this option is not allowed at open and open restricted SFSP sites. Refer to the USDA [Family Style Meals](#) handout for specific requirements to ensure sponsor compliance when serving meals family style.

Dietary Substitutions and Exceptions - A child whose special dietary need restricts his/her diet shall be provided food substitutions only when supported by a statement signed by a licensed healthcare official. The medical statement must identify the individual's dietary needs & how it restricts the child's diet, the foods to be omitted, and the foods that can be substituted. A medical statement can many times be avoided by offering choices of food items. For additional special dietary needs guidance and resources, including a sample Medical Statement and fluid milk substitution information, refer to the School Nutrition, [Special Dietary Needs webpage](#).