

2019 CACFP Meal Service Training Q&A

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Special Dietary Needs (SDN)

Q: Are there any differences in SDN procedures for Head Start facilities? Example: do we need to provide almond milk even if it is not reimbursable?

All facilities participating in the CACFP, including Head Start facilities must follow the same SDN procedures. If almond milk is required to accommodate a disability documented with a valid medical statement, then yes, the facility must provide the almond milk. If almond milk is requested for a non-disability reason, then no, the facility is not required to provide the substitution.

Almond milk is not creditable to the CACFP meal pattern. Meals/snacks containing a non-creditable non-dairy beverage, supplied by either the program or family, may only be claimed when all of the following conditions are met:

- The participant's special dietary need is the result of a disability;
- There is a valid medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional on file;
- The Special Dietary Needs Tracking Form is completed by the program and on file; and
- All other required meal components served to the participant are supplied by the program.

If the participant has a non-disability SDN, only creditable non-dairy beverages may be served in order for the meal to be reimbursable. This excludes almond milk.

Q: A child has lactose intolerance and the doctor's note says to provide lactose-free milk and we offer Lactaid. The parent wants soymilk instead; do we need to provide soy milk?

A: If the medical statement indicates that lactose-free milk should be served, the provider is only required to offer lactose-free milk to the child. If the parent insists on soymilk, the parents may choose to decline the accommodation and make the accommodation on their own. In this case, the parent should provide a written statement requesting that soymilk be served instead of the lactose-free milk. In this case, the center is not required to provide the soymilk because the center is following the medical statement by offering to provide lactose-free milk. If the family were to obtain an updated medical statement that

indicates soymilk should be served to accommodate the lactose intolerance, then the center is required to provide soymilk.

With that said when accommodating disabilities Programs are not required to provide the exact substitution or modification requested, however, must work with the family to determine a reasonable modification that effectively accommodates the disability. For example, a family may request a particular brand name substitute. While a program is not required to provide the brand name item identified, it must offer a substitute that does not contain the specific allergen that affects the participant. Once a reasonable modification has been offered, families may choose to accept it and then the program must supply the item, or decline the item and choose to provide a different substitution (ex. a specific brand). In addition, families may choose to provide more than one food component if the disability requires such modifications.

Q: Do we need to fill out an SDN form if we do not serve the item in question?

A: No, if you do not serve the item (ex: pork), no substitutions need to be made so you do not need to fill out an SDN form.

Q: Can you provide meal components if a parent tells you their child has an SDN (an allergy or intolerance) but has not provided a signed medical statement?

A: When a valid medical statement for a disability is not provided to support meal substitution requests, programs are not required but may choose to accommodate meal substitutions. When accommodating non-disability SDNs, modifications must meet CACFP meal pattern requirements (i.e. all required components are served and substituted food(s) and/or beverage(s) are creditable). Families may choose to provide one creditable component towards a reimbursable meal. It is the responsibility of the program to ensure that food substituted meets meal pattern requirements.

Q: If a child has a gluten allergy and does have a doctor's note, do we have to provide the substitute or does the family?

A: Yes, programs must accommodate participants with disabilities with an appropriate modification; this includes offering appropriate meal substitutions. Programs may never require the family to provide the accommodation. Accommodations do not have to meet meal pattern requirements. The modification must be related to the disability or limitation caused by the disability. The medical statement from a state licensed healthcare professional identifying how to accommodate the disability and/or recommended substitution(s) must be followed. Programs are not required to provide the exact substitution or modification requested, however, must work with the family to determine a reasonable modification that effectively accommodates the disability.

Q: Families can provide one component for non-disability. Does that include Ensure (chocolate)?

A: No, Ensure is not creditable and flavored beverages are not creditable.

Q: When a family is vegetarian and they do not drink cow's milk or eat meat, do we need a tracking form for every meal because it will be different?

A: No, the tracking form indicates the reason for substitutions is vegetarianism. It should include milk substitute served and list of meat alternate substitutions served. All meal substitutions must be creditable to the CACFP to claim meals. If a non-creditable food is served, meals are not reimbursable and cannot be claimed.

Q: Do doctor's notes for disabilities need to be obtained yearly? Or can they transfer year to year?

A: Doctors notes do not expire; they can be transferred year to year.

Q: When families provide one creditable component is it for one meal per day or one component per meal?

A: Families may provide up to one creditable component of each meal for a non-disability.

When a disability requires modifications to more than one meal component and the family chooses to provide these modifications, the program must provide at least one component of the meal/snack. Meals do not have to meet meal pattern requirements.

Q: Do you need separate SDN tracking forms for one child with multiple allergies?

No, multiple forms are not needed as long as all allergies and substitutions are listed on one SDN Tracking form.

Q: If a facility is nut-free, are they required to provide substitutes such as almond milk?

A: If a program is faced with an issue where they are required to make an accommodation for a disability that includes a specific allergen and they have chosen to go "free" of that allergen, they cannot simply deny the accommodation based on that reason alone. If they are able to work with the family to find an alternative based on medical guidance, then they can make a different substitution. Otherwise, they are required to follow the medical statement. These scenarios should be considered when developing policies regarding allergens. All issues should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Any discussion from either the food program or child care licensing regarding creating a form for centers to utilize to send to physicians?

A: The CACFP is in the process of creating a form that may be completed by the licensed healthcare professional. We will notify all participating agencies when this is complete.

Food Buying Guide Calculator/Production Records

Q: I work for a shelter for men/women/children (Emergency Shelter), am I required to complete a production record?

A: No, Emergency Shelters do not need to complete production records. However, Emergency Shelters must meet the minimum portions for all meals/snacks claimed for reimbursement. The production record can be used as a tool to ensure enough food is being prepared and served.

Q: Meals are served in separate classrooms. Do I need to break down minimum servings for each class or as long as food is available can I approximate to individual classrooms?

A: Production records are a tool to ensure enough food is prepared for the meals and snacks claimed for reimbursement. When dividing out food for each classroom it needs to be based off the ages and number of participants in that specific room. It cannot be an approximate amount because the minimum amounts based off the CACFP Meal Pattern must be available to the participants in each classroom to be able to claim the meal for reimbursement, regardless if you are serving pre-plated or family style.

Q: What is the min. number of weeks in a rotating (cycle) menu? Is four weeks enough?

A: There is no minimum number of weeks for a rotating (cycle) menu in CACFP. Four weeks is adequate as the goal is to provide a variety of foods from each meal component.

Q: There were two options in the FBG app for grapes (seedless with stems). One person chose the first option which was halved, the other chose the second which was whole. The amounts specified for purchase were 4.75 and 5.25. Why is there a difference?

A: The difference is because you can fit more halved grapes into a cup versus whole grapes into a cup, therefore you will need more halved grapes.

Fresh grapes (seedless with stems), whole grapes will yield about 2 5/8 cups of ready to serve grapes per pound. Fresh grapes (seedless with steps), cut in half will yield about 2 ¼ cups of ready to serve grape halves. This information is found in the Food Buying Guide Yield Tables. Refer to the Food Buying Guide webpage: <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Appendix/DownloadFBG>

Q: If not all milk, veggies, fruit, etc. are used can they be used the next day for a meal or snack?

A: Foods that leave the kitchen must be thrown out, except for milk in the original container. If the food does not leave the kitchen, it can be saved for another use, following food safety requirements. The Department of Children and Families has time limits on when food needs to be used.

Q: Lettuce credits as ½ (1 cup = ½ cup creditable) so do we double the amount the FBG gives us?

A: No, you do not double the amount. The FBG calculator takes into account how raw, leafy greens credit in Child Nutrition Programs. For example, lettuce in the FBG calculator states ¼-cup raw vegetable pieces credits as 1/8 cup in the CACFP.

Q: Can we list “fruit” and fill in specifics each week, rather than crossing out?

A: Menus for the CACFP must identify the specific fruit. If the fruit you planned on the menu changes, simply cross it off and write in the actual fruit served. Make sure this change is reflected on the production record too.

Q: How do we measure fresh fruits and vegetables in the FBG, like apples, oranges, pineapple, etc.?

A: Fresh fruits and vegetables are purchased by the pound, but the meal pattern has fruit and vegetable portions in cups. Using the FBG calculator and Amounts Required from the production record, you can determine how many pounds you will need to purchase and prepare. When serving the fresh fruit and vegetables, you would use the appropriate scoop size or measuring cup to ensure the minimum portion on the CACFP Meal Pattern is being provided.

Q: Why is the amounts required field not needed (in FBG)?

A: The Amounts Required on the production record is the minimum amount needed in the edible form for each component at a meal or snack based off the CACFP Meal Pattern. The Amounts Required is determined using the Meal Requirements Calculator worksheet. The Amounts Required is needed to determine the Amounts Prepared, which is determined using the FBG calculator.

Identifying Foods as Whole Grain Rich (WGR)

Q: If the WIC whole grain list changes, how are facilities notified if they are using the list to identify WGR foods?

A: When DPI is notified of the WIC changes, we will provide updated WIC information to all participating CACFP agencies.

Q: How many grains do I have to serve per day?

A: Grains are a required component at breakfast, lunch, and supper. They may be substituted a maximum of three times per week at breakfast with a meat/meat alternate. Grains are optional at snacks. At least one WGR item must be served per day. You may choose which meal/snack the WGR item is served.

Q: Is whole grain white bread creditable?

A: Yes, whole grain white bread is creditable as a grain, but not as WGR.

Q: How do I better serve whole grains? I was told I could no longer serve whole wheat pasta or brown rice more than once per week.

A: A variety of whole grains should be served. This can include crackers, cereal, bread, pasta, tortillas, rice, bagels, etc. Serving a variety of foods and how often you may serve certain items is a licensing requirement. You should check with your DCF Licensing Specialist regarding the variety of your menus.

Q: Are bagels considered a bun?

A: No, bagels are not considered to be bread, buns or rolls.