

CACFP Tuesday Talks: Menu Planning Questions and Answers

Resources mentioned in the Tuesday Talks Menu Planning webinar can be found in this handout: [Menu Planning Resources](#). If you have questions, contact your [assigned consultant](#). If you are a family day care home provider, contact your home sponsor.

1. Is tofu creditable for children 2 and under?

Tofu is creditable for participants age one year and older. It is not creditable for infants. Tofu served must be commercially prepared firm, extra firm, soft, or silken. Here is a resource with some tofu recipes: [Tofu Recipes](#)

The following is information on how to credit tofu:

2.2 oz. (1/4 cup) of tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein = 1.0 oz. meat alternate

Use the Nutrition Facts Label and the calculation below to determine if tofu is creditable:

Protein (g) ÷ Serving Size (oz.) or (g) = Threshold for ounces: 2.27 or more

Threshold for grams: .08 or more

Tofu products such as links and sausages can only credit when the product has a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) from the manufacturer to document how the item meets CACFP requirements. Tofu is NOT creditable when incorporated into drinks, such as smoothies, or other dishes to add texture, such as in baked desserts.

2. Can you give examples of approved frozen fish?

Creditable frozen fish includes fish fillets or steaks such as cod, tilapia, salmon, haddock, walleye, perch, tuna, mahi mahi, and mackerel. Programs can also serve shellfish such as shrimp and crab. Frozen fish that is commercially prepared with breading or other coatings (i.e., fish sticks or fish patties), requires additional documentation to show how the item credits to the CACFP, such as a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS). If the program is unsure if a food item is creditable or may require further documentation, contact your assigned consultant.

3. Where can I find more information on menu organization?

Menus must be maintained for all meals and snacks served to participants 1 year and older. They must be dated, and all food items served to meet the meal pattern must be documented. Meal substitutions must be recorded on the menu kept on file. While the DPI does not have specific requirements as to how to organize menus, the following ideas were presented in the webinar:

- Have a file for 'Menus' where a copy of each month's menu is filed after the end of the month. This can be maintained by Fiscal Year.
- Have a file for each month that includes copies of that month's claim support documentation: menu, production records, meal count forms, infant meal forms, etc.

4. What is consider support documentation?

Support documentation includes menus, production records, CN labels/PFS, food receipts/invoices, meal count records, attendance records, etc. Keep these records on file to support the CACFP reimbursement received.

5. Can I repeat the same menus for lunch and dinner? Or at dinner one day and lunch the next day?

There are no CACFP requirements regarding how frequently foods and meals can be repeated; however, it is recommended to provide a variety of foods and meals. This is especially important when participants are present at both lunch and supper. Try and serve different foods at these meals so they are not eating the same meal twice in the same day or at supper one day and lunch the next. If different participants are present during those meals, then it would be okay to serve the same meal at lunch and supper.

It is also good practice to serve different forms of the same foods. For example, when serving apples, try not to serve apple slices more than once/week. However, you can serve applesauce and baked apples. If your program is licensed, DCF has their own requirements for how often meals and foods can be repeated. Licensing regulations state that a daily menu may not be repeated within a one-week time period, however, you should contact your licensor for clarification.

6. Sounds like a good idea to keep the weeks' recipes with the menus in a binder each week, correct?

Yes, this is a great idea. By having the menu and recipes together, the food preparer has all the information they need in one location. To take this one step further, programs could include copies of required labels for whole grain rich foods, cereal, yogurt, and tofu served with the menu and recipes each week. This will also be very helpful for your DPI reviewer when they are conducting the CACFP review.

7. What are dry beans and peas?

Dry beans and peas are mature forms of legumes, which are plants that have pods with rows of seeds inside. Some popular varieties include pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, lentils, split peas, and garbanzo beans (chickpeas). Some beans and peas, such as green beans, string beans, green peas, snap peas, and baby green lima beans, are not considered dry beans or peas.

8. Can I serve water at snack?

Yes! In fact, we recommend programs serve water at snack along with two other food components. Water is not a creditable food item, so it does not count towards a component; however, by serving water and then two creditable food components, you are providing participants with enough food to tide them over until their next meal.

In addition, a CACFP requirement is that water is made available and offered to participants throughout the day. Younger children must be asked frequently, throughout the day, if they want water. Water can be made available in a variety of ways: cups next to a sink, assigned water bottles, pitchers of water with cups set out, and scheduled water breaks, etc.

9. What are meals that I can serve that include nuts and seeds?

Nuts and seeds can be served at snack in a trail mix. At a lunch or supper, some meal ideas include nuts and seeds served as part of a stir-fry or on top of a salad. They could also be served alone. However, at lunch and supper, nuts and seeds may be used to meet no more than half the meat/meat alternate serving size. Another meat or meat alternate must be served to meet the full minimum serving size, such a cheese stick, yogurt or hard-boiled egg.