

# USDA INFANT AND PRESCHOOL MEAL PATTERN IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS



## Fruit and Vegetable Components

This handout provides information about the fruit and vegetable requirements under the Infant and Preschool meal pattern. These requirements are for School Food Authorities (SFAs) serving children aged 1-5 years old and not yet in kindergarten (5K). A separate handout on the new infant meal pattern requirements is available.

### Fruit and Vegetable Components

#### What is allowed at lunch?

| <u>Allowed</u> | <u>Allowed</u> | <u>Not Allowed</u> | <u>Not Allowed</u> |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Chicken        | Chicken        | Chicken            | Chicken            |
| Carrots        | Carrots        | Carrots            | Kiwi               |
| Broccoli       | Apples         | Carrots            | Apples             |
| WG Bun         | WG Bun         | WG Bun             | WG Bun             |
| 1% Milk        | 1% Milk        | 1% Milk            | 1% Milk            |

#### Breakfast:

- Fruits and vegetables are **combined** as one meal component.
- Any type of vegetable may be served.

#### Lunch:

- Fruits and vegetables are **separate** meal components.
- A fruit and a vegetable, OR two different vegetables must be served.
- Two fruits cannot be served.

#### Afterschool Snack:

- Fruits and vegetables are **separate** meal components.

- When two vegetables are served at lunch, the serving size of the second vegetable must be at least the same serving size as the fruit component it is replacing.
- A variety of fruits and vegetables may be offered to students. Reimbursable meals must contain at least the minimum amount of a fruit and vegetable or two different vegetables.
- There are no vegetable subgroup requirements for this meal pattern, but serving a variety of vegetables is encouraged!

### Fruit and Vegetable Serving Size Requirements

|  | 1-2 years | 3-5 years |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Breakfast: Fruit and/or vegetable</b> | ¼ cup     | ½ cup     |
| <b>Lunch: Vegetable</b>                  | ⅛ cup     | ¼ cup     |
| <b>Lunch: Fruit</b>                      | ⅛ cup     | ¼ cup     |

#### Vegetable and Fruit Crediting Reminder:

- 1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable
- ¼ cup dried or dehydrated fruit (100%) = ½ cup fruit

These quantities are the *minimum* required fruit and vegetable serving sizes that must be served at breakfast and lunch.



Reminder: Offer versus Serve is not allowed for students not yet in kindergarten (5K), unless students are comingled.

## Mixed Fruits and Vegetables

Mixtures of vegetables and fruits, such as a carrot-raisin salad, may credit towards both the vegetable component and the fruit component if they contain at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup vegetable and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup fruit per serving. For example, a carrot-raisin salad served to 4 year olds that contains  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup carrots and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup raisins (crediting as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fruit) meets the full vegetable component and the full fruit component.

## Juice

Full-strength juice may count toward the vegetable or fruit component no more than once per day, per student.

Schools that offer half-day sessions and serve different groups of students may choose to:

1. Treat each session as a separate program and offer juice once per day to students in each session.
2. Apply the meal pattern requirements across both half-day sessions and only offer juice once per day.

## Recordkeeping Requirements

Records must document that students following the Infant and Preschool meal pattern are being served meals that meet the meal pattern requirements. Visit the School Nutrition Team [Menu Planning](#) webpage for more information on product documentation, production record requirements, and downloadable production record templates.

### Q&A:

**Q:** How do mixed vegetables (e.g., peas and carrots) credit at lunch?

**A:** Combination and mixed vegetables credit as one vegetable. Therefore, if a mixed vegetable is served at lunch, the mixed vegetable counts as one vegetable, and another fruit or vegetable will need to be served.

Example: (1) peas and carrots, (2) broccoli.  
Double the amount of the mixed vegetable item cannot be served.



The Infant and Preschool meal pattern allows you to serve more fruits and vegetables. Use these great resources to help your youngest students develop a taste for healthy foods!

- The Smarter Lunchroom Strategies to [Focus on Fruit](#) and [Vary the Vegetables](#)
- USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- USDA's Tools For Schools: [Offering Fruits and Vegetables](#)
- [Wisconsin Team Nutrition](#)
- [Farm to School](#) and [Farm to Early Care and Education](#)



For more information, visit the [Infants and Preschool in NSLP and SBP](#) webpage.