

# Child Nutrition Program

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PROVIDING HEALTHY MEALS  
AND SNACKS FOR CHILDREN  
IN YOUR CARE



# How it works

- Providers are reimbursed for serving nutritious meals that meet USDA guidelines to children receiving child care services. This program plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and making the cost of nutritious food more affordable for low-income families accessing child care.
- Also, information is shared with the provider to give families about the importance of healthy meals and how it impacts a child's health and development.



# Resources

- 4C offers resources in English and Spanish on topics like:
- Menu Planning
- Recipes for Meals and Snacks
- Meal Patterns
- Feeding Infants
- Activities for Children
- Special handouts on topics like accommodating children with allergies
- Making water available throughout the day
- And even charts on seasonal foods



United States Department of Agriculture

## Desarrollando un futuro más saludable con el CACFP

Cada día, más de 4 millones de niños reciben comidas y meriendas mediante el Programa de Alimentos para el Cuidado de Niños y Adultos (CACFP por sus siglas en inglés). Gracias a las recientes actualizaciones de los patrones de comidas de CACFP, ahora tiene aún más oportunidades de ayudar a los niños a obtener la nutrición que necesitan para **aprender, crecer y jugar**.



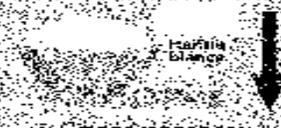
**El agua debe ser el líquido principal de los niños.** El agua debe ser el líquido principal de los niños.



**Los patrones de comidas de CACFP ahora incluyen más opciones de frutas y verduras.** Los patrones de comidas de CACFP ahora incluyen más opciones de frutas y verduras.

### Comidas y meriendas saludables para niños

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### Hablando de bebés: Actualizaciones de los patrones de comida infantil

Los patrones actualizados de alimentación infantil apoyan la salud de los participantes más jóvenes del CACFP mediante:

- El reembolso de los costos cuando las madres lactan en el sitio.
- Una mayor variedad de alimentos que el bebé puede probar durante su primer año de vida.

Los patrones de alimentación infantil actualizados se aplican a partir del 1 de octubre de 2017. Para más información, consulte el sitio web de los patrones de alimentación infantil.

Para saber más:  
<https://nsls.fns.usda.gov/guidelines/2015>  
[https://nsls.fns.usda.gov/fact-sheets/factsheet-2007-10/table\\_s06.html](https://nsls.fns.usda.gov/fact-sheets/factsheet-2007-10/table_s06.html)  
[https://nsls.fns.usda.gov/fact-sheets/factsheet-2007-10/table\\_s45.html](https://nsls.fns.usda.gov/fact-sheets/factsheet-2007-10/table_s45.html)



Food and Nutrition Services  
FNS-691-6  
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov>  
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# Sample Infant Menu



Here is a sample menu for infants, 6 months to 11 months old, to help you plan your calendar with creditable recipes that meet the Meal Pattern guidelines.

	6 MONTHS Mothers		MONDAY Day 1		TUESDAY Day 2		WEDNESDAY Day 3		THURSDAY Day 4		FRIDAY Day 5	
BREAKFAST	4-6 oz.	6-8 oz.	Milk	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula
	—	0-2 lbs.	Fruit/Vegetable	Washed Banana	Mashed or Sliced Avocado	Applesauce	Purée of Mangoes	Purée of Peaches				
	—	0-4 oz.	Grain/Meat	Infants Rice Cereal	Strawberry Eggs	Infants Rice Cereal	Plain Yogurt					
LUNCH	4-6 oz.	6-8 oz.	Milk	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula
	—	0-2 lbs.	Fruit/Vegetable	Washed Carrot	Washed Green Beans	Mashed Carrots	Purée of Peas	Mashed Peas				
	—	0-4 oz.	Grain/Meat	Early Chopped Turkey	Infants Rice Cereal	Early Chopped Turkey	Infants Rice Cereal	Cheddar Cheese				
SNACK	4-6 oz.	2-4 oz.	Milk	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula	Breastmilk or Formula
	—	0-2 lbs.	Fruit/Vegetable	Sweet Potato	Washed Sweet Potato	Mashed Rice						
	—	0-4 oz.	Grain/Meat	Infants Rice Cereal	Puffed Cereal	Crackers	Crackers	Crackers	Crackers	Crackers	Crackers	Teething Biscuits

All foods are subject to the individual infant and their own developmental readiness to consume that food item.

## Important

1. Breastmilk or formula, or portions of both, must be served. However, it is recommended that breastmilk be weaned in favor of formula from birth through 12 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breastmilk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breastmilk may be offered, with additional breastmilk offered at a later time if the infant will continue to eat.
2. Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.
3. ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.
4. A serving of grains must be whole grains such, enriched cereal, or enriched flour.
5. Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 31.2 grams of rice and other grains per 100 grams of dry cereal).
6. Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.



Visit [www.cacfp.org](http://www.cacfp.org) for more information. CACFP is an initiative of United Way, and this program is a service of United Way.



# Crediting Store-Bought Combination Baby Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program



Combination baby foods are foods that include a mixture of two or more foods, such as meat and vegetables. Under certain circumstances, these foods may be counted toward a reimbursable infant meal or snack in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Before serving a store-bought combination baby food, check with your State agency or sponsoring organization. It may require you to have the baby food packaging, a Product Formulation Statement, or other form of documentation to show how the food credits toward the CACFP infant meal pattern.

## How Much of the Combination Baby Food Needs to be Offered?

In the CACFP infant meal pattern\*, amounts of food served at meals and snacks are shown as ranges, such as 0 to 2 tablespoons. This range lets you introduce new foods slowly when the infant is developmentally ready. Once a baby is regularly eating a food, offer the infant the full amount of the food (the uppermost range).

Combination baby foods should be offered only after the infant has been introduced to the individual ingredients in the combination food. For example, before an infant is given a chicken-and-vegetable combination baby food, the infant should have already been introduced to both chicken and the vegetable individually as single-component foods. More information on the introduction of foods is available at [fns.usda.gov/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program](https://www.fns.usda.gov/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program).

Since infants eating combination baby foods have already shown that they are developmentally ready and accepting of each food in the combination baby food, you must ensure that the combination baby food package provides the full, required amount of the food component. If it does not, you must offer more food from that component to meet the full amount of the food. Remember, this amount must be offered to the infant, but the infant does not have to eat all of it.

\*For information on the CACFP infant meal pattern, please see the "Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program" guide at [fns.usda.gov/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program](https://www.fns.usda.gov/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program).



## Fast Prep with Slow Cooking

TRY THESE EASY RECIPES!

Slow cookers are a relatively inexpensive investment with high yield, and can be a great way to prep food served as part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Using a slow cooker will:

- Free up the stove and the oven for other dishes.
- Tenderize meats, especially cheaper, tougher cuts.
- Allow flavor more time to develop, adding depth to the dish.
- Require only a few checks as it's cooking.

### Tips to Get Started

- Know your slow cooker is only halfway to two-thirds full to ensure that foods cook thoroughly.
- Always defrost meat and poultry before adding them to the slow cooker.
- Keep perishable foods refrigerated until it is time to add them to the slow cooker.
- Cut large pieces of meat into smaller pieces before adding into the slow cooker.

### Get the Best Results

- Season your meat or poultry before adding it to the slow cooker to add more flavor.
- Add dried herbs and spices when preparing the slow cooker, but wait until the last hour of cooking if you're using fresh herbs and spices.
- Wait to add dairy products until the final 30 minutes of cooking or before serving.
- Grease the slow cooker or use a liner to avoid long cleanup.

### Learn to Layer



- Add dairy and fresh meats at the end of the cooking process.
- Delicate ingredients that cook quickly like bell peppers, canned vegetables and onions go on top.
- Sauces, dried herbs and spices gather flavor in the middle layer.
- The bottom layer is food that takes the longest to cook, like meat, poultry and root veggies.



[cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org)  
 CACFP is an indicator of quality care.  
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### Speedy Salsa Chicken



- 1 lb chicken breast, skinned, boned and cubed
- 1 tomato
- 1/2 onion, diced

Place chicken in slow cooker and cover with salsa. Add rice, beans or other accessories to taste. Cook on low for 6 hours, then shred the chicken using two forks. Top serving with rice or steamed veggies, or over any low vegetable.

Serving size: 1 cup. Makes 11 servings.  
 Credit: Day 170, 2010.

### Overnight Oatmeal



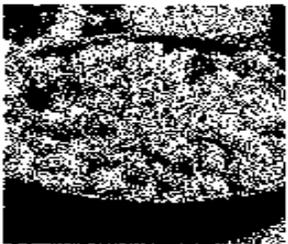
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup fruit, fresh
- 1/2 tsp nut milk

Open the inside of a slow cooker with hot water cooking spray. Cook on the oats and water. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours, overnight. Serve in the morning.

Serving size: 1/2 cup oatmeal, 1/2 cup fruit. Makes 16 servings.

Credit: Day 170, 2010  
 © 2010, 2011

### Mac and Cheese



- 1/2 lb elbow macaroni, whole wheat macaroni, cooked and drained
- 1/2 lb cheddar cheese and milk
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/2 tsp salt, pepper

Mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. Pour into a 4-qt. prepared slow cooker. Stir well, cover and cook on low for 3-4 hours, stirring occasionally.

Serving size: 1/2 cup. Makes 16 servings.  
 Credit: Day 170, 2010  
 © 2010, 2011



# Creative Snack Ideas



- Ants on a Log (M/M/A & V or F)**—Spread peanut butter on celery sticks and top with raisins.
- Baked Apples (F & M/M/A)**—Core apples, stuff with finely chopped nuts, sprinkle with cinnamon, and bake in the oven or microwave.
- Baked Sweet Potato Fries (V & M/M/A)**—Foil, slice, sprinkle with oil, pepper, and olive oil, and bake. Serve with a savory Greek yogurt dip.
- Baked Egg Muffins (M/M/A & V)**—Beat eggs and vegetables in muffin cups. Sprinkle cheese on top.
- Banana "Ice Cream" (F & G/B)**—Slice and freeze ripe bananas, blend in a smoothie, and top with granola.
- Banana Roll-Up (M/M/A, F & G/B)**—Spread nut or seed butter on a WG tortilla, add sliced bananas. Roll it up.
- Cheddar Apples (M/M/A & F)**—Served sliced low-fat cheddar cheese with different varieties of sliced apples.
- Chex Mix (G/B & M/M/A)**—Buy it at the store or make your own. Include cereal and chopped nuts or seeds.
- Chicken, Tuna, or Egg Salad (M/M/A & G/B)**—Serve on WG crackers or WG bread or toast.
- Chips and Dip (G/B & V)**—Serve WG tortilla chips with salsa or guacamole.
- Cottage Cheese & Pineapple or Peaches (M/M/A & F)**
- Crackers and Low-Fat Cheese (G/B & M/M/A)**
- Frozen Banana Pops (F & M/M/A or G/B)**—Cut half a banana on a stick, dip in yogurt, roll in cereal, freeze.
- Fruit Parfaits (F, G/B, & M/M/A)**—Layer sliced fruit or berries, granola or cereal, and yogurt.
- Fruit Salsa (F & G/B)**—Chop peaches, pineapple, or mango. Serve with toasted WG pita and cinnamon.
- Fruit and Veggies Skewers (F or V & M/M/A)**—Cut fruit or vegetables and low-fat cheeses into small pieces and slide them onto skewers or use the kids' old world string.
- Hummus Dip (M/M/A & V or G/B)**—Serve with crunchy vegetables (carrots, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, snap peas, red pepper slices, etc.) or WG pita bread.
- Kale Chips (V & G/B)**—Coat kale lightly with olive oil, salt, pepper. Bake until crispy. Serve with savory crackers.
- Melon Pops (F)**—Chop cubes of melon (such as honeydew melon, watermelon, or cantaloupe), put them into Pop-it's molds, and freeze.
- Mini Pizzas (G/B, V, & M/M/A)**—For 1/2 of a WG English muffin, add tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese.
- Mini Sandwich (M/M/A, V, & G/B)**—For lunch, meat, cheese, and vegetables on a whole roll or mini roll.
- PB&Berries (M/M/A, F, & G/B)**—Spread peanut butter or another nut or seed butter on WG bread. Add sliced strawberries or other berries.
- Pumpkin Yogurt Dip (F & M/M/A)**—Mix pumpkin puree, yogurt, and pumpkin spice. Serve with fruit.
- Seven Layer Dip (M/M/A, V, & G/B)**—Layer beans, low-fat cheese, guacamole, onions, plain Greek yogurt, salsa, and olives. Serve with WG tortilla chips.
- Smoothies (F & M/M/A)**—Blend fruit and yogurt.
- Strawberry Shortcake (G/B, F, & M/M/A)**—Top 1/2 a WG English muffin with sliced strawberries and vanilla yogurt.
- Topped Tortillas (G/B & M/M/A)**—Spread WG tortillas with a layer of cream cheese and low-fat cheese. Briefly broil them into the oven to melt the cheese.
- Tortilla Roll-Up (G/B, M/M/A, & V)**—Top a tortilla with mustard, deli meat, cheese, and vegetables. Roll it up!
- Trail Mix (F, M/M/A, & G/B)**—Combine dried fruit, nuts, and low-sugar cereals.
- Vegetable Dip (M/M/A & V)**—Mix a low-fat Greek yogurt with Ranch dressing powder or fresh herbs, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Serve with vegetables.
- White Bean Dip (M/M/A, & G/B or V)**—Serve the dip with WG tortilla chips or vegetables.
- WG Bread Sticks and Marinara Sauce (G/B & F)**
- WG Pancakes or Waffles (G/B & F or M/M/A)**—Top with sliced fruit or yogurt.
- WG Quick Bread or Muffins (G/B & F or M/M/A)**—Try flavors such as blueberry lemon, cranberry orange, pumpkin, or zucchini bread. Serve with fruit or yogurt.

ABBREVIATION KEY	
F	= Fruit
G/B	= Grain/Bread
M/M/A	= Meat/Milk Alternatives
V	= Vegetable
WG	= Whole Grain

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# Meal Pattern Chart for Children



## Breakfast

All Three Components Required	Servings	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12
Milk: 2oz eq. of 1% or 2% or Skim Milk	1	2 cup	2 cup	2 cup
Vegetable/Fruit/100% Juice	1	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Grains: 1oz eq. of 100% Whole Grain	1	1 oz. eq.	1 oz. eq.	1 oz. eq.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole-Grain Rich or Enriched Bread</li> <li>• Whole-Grain Rich, Enriched or Fortified Cooked Breakfast Cereal; Cereal Grain</li> <li>• Whole-Grain Rich, Enriched or Fortified Cold Cereal</li> <li>• Pasta</li> </ul>		½ oz. eq.	½ oz. eq.	1 oz.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean Meat, Fish, Poultry</li> <li>• Chickens</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Cooked Dry Beans/Peas</li> <li>• Peanut Butter/Other Nut and Seed Butters</li> <li>• Nuts/Seeds</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> <li>• Tofu, Soy Product or Alternate Protein Product</li> </ul>		1 oz.	1 oz.	1 oz.

\* Meat/Meat Alternatives may be served in place of the entire breakfast grains component a minimum of 1 time per week

## Snack

Two of Five Components Required	Servings	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12
Vegetable/ 100% Juice	1	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Milk: 2oz eq. of 1% or 2% or Skim Milk	1	2 cup	2 cup	2 cup
Grains	1	1 oz. eq.	1 oz. eq.	1 oz. eq.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole-Grain Rich or Enriched Bread</li> <li>• Whole-Grain Rich, Enriched or Fortified Cooked Breakfast Cereal; Cereal Grain</li> <li>• Whole-Grain Rich, Enriched or Fortified Cold Cereal</li> <li>• Pasta</li> </ul>		½ oz. eq.	½ oz. eq.	1 oz.
Meat/Meat Alternative		1 oz.	1 oz.	1 oz.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean Meat, Fish, Poultry</li> <li>• Chickens</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Cooked Dry Beans/Peas</li> <li>• Peanut Butter/Other Nut and Seed Butters</li> <li>• Nuts/Seeds</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> <li>• Tofu, Soy Product or Alternate Protein Product</li> </ul>		1 oz.	1 oz.	1 oz.
Milk Best practice - serve water at snack	1	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup

Note: oz eq - ounce equivalent

# Meal Pattern Chart for Children



Lunch or Supper

All Five Components Required	Servings	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12
Milk: <i>Whole for Age 1, 1% or Skim Ages 2 and older</i>	1	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Vegetable/ 100% Juice	1	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Fruit or 100% Juice	1	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Grains	1			
• Whole Grain Rich or Enriched Bread		½ oz. eq.	¾ oz. eq.	1 oz.
• Whole-Grain Rich, Enriched or Fortified Cooked Breakfast Cereal; Cereal Grain		¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
• Whole Grain Rich, Enriched or Fortified Cold Cereal		¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
• Pasta		¾ cup	¾ cup	½ cup
Meat/Meat Alternative	1			
• Lean Meat, Fish, Poultry		1 oz.	1½ oz.	2 oz.
• Cheese		1 oz.	1½ oz.	2 oz.
• Egg		½ egg	¾ egg	1 egg
• Cooked Dry Beans/Peas		¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
• Peanut Butter/Other Nut and Seed Butters		2 tbsp.	3 tbsp.	4 tbsp.
• Nuts/Seeds		½ oz.	¾ oz.	1 oz.
• Yogurt		4 oz.	6 oz.	8 oz.
• Tofu, Soy Product or Alternate Protein Product		1 oz.	1½ oz.	2 oz.

**Note:** oz. eq. = ounce equivalent

**Additional Notes:**

- Milk must be unflavored for children one to five years old. It must be unflavored low fat (one percent), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free (skim) milk for children six years of age and older.
- A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.
- 100% juice may only be used to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal (including snack) per day.
- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich.
- Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.
- Grain-based desserts no longer count towards the grain component.
- Only OR labeled soy products or alternate soy protein products are creditable.
- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.
- Frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods on-site.
- Child care centers and child care homes must offer and make water available throughout the day to all children upon their request.
- Ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.

# Meal Pattern Chart for Infants



## Breakfast

Foods	0-5 Months	6-11 Months
Breast milk or formula	4-6 fl. oz.	6-8 fl. oz.
Infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, whole eggs, cooked dry beans or peas*	None	0-4 tbsp.
OR cheese*	None	0-2 oz.
OR cottage cheese, yogurt or a combination of both*	None	0-1 fl. oz.
Vegetable, fruit or a combination of both*	None	0-2 tbsp.

## Snack

Foods	0-5 Months	6-11 Months
Breast milk or formula	4-6 fl. oz.	6-8 fl. oz.
Vegetable, fruit or a combination of both*	None	0-2 tbsp.
Bread*	None	1-1½ slices
OR crackers*	None	0-2 crackers
OR infant cereal or ready-to-eat cereal*	None	1/4-1/2 cup

## Lunch or Dinner

Foods	0-5 Months	6-11 Months
Breast milk or formula	4-6 fl. oz.	6-8 fl. oz.
Infant cereal*	None	0-4 tbsp.
Vegetable, fruit or a combination of both*	None	0-2 tbsp.
Meat/Meat Alternative*		0-4 tbsp.
Cheese*		0-2 oz.
Whole egg*		0-4 tbsp.
Cooked dry beans/peas*		0-4 tbsp.
Cottage cheese*		0-4 oz.
Yogurt*		0-4 oz.

\*A serving is required when infant is developmentally ready to accept it. Solid foods are gradually introduced around 6 months of age.

### Additional Notes:

- Providers may receive reimbursement when a breast-feeding mother comes to the child care center or home and directly breastfeeds her infant.
- Vegetable, fruit or a combination of both must be served at snack.
- Vegetable and fruit juices are not allowed as part of a reimbursable meal and must not be served. Cheese, food and cheese spread are no longer allowed to be served.
- Yogurt must contain no more than 22 grams of sugar per 6 ounces, and ready-to-eat cereals must contain no more than 5 grams of sugar per dry ounce. A serving of grains must be whole grain-rich, enriched, meal or enriched flour. Ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.

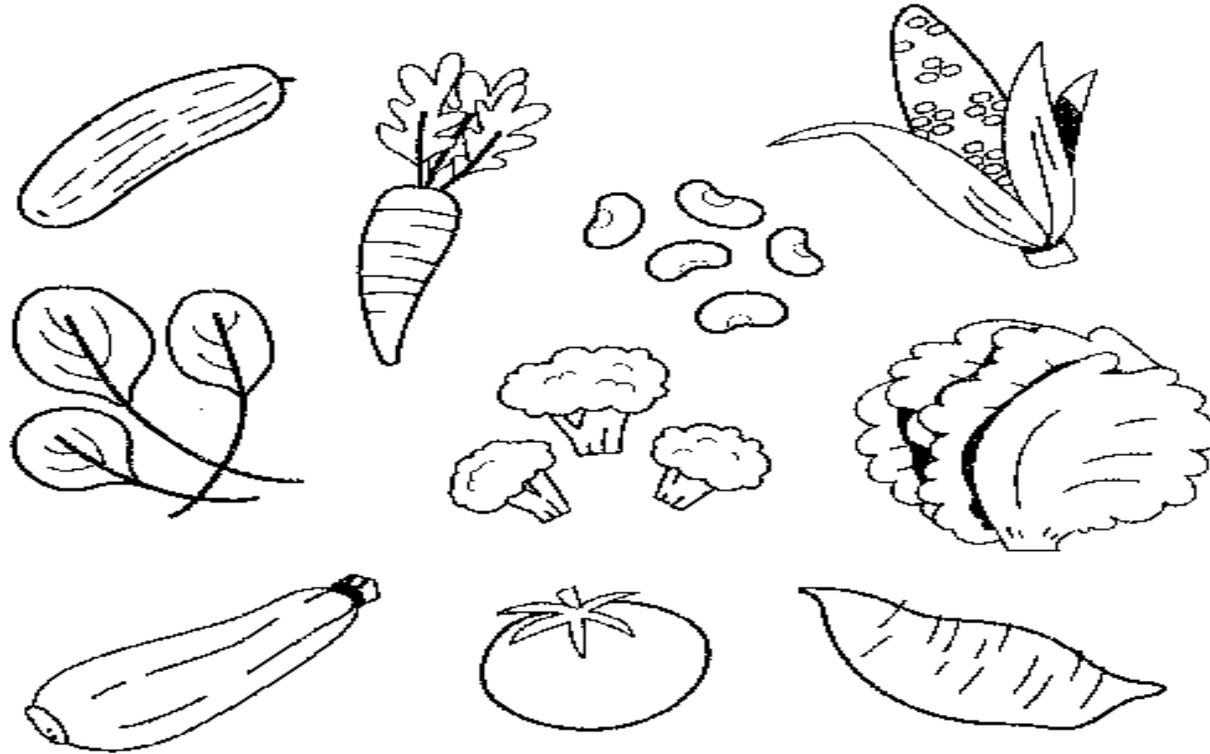
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## Five Ways To Encourage Vegetables

- 1 Eat together.** Let your child see you enjoying vegetables as meals and snacks.
- 2 Prepare together.** Teach your child how to tear, cut, or add vegetable toppings to pizza.
- 3 Get colorful.** Choose different pairs of vegetables to eat.
- 4 Make vegetables fun.** Read about them in books. Plant a seed and watch it grow.
- 5 Share the adventure.** Shop for vegetables together. Try a new vegetable each week.

### Activity

At child care, we offer different vegetables throughout the week. Ask your child to color the vegetables he or she has tried.



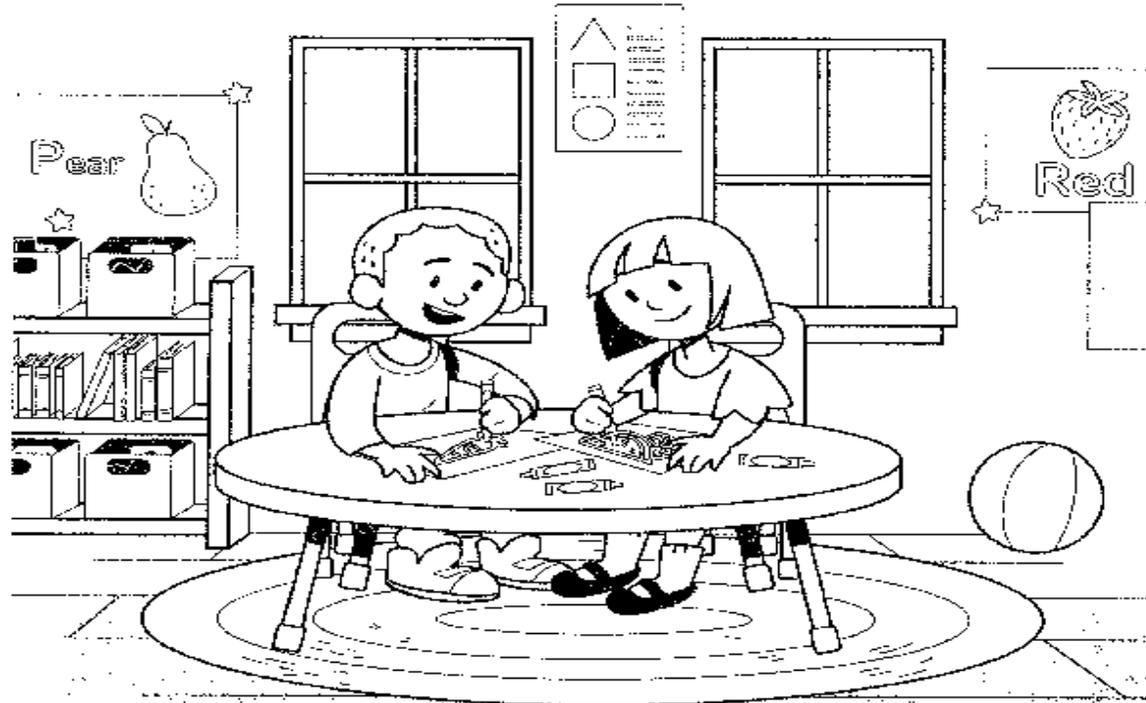
## Healthy Foods + Healthy Environments = Healthy Kids

At child care, we encourage healthy choices in ways that go beyond our menu:

- 1 **Look around.** See how our site displays pictures of healthy foods. Ask your child to point out his or her favorite picture.
- 2 **Read about it.** Our bookshelf includes stories about trying new foods. Ask if you can borrow a book to read to your child.
- 3 **Try fun activities.** We do a number of activities involving growing and tasting new foods. Ask your child his or her favorite activity and try it at home.

### Activity

Have your child color the picture below:







## Accommodating Allergies & Special Diets in the CACFP

When a child's diet is restricted due to a disability, federal law and USDA regulations require reasonable modifications to be made, at no extra charge. If you care for a child with allergies in a meal, you may start menu planning with rice, corn, or other gluten-free grains. If the child is allergic to both cow and soy milk, however, you may need to serve a milk substitute that does not meet the meal pattern requirements.

If the meal pattern cannot be met 100%, a medical statement from a State licensed healthcare professional is required. Note that reasonable modifications or accommodations do not extend to substitutions or changes in your program that could put you in a severe financial strain, such as accommodating a medical statement that specifies a brand of expensive infant formula.

It's not just about the ingredients, either. You may have a child with diabetes who needs help tracking their diet, or a participant who recently had surgery and needs a soft foods diet. Every child deserves the healthiest start in life, and recognizing specific needs while making the necessary modifications helps ensure adequate and nutritious food.

### Five Tips for Accommodating Allergies

1. Create separate cycle menus for common allergens to reduce time and figuring out what foods to serve.
2. Understand how to identify allergens and trace allergens using the food label.
3. Share your weekly menu, including the ingredient list, with parents and caregivers, and encourage them to share their child's preferred alternatives to allergens (i.e. seed butter instead of peanut butter).
4. Clean everything and keep separate utensils to prevent cross-contamination.
5. Holding meals in the most integrated setting possible is a requirement. For instance, you cannot isolate children with airborne allergies in a separate room during meal service.

\*Eight foods are identified as major food allergens. Under the FASTER Act of 2021, sesame is being added as the ninth major food allergen, effective 1-1-23

### Know the Major Food Allergens\*



Milk



Eggs



Seafood



Shellfish



Tree Nuts



Peanuts



Sesame



Soybeans



Wheat

### Five Tips for Accommodating Special Diets

1. Understand the difference between preference vs. disability (supported/not supported by medical statement).
2. Incorporate dietary needs into the overall weekly menu instead of modifying one specific participant's meal.
3. Seek out modifications rather than alternatives when possible (i.e. juicing carrots for a soft diet).
4. Show patience towards participants whose special dietary needs may cause them to eat slower.
5. Educate children and family about how some eat differently than others to help destigmatize special diets.

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## Make Water Available Throughout the Day

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children  
Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

When children are thirsty between meals and snacks, water is the best beverage choice. The amount of water needed will vary among young children, and increase on hot summer days, during physical activity, and on dry winter days. You can help by making safe drinking water freely accessible<sup>1</sup> to children throughout the day. Drinking water can:



- Keep children hydrated and healthy.
- Help build and maintain strong teeth, if water includes fluoride.
- Help those freed from teeth and reduce acid in the mouth, both of which contribute to dental cavities.
- Help children develop a habit of drinking water that they will keep for life.

### How and When Should Water Be Made Available?

- **CACFP standards require providers to make water freely accessible\* throughout the day.** Water must also be available to drink upon children's request.
- **Make water available during meals and snack time.** While drinking water must be made available to children during meal times, it does not have to be served alongside the meal. Water is not part of the reimbursable meal and may not be served instead of fluid milk.
- **Some children who drink too much liquid right before a meal may feel too full to eat.** If children drink normal amounts of water before meals, it rarely will not affect their appetite and hunger levels. You should keep this in mind when deciding how much water to offer a child right before meals.
- **Replace other high-calorie, sweetened beverages** that are served outside of meal times with plain, unflavored, noncarbonated water.
- **Serve fluoridated tap water.** Many community tap water supplies contain fluoride. Most bottled water is not fluoridated. Bottled water is not necessarily safer than regular tap water, and it's more expensive.

\* "Freely accessible" can mean allowing children to access water from a water fountain whenever they are thirsty.

*Or, you can make clean small pitchers of water and single-use paper cups available in the classrooms and on the playgrounds, or make paper cups available next to the kitchen sink.*

*Allow children to serve themselves water when they are thirsty, or provide water to a child when he or she requests it.*



*Water is an excellent beverage choice at snack time, along with your two other reimbursable meal components.*



## Resource List

1. My Plate – 10 Tips Series  
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html>
2. Child Care Tips Poster  
<http://www.nfsmi.org/>  
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080130051129.pdf>
3. Zero to Three  
<http://www.zerotothree.org/>
4. Back to School Health and Safety Checklist  
<http://www.cdc.gov/media/dpk/2013/docs/back-to-school/Back-to-School-Checklist.pdf>
5. National Safety Council NSC.org  
<http://www.nsc.org/Pages/Search.aspx?#k=back%20to%20school%20safety%20checklist>
6. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/en/safety-education/neighborhood-safety-network/posters/back-to-school-safety-checklist-backpacks/>
7. National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education  
<http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/products/checklists-tip-sheets/water-and-100-juice-tipsheet/>
8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/early-childhood-drinking-water-toolkit-final-508reduced.pdf>

# 4cforchildren.org

- We hope you'll join the Child Nutrition Program
- For an introductory video and more information on how to participate in the CACFP, visit our website at [4cforchildren.org](http://4cforchildren.org)