



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Institutions Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

From: Falita S. Flowers, Nutrition Services Director (*Original Signed*)

Date: January 10, 2017

Subject: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Legal Authority: USDA Policy Memorandum CACFP 05-2017

This memorandum outlines the use of offer versus serve (OVS) in the adult day care and at-risk afterschool settings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the use of family style meals in the CACFP. This memorandum includes clarification on the differences between OVS and family style meal service and contains frequently asked questions and answers in the Attachment. In addition, this memorandum supersedes SP 35-2011, CACFP 23-2011, *Clarification on the Use of Offer vs. Serve and Family Style Meal Service*, as it relates to the CACFP. In addition, this memorandum supersedes FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 2, *Family Style Meal Service in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*; Instruction 783-9 has been rescinded.

### Background

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296, amended section 17 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), 42 U.S.C. 1766, to require the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to update the CACFP meal pattern requirements to make them more consistent with (a) the most recent version of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, (b) the most recent relevant nutrition science and (c) appropriate authoritative scientific agency and organization recommendations. On April 25, 2016 USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the final rule "Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act" (81 FR 24348) to update the CACFP meal patterns in 7 CFR 226.20.

The CACFP regulations allow OVS in adult day care centers and the final rule extended the option to use OVS to at-risk afterschool programs (7 CFR 226.20(o)) starting October 1, 2017. Extending this allowance to at-risk afterschool programs provides menu planners another option for meal service and improves consistency across Child Nutrition Programs as OVS is already established in the NSLP, SBP and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This memorandum explains the requirements an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program must follow when serving OVS meals in order to receive reimbursement.

In addition, the final rule added the family style meal service requirements that were outlined in FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 2 to the CACFP regulations under 7 CFR 226.20(n). This memorandum explains the requirements centers or day care homes must follow when serving meals family style in order to receive reimbursement.

## **I. OFFER VERSUS SERVE**

### **Overview**

OVS is an approach to menu planning and meal service that allows participants to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or supper. Children and adults who are offered food choices are more likely to eat the foods they enjoy rather than throw the food away. OVS is only allowed in CACFP adult day care and CACFP at-risk afterschool settings for breakfast, lunch and supper meals. OVS is not allowed at snack. OVS may not be implemented at snack because there are only two required components and, therefore, there is not enough food offered to allow a child or adult to decline some foods and ensure that the snack the child or adult takes is nutritionally sufficient. Using OVS can help adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs reduce food waste and costs while maintaining the nutritional value of the meal that is served.

In general, OVS is not considered to be appropriate for younger children because it may interfere with the CACFP's nutrition goals and the center's or day care home's efforts to introduce new foods to children while they are young and still developing food preferences. Therefore, OVS is only an available meal service option for the CACFP adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs.

Using OVS is optional. Adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs are not required to implement OVS. Sponsors or independent centers that choose to use OVS must notify their State agency. How sponsors and independent centers must notify their State agency is up to the State agency. If a sponsor or independent center chooses to use OVS, menu planners should examine participation and food selection trends to determine what and how much food to prepare. This process results in cost savings through minimizing food waste.

Please note that State agencies cannot institute a statewide ban on OVS. However, specific sponsors or independent centers may be restricted from using the option on a case-by-case basis, such as through a corrective action, if the State agency determines that the sponsor or independent center is unable to implement OVS within the requirements outlined in this memorandum.

### **Terms to Know**

For any meal to be eligible for reimbursement, no matter what meal service type is used, all food components in the required minimum serving sizes must be offered. Before using OVS, there are several terms adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool program operators should know:

- A food component is one of the food categories that comprise a reimbursable meal. CACFP centers and day care homes must always offer all the food components that comprise a

reimbursable meal in at least the minimum required amounts. The food components in the CACFP are: grains, vegetables, fruits, meat/meat alternates and milk.

- A food item is a specific food offered within the food components comprising the reimbursable meal. For example, separate ½ cup servings of broccoli and carrots are two food items that comprise the vegetable component.
- A combination food contains more than one food item from different food components that cannot be separated, such as a vegetable pizza. A vegetable pizza contains three food items from three different food components: a serving of grains (crust), a serving of vegetables (vegetable toppings), and a serving of meat alternate (cheese). Other examples of combination foods are soups, prepared sandwiches and burritos.

### **CACFP OVS Requirements**

The CACFP OVS requirements support the practice of offering a variety of food choices for children and adults, increase the likelihood that children and adults will select foods they prefer, reduce waste, and ensure children and adults are receiving enough food to meet their nutritional needs. All sponsors and independent centers electing to use OVS in the adult day care and at-risk afterschool settings of the CACFP are required to follow the CACFP OVS requirements. Due to the distinguishing nature of the CACFP from the NSLP, SBP and SFSP, including variations in settings and resources, the OVS requirements in the adult day care and at-risk afterschool settings of the CACFP are slightly different from the OVS requirements in NSLP, SBP and SFSP. The OVS requirements in the CACFP are as follows:

#### OVS at Breakfast

The CACFP breakfast meal pattern requires three food components to be offered: milk, fruits and vegetables, and grains. As a reminder, fruit and vegetables are one combined component in the breakfast meal patterns.

When using OVS at breakfast, at least the following four food items, in the required minimum serving sizes, must be offered:

1. A serving of milk;
2. A food item from the fruit and vegetable component;
3. A food item from the grains component; and
4. A food item from the meat/meat alternate component **or** one additional item from the fruit and vegetable component **or** grains component.

All the food items offered must be different from each other. For example, while a flake cereal, such as bran flakes with raisins, and a puff cereal, such as a puffed rice cereal, are two types of cereals that are not identical, they are the same food item.

A child or adult must take at least three different food items from any of the food items offered. The food items selected may be from any of the required components and must be in the required minimum serving sizes. Here is an example of a reimbursable OVS breakfast menu:

- ½ cup berries;
- ½ cup grapefruit;
- 1 serving pancakes; and
- 1 cup (8 oz) of fluid milk

Under this menu, a child may take the berries, grapefruit and milk, OR, berries, pancakes and milk, and many other combinations. If the child takes two servings of pancakes and the milk, it is not a reimbursable

meal because two of the food items are the same and all three items selected must be different from each other.

Depending on the planned menu, children and adults may need to select more than one food item to have the minimum serving size needed for a component to be credited towards a reimbursable meal. For example, an OVS breakfast menu for adults may include:

- ¼ cup melon;
- ¼ cup bananas;
- 1 cup of cereal;
- 1 cup of yogurt; and
- 1 cup (8 oz) of fluid milk.

In this situation, the adult must take the melon and bananas in order to select the ½ cup minimum serving size of the fruit and vegetable component required for adults at breakfast. It is the child or adult's choice to select or decline a food item. Adult day care centers or at-risk afterschool programs may not specify what food items a child or adult must select.

### OVS at Lunch or Supper

The CACFP lunch and supper meal patterns requires all five food components to be offered: milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains. Milk is optional for supper meals served in the adult day care centers.

When using OVS at lunch or supper, at least one food item from each of the five food components, in the required minimum serving sizes, required at lunch and supper must be offered:

1. A serving of milk\*;
2. A food item from the meat/meat alternate component;
3. A food item from the vegetable component;
4. A food item from the fruit component; and
5. A food item from the grains component

\*As noted above, milk is optional for supper for meals served in adult day care centers and does not need to be offered when serving an OVS supper in those settings. In all other situations, milk must be offered.

Similar to OVS at breakfast, all of the food items offered at lunch and supper must be different from each other. For example, while apple slices and apple sauce are two types of apples that are not identical, they are the same food item. Unlike OVS at breakfast, at lunch or supper meals using OVS, a child or adult must take at least three food components, rather than three items, to ensure the child or adult takes an adequately nutritious meal. A child or adult must select at least the minimum required serving size of the components for them to be counted. It is the child or adult's choice to select or decline a food component. Adult day care centers or at-risk afterschool programs may not specify what food components a child or adult must select.

Here is an example of a reimbursable OVS lunch menu:

- 2 ounces Parmesan Chicken;
- ½ cup spinach salad;
- ¼ cup broccoli;
- 1 cup pasta; and
- 1 cup (8 oz) of fluid milk.

### **Option to Offer an Increased Variety of Foods**

When using OVS, menu planners have the option to go beyond the minimum requirements. Within each component, different food items may be offered, giving children and adults many combinations for building a reimbursable meal. Offering different food items when using OVS increases the likelihood that children and adults will select foods they prefer and reduces waste.

For example, an OVS lunch menu may offer milk, roasted chicken, black beans (credited as a meat alternate), rice, broccoli, and apple slices. This menu includes two food items from the meat/meat alternate component (roasted chicken and black beans) for children and adults to choose from. Please note, one serving of dry beans and peas may count towards the meat/meat alternate component or the vegetable component, but not both in the same meal. In this menu, the black beans are designated as a meat alternate. The menu planner must decide how dry beans or peas are credited prior to meal service and it cannot be switched during meal service. Therefore, a child or adult could not select milk, roasted chicken and black beans and have it count as three components in this example.

As explained above, offering two servings of the same food item is not permissible under OVS in the CACFP. All food items offered must be different from each other. For example, an OVS breakfast with a serving of milk, banana, and two servings of toast (e.g. toasted enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and toasted whole-wheat bread) would not be reimbursable because the toast is two servings of the same food item.

However, a menu planner could provide children or adults choices within a food item as long as at least four different food items are offered at breakfast and at least five different food items are offered at lunch or supper meals. For example, an OVS breakfast could include:

- Milk;
- Banana;
- Two types of toast (e.g. toasted enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and toasted whole-wheat bread);  
and
- Cereal.

Further, a larger food item that is worth two servings in weight, such as a two ounce bagel, counts as only one food item under OVS in the CACFP, not two.

If the menu planner offers combination foods or two or more food items from one food component, such as bread and rice, instructions or signs must be available to let supervisors and participants know what choices make up a reimbursable meal. The instructions and signs should let an adult participant know that they cannot select two of the same food items or components. For example, an adult participant could not select two pieces of toast and milk and have it count towards a reimbursable breakfast because only two different food items were selected. Additionally, an adult participant could not select two servings of chicken and one serving rice and have it count towards a reimbursable lunch because only two components were selected.

## **II. FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE**

Family style meal service is a type of meal service that allows children and adults to serve themselves from communal platters of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. Family style meal service allows children and adults to be introduced to new foods, new tastes and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in group eating situation and developing good eating habits. Unlike other types of meal services (e.g. cafeteria lines, vended meals, pre-plated service, and OVS), family

style meals afford some latitude in the initial portion of food that is served. Additional servings of each food are readily available at each table and more can be served at any time.

Serving meals family style is optional and may be used in any CACFP setting. If a center or day care home chooses to serve meals family style they must comply with the following practices (7 CFR 226.26(n)):

1. A sufficient amount of prepared food must be placed on each table to provide the full required portions of each of the components, as outlined in 7 CFR 226.20(c)(1) and (2), for all children or adults at the table and to accommodate supervising adults if they wish to eat with the children and adults. See the question and answer section in the Attachment for an example.
2. Children and adults must be allowed to serve the food components themselves, with the exception of fluids (such as milk and juice). During the course of the meal, it is the responsibility of the supervising adults to actively encourage each child and adult to serve themselves the full required portion of each food component of the meal pattern. Supervising adults who choose to serve the fluids (including milk and juice) directly to the children or adults must serve the required minimum quantity to each child or adult. For example, children 3-5 years old must be served 6 fluid ounces of milk at breakfast, lunch and supper meals.
3. Centers and day care homes that use family style meal service may not claim second meals for reimbursement.

In line with the nutritional goals of the CACFP, family style meal service encourages a pleasant eating environment, promotes mealtime as a learning experience by allowing children to serve themselves from common platters of food (with assistance from supervising adults) and provides educational activities that are centered around food. Even when a complete family style meal service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer one component or multiple components in a family style manner. Supervising adults should provide assistance to children and adults as needed when serving foods from communal platters. This practice can help young children develop motor skills and the dexterity and hand strength needed to serve foods. For tips on how to successfully serve meals family style in CACFP, refer to the *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children Supplement E: Support for Family Style Meals* available at: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/Supplement\\_E.PDF](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/Supplement_E.PDF).

### **III. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE AND OVS**

Both family style meals and OVS are types of meal service and there are some key differences between the two. First, food components in family style meals are self-served by the child or adult participant, while food components in OVS are pre-portioned or served directly by the provider or supervising adult.

Second, while children and adults must be offered the minimum required serving sizes of each required meal components in both family style meals and OVS, in family style meals, a child or adult does not need to take the full minimum required serving size of a food component to receive reimbursement.

When a child or adult does not take a food component or the full minimum serving size of a food component during family style meals, the supervising adult must encourage the child or adult to serve themselves the full minimum serving size. However, if the child or adult does not serve themselves a food component or take the full minimum serving size of a food component when using family style meal service, the meal may still be reimbursed. Alternatively, while the child or adult may decline some food items or components in OVS, they must take the full minimum serving size of the food components they choose in order for the meal to be reimbursable. The final key difference between family style meals and OVS is that family style

meal service may be utilized in all CACFP settings, but OVS is only allowed in adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs.

<b>Family Style and Offer vs. Serve</b>		
	<b>Family Style Meals</b>	<b>Offer vs. Serve</b>
<b>What CACFP settings may use this type of meal service?</b>	All CACFP settings	Adult day care and at-risk afterschool programs only
<b>What meals may be served using this type of meal service?</b>	All meals, including snack	Breakfast, lunch, and supper only; OVS is not allowed at snack
<b>Is the center or day care home required to offer the minimum serving size of each meal component for each participant?</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Is the participant required to take the minimum required serving size of a meal component?</b>	No	Yes
<b>Who serves the food?</b>	The child or adult participants (with assistance from the supervising adult if needed)	Pre-portioned or served directly by the provider or supervising adult

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact Sonja Adams, Policy Administrator at (404) 651-8193.