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Area Memo: Meals/
Food Service
Programs CACFP

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

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the use of Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in the adult day care and at-risk afterschool settings, as well as the use of family style meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This memorandum contains two attachments that highlight frequently asked questions and answers and OVS examples for breakfast, lunch, and supper meal service. In addition, this memorandum provides updates to terms consistent with the final rule titled, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025* ([89 FR 31962](#)) published on April 25, 2024. This memorandum supersedes CACFP 05-2017, *Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

In addition to the information included in previous memoranda, this memorandum specifically:

- Updates terminology from “food component” to “meal component” per CACFP regulations;
- Updates definitions listed under “Terms to Know;”
- Includes two new questions clarifying policy regarding meals for supervising adults (#13) and meal accommodations (#14);
- Includes an attachment with updated examples of OVS;
- Adopts standardized terminology such as “institutions and facilities;” and
- Reorganizes information throughout the memorandum for clarity.

Legal Authority

USDA Policy Memorandum CACFP 02-2025

Background

Following passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296), CACFP regulations were updated to align meal patterns more closely with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. As part of that

Program update, the CACFP regulations were revised to extend the option of OVS to at-risk afterschool programs (7 CFR 226.20(o)), in addition to adult day care centers in 2017. This allowance provided menu planners another option for meal service and improved consistency across Child Nutrition Programs as OVS was well established in the NSLP, SBP and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

In addition, the 2024 final rule added the family style meal service requirements that were previously 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. While the majority of the 2024 final rule focused on gradual updates to school nutrition requirements, the rule also included a few updates to the CACFP to better align Child Nutrition Program requirements. The 2024 final rule changed all “food component” references to “meal component” references in program regulations, as reflected in this memorandum.

Program Requirements

Offer Versus Serve

Overview

OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows participants to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. The goal of OVS is to reduce food waste and give participants some control and choice in their meal selection, while still providing a nutritious meal. 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 because there are only two required meal components during that service; as such, not enough food is offered to allow participants to decline some foods and ensure that the snack selected is nutritionally sufficient.

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 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.

Adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs are not required to implement OVS; use of OVS is optional in these settings. Institutions and facilities that choose to use OVS must notify their State agency. How institutions and facilities notify their State agency is at the discretion of the State agency. If an institution or facility chooses to use OVS, menu planners should examine participation and food selection trends to determine what and how much food to prepare. This process typically results in cost savings by reducing the amount of food waste.

State agencies cannot institute a statewide ban on OVS. However, specific institutions and facilities may be restricted from using OVS on a case-by-case basis if the State agency determines that the institution or facility is unable to implement OVS within the requirements outlined in regulations and further through this memorandum.

Terms to Know

For any meal to be eligible for reimbursement, no matter what meal service type is used, all meal components must be offered in at least the required minimum serving sizes as outlined at 7 CFR 226.20(c). Adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool program operators should be familiar with the following terms

before implementing OVS:

- A meal component is one of the food groups that comprise reimbursable meals. The meal components for lunch and supper in the CACFP are fluid milk; fruits; vegetables; grains; and meats/meat alternates. The meal components in the CACFP for breakfast are fluid milk, grains, and a combined vegetables and fruits component. This means program operators may serve vegetables, fruits, or a combination of both, to meet this requirement. Meats/meat alternates are not required at breakfast but may be served in place of the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week.
- A serving size is a single portion of food identified by the measure, typically as a weight or volume. Each meal pattern lists the minimum serving size for each meal component that must be served or offered to meet the meal pattern requirements. CACFP operators may choose to serve more than the minimum serving size; however, additional reimbursement will not be given for the extra food served.
- A menu item is any single food or combination food offered on the menu. A menu item may contain one or more meal components. For example, vegetable lasagna is a menu item that contains three meal components: vegetables, grains (pasta noodles), and meats/meat alternates (cheese).
- A breakfast food item is a specific food offered within the three meal components required in the breakfast meal pattern. For example, ½ cup of cantaloupe is a breakfast food item within the combined vegetables and fruits meal component, and a biscuit is a breakfast food item within the grains meal component.
- A combination food is a menu item that contains more than one meal component that cannot be separated. Common examples of combination foods are soups, tacos, smoothies, pizza, and burritos.

CACFP OVS Requirements

All institutions and facilities 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 at 7 CFR 226.20(o). Due to the distinguishing nature of the CACFP from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Summer Food Service Program (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 Program operators to offer three meal components: fluid milk; vegetables and fruits; and grains. As a reminder, vegetables and fruits are one combined component in the CACFP breakfast meal pattern and meats/meat alternates may be used to meet the entire grains requirement a maximum of three times per week. For OVS at breakfast, food items are counted for a reimbursable meal, not meal components. Under OVS, the menu planner must offer at least four different food items at breakfast, including at least one from each required meal component. The fourth food item can come from the vegetables and fruits, grains, or meats/meat alternates components. A participant must take at least three different food items from any of the food items offered for a reimbursable meal. The food items selected may be from any of the required components and must be in the required minimum serving sizes. Participants may choose which three food items to select. A participant may select all four food items or may decline one food item. Adult day care centers or at-risk afterschool programs may not specify which food items a participant must select when using OVS. When using OVS at breakfast, at least the following four food items, in the required minimum serving sizes, must be offered:

- A serving of fluid milk (food item);
- A food item from the combined vegetables and fruit component;
- A food item from the grains component or meats/meat alternates component (as applicable); and
- A food item from the vegetables and fruits, grains or meats/meat alternates component.

All of the food items offered must be different from one another. 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 considered the same food item because they are both ready-to-eat breakfast cereals. While two different vegetables or fruits, such as a ½ cup apple slices and a ½ cup cantaloupe, may credit as two different breakfast food items, a ½ cup apple slices and a ½ cup applesauce would both be considered apples and therefore would only credit as one breakfast food item.

Further, a larger food item that is equivalent to two or more required servings, such as a two ounce bagel, may be served; however, the larger food item only counts as one food item under OVS in the CACFP, not two.

Depending on the planned menu, participants may need to select more than one food item to meet the minimum quantity needed for a component, such as ¼ cup grapes and ¼ cup apple slices to meet the ½ cup fruit requirement at breakfast, to be credited toward a reimbursable meal.

- **OVS at Lunch or Supper** - The CACFP lunch and supper meal patterns require all five meal components to be offered in the minimum serving sizes required for the respective meal pattern: fluid milk; fruits; vegetables; grains; and meats/meat alternates. However, there are two exceptions:
 - Fluid milk is optional for supper meals served in adult day care centers. If milk is not offered, the adult still must select at least three different meal components in order for the meal to be reimbursable; and
 - An institution or facility may choose to serve two different vegetables at lunch and supper, rather than a serving of vegetables and a serving of fruits. This means that the fruits component at lunch and supper may be substituted by an additional vegetable. When a vegetable is offered in lieu of the fruits component, the two different vegetables credit as two different meal components. If a participant selects both vegetables, the participant would only be required to select one additional component for the meal to be reimbursable (grains, meats/meat alternates, or fluid milk).

Unlike OVS at breakfast where three food items must be taken, in OVS at lunch or supper meals, a participant must take at least three meal components, rather than three food items, to ensure the participant takes an adequately nutritious meal. A participant must select at least the minimum required serving size of the meal components for them to be counted toward the reimbursable meal. Participants must be able to select or decline a meal component, as long as at least three meal components are selected. Adult day care centers or at-risk afterschool programs may not specify which meal components a participant must select.

- **Option to Offer an Increased Variety of Foods** - Offering a variety of choices within a meal component, a practice often seen when foods are offered via a serving line, is not the same as implementing OVS. Under OVS, participants must be allowed to decline food items at breakfast

and meal components at lunch and supper. If a menu planner provides choices within each meal component but still requires participants to take all five meal components at lunch or all four food items at breakfast, that is not OVS.

Menu planners always have the option to exceed the minimum daily requirements. Within each meal component, different food and menu items may be offered, giving participants many combinations for building a reimbursable meal. Offering different food and menu items within the required meal components increases the likelihood that participants will select foods they prefer and reduces waste. If the menu includes choices of food or menu items within a meal component, instructions or signs must be available to let supervisors and participants know how to select a reimbursable meal.

For example, a menu planner using OVS at lunch or supper may offer fluid milk, apple slices, broccoli, rice, roasted chicken, and black beans (credited as a meat alternate) for lunch.

Menu Item	Meal Component
Fluid Milk	Milk
Apple Slices	Fruits
Broccoli	Vegetables
Rice	Grains
Roasted Chicken	Meats/Meat Alternates
Black Beans	Meats/Meat Alternates

This menu includes two menu items from the meats/meat alternates component (roasted chicken and black beans) for participants to choose from. Please note, one serving of beans, peas, and lentils may count toward the meats/meat alternates component or the vegetables 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 beans, peas, and lentils credit prior to meal service and the crediting cannot be switched during meal service. Therefore, a participant could not select fluid milk, roasted chicken, and black beans as a reimbursable meal in this example, because they would only be selecting two meal components (milk and meats/meat alternates) since the black beans were designated as a meat alternate.

As explained above, when using OVS at breakfast at least four different food items must be offered, and all four food items must be different from one another. For example, an OVS breakfast with a serving of fluid milk, banana, and two servings of toast (e.g. toasted enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and toasted whole-wheat bread) is not permissible under OVS because the toast is two servings of the same food item. However, if a menu planner offers more than four food items at breakfast, they have the option to allow the fifth food item to be a duplicate food item, allowing participants more food items to choose from. For this example, it would be permissible to offer a serving of fluid milk, banana, two varieties of toast, and cereal under OVS because at least four different food items are offered. However, if the participant selected two varieties of toast, that only credits toward one of the three required food items in OVS, and the participant must still select two different food items for a

reimbursable meal.

If the menu planner offers combination foods, such as pizza or a quesadilla, or two or more menu items from one meal component, such as bread and rice, instructions or signs must be available to let supervisors and participants know how to select a reimbursable meal. For example, at breakfast, a participant could not select two pieces of breakfast pizza and fluid milk as a reimbursable meal because only two different food items were selected. When using OVS at breakfast, three different food items must be selected by the participant for the meal to be reimbursable. As another example, at lunch a participant could not select two servings of grilled chicken and one serving of rice as a reimbursable lunch because only two meal components were selected. However, a participant could select a hamburger on bun (which credits towards the meats/meat alternates and grains components) and fluid milk, and the meal would credit toward a reimbursable lunch because three meal components (grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk) were selected.

Family Style Meal Service

Family style meal service is a type of meal service that allows participants to serve themselves from communal platters of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. Family style meal service allows participants to be introduced to new foods, tastes, and menus, while developing a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in a group eating situation, and practicing good eating habits. Unlike other types of meal services (e.g. cafeteria lines, vended meals, pre-plated service, and OVS), family style meal service provides some flexibility in the initial portion of food that is selected by the participant. With family style meal service, additional servings of each food are readily available at each table and additional food can be selected by participants at any time.

Serving meals family style is optional in the CACFP 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 226.20(n)):

- A sufficient amount of food must be placed on each table to provide the full required portions of each of the meal components, as outlined in 7 CFR 226.20(c), for all participants at the table and to accommodate supervising adults if they wish to eat with the participants.
- Each required meal component must be offered to each participant. However, a participant is not required to put the food on their plate or eat the food in order for the meal or snack to be reimbursable. For example, if there are three children between the ages of 3-5 years and one supervising adult seated at a table for lunch, then at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sliced apples must be available for each person. In this example, a total of 1 cup of sliced apples must be placed in the communal bowl or plate on the table to meet the meal pattern requirement for the fruit component to offer $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit per person (this includes the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit for the supervising adult).

During the course of the meal, it is the responsibility of the supervising adults to actively encourage each participant to serve themselves the full required portion of each meal component of the meal pattern. Supervising adults may choose to serve any meal components directly to the participants. However, when supervising adults choose to serve any meal component, the full required minimum quantity must be provided to each participant. For example, children 3-5 years old must be served the full 6 fluid ounces of milk at breakfast, lunch, and supper meals when the supervising adult chooses to serve fluid milk to the children.

- 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 promotes mealtime as a learning experience for participants to practice their fine motor skills while building self-esteem and confidence, eat without pressure, develop healthy eating behaviors, practice social and language skills, and participate in 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 meal component or multiple meal components in a family style manner. For example, participants can pass around dinner rolls with tongs while the rest of the meal components are pre-plated or served by the supervising adult. Supervising adults should assist participants 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.

Differences Between Family Style Meal Service and OVS

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

Second, while participants must be offered the minimum required serving sizes of each required meal component in both family style meals and OVS, a participant is not required to serve themselves a meal component or take the full minimum required serving size of a meal component for the meal to be reimbursable in family style meals. When a participant does not take a meal component or the full minimum serving size of a meal component during family style meals, the supervising adult must encourage the participant to serve themselves the full minimum serving size. Once encouraged, if the participant does not serve themselves a meal component or take the full minimum serving size of a meal component when using family style meal service, the meal may still be reimbursed. Alternatively, while the participant may decline some food items or meal components in OVS, they must take the full minimum serving size of the meal 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.

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

Comments

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact the Policy Administrator at 404-651-8193.

Attachment 1 --- Questions and Answers

OFFER VERSUS SERVE (at-risk and adult day care programs only)

1. How many food items or meal components must a participant select in OVS?

At breakfast, a participant must select at least three different food items from any of the food items offered for a reimbursable meal. The food items selected may be from any of the required components and must be in the required minimum serving sizes.

At lunch or supper, a participant must select at least three meal components in the required minimum serving sizes for a lunch or supper to be reimbursable.

It is the adult supervisor's responsibility to ensure that participants understand which food items or meal components they may decline under OVS. This can be done through signage and instructions to participants.

2. Under OVS, may a participant decline a combination food?

It depends. At breakfast, at least four food items must be offered, and a participant must take at least three different food items for the meal to be reimbursable. If a breakfast menu provides only four food items, a participant may not decline a combination food as the participant would be selecting fewer than three food items. If a breakfast menu provides five or more different food items, a participant may decline the combination food as long as the participant selects at least three different food items to make a reimbursable breakfast.

At lunch or supper, the required five meal components must be offered. The participant must take the required minimum serving size from at least three meal components in order for the meal to be reimbursable. Therefore, if a combination food contains three or more meal components and a total of five meal components are offered (three of which are included in the combination food), a participant cannot decline the combination food. If a total of five meal components are offered and the combination food only includes two meal components, then the combination food may be declined.

3. Is a participant required to take a vegetable or fruit in CACFP OVS?

A participant is not required to take a vegetable or fruit when an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program uses OVS. Under CACFP OVS, there are no specific breakfast food items or meal components that a participant must take. A participant must take three different food items at breakfast and three different meal components at lunch or supper. While FNS encourages increased consumption of vegetables and fruits, participants may select or decline a particular breakfast food item or meal component. Additionally, participants should not be discouraged or prevented from taking all the breakfast food items or meal components offered during OVS.

4. Does OVS require an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program to offer choices within each of the meal components?

No. OVS does not require adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs to offer participants a variety of choices within each meal component. However, FNS encourages Program operators to offer a variety of food choices to help increase the likelihood that participants will select foods they prefer, reduce waste, and ensure participants are eating enough food to meet their nutritional needs.

5. When an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program uses OVS, how do monitors ensure enough food is provided?

During on-site reviews, monitors should observe the meal service and ensure that the minimum serving sizes are being offered for each meal component and meal pattern requirements are being met. During both announced and unannounced reviews, monitors may also review written policies, training materials, receipts, menus, inventories, and invoices. Please note, maintaining production records is not a Federal requirement in CACFP.

6. When using OVS, if an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program runs out of a meal component, are all the meals served after the required meal component is no longer available disallowed?

Yes. Similar to other types of meal service, all the required meal components in the required minimum serving sizes must be offered in order for a meal to be eligible for reimbursement. If an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program runs out of a meal component when using OVS, all meals served after that point are not reimbursable because the program was unable to offer the remaining participants a complete reimbursable meal.

However, if a program runs out of a food or menu item, it may be replaced with another food or menu item within the same meal component group and the meals would still be reimbursable. For example, if a center serves oranges to meet the fruits component and runs out of oranges, the center may begin serving apples in place of the oranges to fulfil the fruits requirement.

FAMILY STYLE MEALS

7. How much food does a center or day care home need to initially serve on the table when serving meals family style?

The CACFP regulations require that the full required minimum serving sizes of each required meal component, as detailed at 7 CFR 226.20(c), be placed on each table for all the participants at the table and to accommodate supervising adults if they wish to eat with the participants.

8. Can a center or day care home choose to serve just one menu item family style?

Yes. Centers and day care homes may serve one meal component, multiple meal components or all the required meal components of a meal or snack in common serving bowls, plates, dishes, pitchers, or containers on the table. Even when a complete family style meal service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer one meal component or multiple meal components in a family style manner.

9. If a participant refuses to serve themselves the full minimum serving size of a required meal component, such as vegetables, during a family style meal, can that meal still be claimed for reimbursement?

Yes. When a participant does not take a meal component or take the full minimum serving size of a meal component during family style meal service, the supervising adult must encourage the participant to serve themselves the full minimum serving size. Once encouraged, if the participant does not serve themselves a meal component or take the full minimum serving size of a meal component when using family style meal service, the meal is still reimbursable if the minimum required serving size of each required meal component was made available to each participant. When preparing foods for family style meals, enough food must be provided for each participant, as well as any supervising adults who are eating with the participants, to be able to take the full minimum serving size.

10. During family style meals, can a supervising adult assist a participant that is not able to serve themselves?

Yes. While participants must be allowed to serve themselves in family style meal service, a supervising adult may help participants who are unable to serve themselves. Portions served to the participant must be at least the minimum portion size. In the case of young children, family style meals are an opportunity to help children develop motor skills. For example, a center or day care home may choose to have children start by serving themselves one menu item while the supervising adult acts as a model and serves the remaining food.

11. What if a participant serves themselves too much or too little food?

Family style meals provide an opportunity for participants to honor their hunger and fullness cues by controlling their own portion sizes. To help participants take the appropriate serving size for their age, centers and day care homes can use serving utensils that provide the amount needed for one serving. For example, if the meal pattern requires ½ cup of fruit, use a ½ cup scoop, ladle, or spoodle for participants to serve the fruit.

If a participant does not take the minimum serving size, they should be encouraged to take the full serving size. However, the participant does not have to self-serve or consume the full serving size in order for the meal to be reimbursable.

On the other hand, if a participant takes more than the serving size for their age group, the meal is still reimbursable because the meal pattern serving sizes are minimums. If the food in a communal platter is emptied before each participant is served, then the platter must be re-filled so each participant is offered a complete reimbursable meal. As a reminder, second meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement when serving meals family style.

12. Can leftover food be stored safely and served in another reimbursable meal?

Centers and day care homes must comply with all applicable local and State health and food safety codes. Therefore, centers and day care homes should refer to their local and State agencies to determine if leftover foods can be reused. It is important to keep in mind that local and State health and food safety codes may place specific limitations on which food or beverage items may be offered again.

13. Are meals consumed by supervising adults reimbursable?

The supervising adult's meals are not reimbursable, but the expense of extra creditable food produced for meals is an allowable cost. Check with your sponsoring organization or State agency about using CACFP funds to buy extra food.

14. How do I accommodate participants with a disability or participants with dietary preferences while using family style meal service?

When supported by a written medical statement from a State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian, CACFP operators are required to provide reasonable modifications on a case-by-case basis to accommodate participants with a disability that restricts their diet. Meals that do not meet meal pattern requirements may still be reimbursed if supported by a written medical statement (7 CFR 226.20(g)(1)). If a participant can only eat certain foods because of a disability, for example gluten-free foods, consider the risk of cross-contact during meal service with the serving spoons and tongs. It may be safer to serve the participant's full meal pre-plated to ensure that cross-contact does not occur.

Program operators are not required to meet modification requests that are not related to a disability; however, Program regulations at 7 CFR 226.20(g)(2) encourage Program operators to meet and consider participants' dietary preferences when planning and preparing meals and snacks. Variations not related to a disability must be consistent with the meal pattern requirements as outlined in 7 CFR 226.20. Regulations refer to "preferences" generally and could include but are not limited to cultural, ethical, Tribal, and religious preferences. For example, if parents do not want a child to eat pork, then a different creditable meat or meat alternate could be served to the child to replace pork for that meal. In this example, the meal would still be reimbursable.

Attachment 2 --- OVS Examples

Breakfast Examples:

Example #1:

An OVS breakfast menu, at an at-risk afterschool meals center serving breakfast on the weekend, a holiday, or school vacation, that features four different food items may include:

- 1 cup (8 oz) fluid milk (one milk item);
- ½ cup berries (one vegetable/fruit item);
- ½ cup grapefruit (one vegetable/fruit item); and
- Two pancakes (1 ounce equivalent) (one grains item).

Under this menu, there are many combinations a child may select to build a reimbursable meal as long as three different foods items are selected. Some of these combinations include:

- Berries, grapefruit and pancakes
- Fluid milk, berries, and pancakes
- Fluid milk, berries and grapefruit

If the child takes the fluid milk and four pancakes (2 ounce equivalent), then the meal is not reimbursable because two of the food items are the same and at least three different food items must be selected.

Example #2:

An OVS breakfast menu at an adult day care center that requires the participant to take two portions/ servings from one meal component to meet the minimum quantity necessary for that meal component may include:

- 1 cup (8 oz) fluid milk (one milk item);
- ¼ cup melon (one vegetable/fruit item);
- ¼ cup bananas (one vegetable/fruit item);
- 1 cup of cooked breakfast cereal (2 ounce equivalent) (one grains item); and
- 1 cup of yogurt (one meats/meat alternates item).

The adult must take the melon and bananas, two servings of the melon, or two servings of the bananas in order to select the ½ cup minimum serving size of the vegetables and fruits component required for adults at breakfast.

Under this menu, there are many combinations an adult may select to build a reimbursable meal. Some of these combinations include:

- Fluid milk, melon, bananas, and yogurt
- Fluid milk, cereal, and yogurt
- Two servings of banana (1/2 cup), cereal and yogurt, OR many other combinations.

Example #3:

An OVS breakfast menu at an adult day care center that features more than four food items may include:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) fluid milk (one milk item);
- ½ cup bananas (one vegetable/fruit item);
- ½ cup orange slices (one vegetable/fruit item);
- 2 cups ready to eat breakfast cereal rounds (2 ounce equivalent) (one grains item); and
- 2 slices toast (2 ounce equivalent) (one grains item).

In this example, a participant still must take at least three different food items in order for the meal to be reimbursable; however, they may decline up to two food items because there are five food items offered. There are many combinations a participant may select to build a reimbursable meal. Some of these combinations include:

- Fluid milk, cereal, and toast
- Orange slices, bananas, and cereal
- Fluid milk, orange slices, and bananas

At breakfast, food items are counted rather than meal components; therefore, participants may select two different food items from the same meal component. The participant is not required to select a vegetable/fruit item in order for the breakfast to be reimbursable under OVS.

Example #4:

A breakfast menu at an adult day care center that features four food items, including a combination food, may include:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) fluid milk (one milk item);
- ½ cup orange slices (one vegetable/fruit item);
- 2 egg and vegetable muffin cups (2 ounce equivalent meat/meat alternate and ½ cup vegetables) (combination food with one meats/meat alternates item and one vegetable/fruit item).

With this menu, the participant must take the egg and vegetable muffin cups in order for the meal to be reimbursable. If a participant declines the egg and vegetable muffin cups, there are only two other food items to select from (fluid milk and orange slices). The participant must select three different food items for the breakfast to be reimbursable.

If a breakfast menu features more than four food items, including a combination food, such as the egg and vegetable muffin cups, a participant may decline the combination food as long as three different breakfast food items are selected by the participant. For example, a participant could select a serving of fluid milk, ½ cup orange slices and 2 cups ready to eat breakfast cereal flakes (2 ounce equivalent) for a reimbursable breakfast.

Lunch and Supper Examples:

Example #5:

An OVS supper menu at an at-risk afterschool center that features one menu item from each of the five meal components may include:

- 1 cup (8 oz) fluid milk (fluid milk component);
- 1 cup spinach salad (vegetables component);
- ¼ cup strawberries (fruits component);
- ½ cup pasta (1 ounce equivalent grains component); and
- 2 ounce equivalent parmesan chicken (meats/meat alternates component).

There are many combinations a child may select to build a reimbursable meal as long as menu items from three meal components are selected. Some of these combinations include:

- Fluid milk, strawberries, and chicken
- Spinach salad, strawberries, and pasta
- Fluid milk, pasta, and chicken

When using OVS at lunch or supper a child must select at least three different meal components.

Example #6:

An OVS supper menu at an at-risk afterschool center that features six total menu items, including two menu items from the meats/meat alternates component, may include:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) fluid milk (fluid milk component);
- ¼ cup apple slices (fruits component);
- ½ cup broccoli (vegetables component);
- 1 ounce equivalent cornbread (grains component);
- 2 ounces roasted turkey (meats/meat alternates component); and
- 1 cup yogurt (meats/meat alternates component).

There are many combinations a participant may select to build a reimbursable meal as long as menu items from three meal components are selected. Some of these combinations include:

- Fluid milk, broccoli, and roasted turkey;
- Fluid milk, broccoli, and cornbread;
- Fluid milk, cornbread, and roasted turkey; and
- Apple slices, broccoli, and yogurt.

However, if a participant selects cornbread, roasted turkey, and yogurt, the meal is not reimbursable because this selection would include only two meal components (1 grains component and two meats/meat alternates components) and not the required three meal components.

Example #7:

An OVS lunch menu at an adult day care center that features three menu items, including a combination food containing three meal components, may include:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) fluid milk (fluid milk component);
- ½ cup apple (fruits component); and
- Vegetable and bean burrito (2 ounce equivalent grains, ½ cup vegetables, and 2 ounce equivalent meat/meat alternate) (combination food with three meal components: grains, vegetables, and meats/meat alternates).

Under this menu, a participant must take the burrito in order for the meal to be reimbursable. If a participant declines the burrito, there are only two remaining meal components to select (milk and fruits components). Three meal components must be selected for the OVS lunch to be reimbursable.

Example #8:

An OVS lunch menu at an adult day care center that features two menu items for the meats/meat alternates component, one of which is a combination food, may include:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) fluid milk (fluid milk component);
- ½ cup apple (fruits component);
- Vegetable and bean burrito (2 ounce equivalent grains, ½ cup vegetables, and 2 ounce equivalent meats/meat alternates) (combination food with three meal components: grains, vegetables, and meats/meat alternates); and
- 3 chicken strips (2 ounce equivalent meat/meat alternate) (meats/meat alternates component).

Under this menu, a participant would be able to decline the combination food as long as they take each of the remaining menu items (fluid milk, apple, and chicken strips) for the lunch to be reimbursable. The participant could also select only the combination food (burrito) for a reimbursable meal since this combination food contains three full meal components.