

Program Comparison of CACFP At-Risk Afterschool and SFSP



Serving meals to young people year-round benefits children, families, and care providers. To do this, many providers transition from operating the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool (ARAS) during the school year to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) while school is out ([FNS-GD-2019-0047](#)). While many of the requirements are the same, there are differences in the meal patterns and program requirements that can be confusing. Overall, SFSP has less restrictions than CACFP and also receives a higher rate of reimbursement. For an overview of the main differences between SFSP and CACFP ARAS, see the comparison chart below.

Reimbursement			
	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Reimbursement Rates	CACFP rates are updated annually in July. The most up to date rates can be found at cacfp.org/rates-of-reimbursement		SFSP rates are updated annually and the most up to date rates can be found at cacfp.org/sfsp/sfsp-policy
Notes on Rates	Follow CACFP “free” rates for July 1 - June 30 of each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All meals for all eligible children are reimbursable at the same rate Reimbursement based on ‘meals times rate’ without comparison to actual or budgeted costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow SFSP rates for January 1 - December 31 of each year USDA commodities accrue for self-prep sponsors/sites at 1.5 cents per meal For camps: only meals served to Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) eligible children are reimbursable
Administrative Costs	Sponsors may allocate or retain up to 15% of meal reimbursements to cover administrative costs	Sponsors must maintain a record of costs but do not have to report them	
Meal Service			
	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Meal Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursement for supper and/or snack on regular school days Reimbursement for any one meal (breakfast, lunch, or supper) and/or snack on other days (including weekends and school breaks) Reimbursement for a second snack in lieu of a meal is allowable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or two meal services per day Congregate, on-site feeding for all meal services with option for one fruit, vegetable, or grain item to be taken off-site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open and closed enrolled sites: claim any two meals and/or snacks, except lunch and supper, on the same day Camps and migrant sites: may claim up to three meals per day Rural areas with no congregate meal service available may have the option of a non-congregate meal service
Meal Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meals and snacks must be served after school on school days; schools that meet USDA’s definition of expanded learning time may serve before the final bell (CACFP 01-2011-Rev) No other restrictions on order, time, or spacing 	State restrictions may apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of one hour must elapse between the end of one meal service and the start of another State agencies may approve meals served outside of service times if unanticipated events occur outside of sponsors’ control Meals claimed as breakfast must be served at or close to the beginning of the day
Meal Preparation	Purchased and/or prepared on-site by facility (<i>cash agreement with sponsor</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplied by sponsor through a vendor Prepared and/or delivered by sponsor 	
Meal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated CACFP meal standards took effect on October 1, 2017 Offer versus serve (OVS) is permitted for all meals (not snacks) provided by any sponsor or site Consists of 5 food components (grains, meats/meat alternates, fruits, vegetables and fluid milk) 	<p>School Food Authorities (SFA) may opt to follow National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program meal patterns</p> <p>See Appendix A for meal patterns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer versus serve (OVS) is permitted for meals (<i>not snacks</i>) provided by SFA sponsors only May be approved to follow age-appropriate CACFP meal patterns if desired; must follow CACFP infant meal pattern if approved to serve infants Consists of 4 food components (grains/breads, vegetables/ fruits, milk, meats/meat alternates)

Meal Pattern Requirements - Grains

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Whole Grain-Rich	Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day if a grain is served that day		No whole grain-rich requirement
Grain-Based Desserts	Grain-based desserts cannot count towards the grain requirement at any meal or snack		Grain-based desserts may be served at breakfast or snack
Breakfast Cereal	Must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugar per dry ounce	Cereal must be whole grain, enriched or fortified	No sugar limit
Crediting	Based on ounce equivalents		Based on serving sizes

Meal Pattern Requirements - Meats/Meat Alternates

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Tofu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed as a meat alternate. Must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight) Creditable tofu include firm and extra firm only 		Not creditable
Yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugar per 6 ounces 4 ounces or 1/2 cup of yogurt may credit as 1 ounce of the meat/ meat alternate component Soy yogurt is creditable as long as it follows the sugar guidelines 	Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	No sugar limit
Alternate Protein Products	Must meet the requirements in 7 CFR Part 226 Appendix A		Must meet the requirements in 7 CFR 225 Appendix A
Nuts and Seeds		For lunch/supper, whole nuts and seeds can only meet 50% of the meat/meat alternate requirement and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the serving requirements, but can meet the full meat/meat alternate requirement at snack	
Peanut, Soy, or Other Nut/Seed Butters		Can credit for 100% of the meat/meat alternate requirement	
Meat/Meat Alternates in Place of Grains at Breakfast	May substitute meat/meat alternate for the entire grain component no more than 3 times per week		
Crediting	Based on ounce equivalents		Based on serving sizes

Meal Pattern Requirements - Vegetables/Fruits

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Components	Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch, supper, and snack	Vegetables and fruits are one component at breakfast	Vegetables and fruits are one component at all meals and snacks
Full-Strength Juice	May count towards the entire vegetable or fruit component at any meal or snack, no more than once per day	Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May count towards no more than half of the vegetable/fruit requirement at lunch and supper Juice can credit as the entire vegetable/fruit component at breakfast and snack
Crediting	<p>Fruits and vegetables are based on volume served</p> <p>Exceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried fruit credit as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit serving) Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable serving) Cooked leafy greens such as sautéed spinach are credited by volume as served (½ cup of cooked spinach = ½ cup of vegetables) <p>You may serve two vegetables at lunch and supper instead of a fruit and a vegetable, but they may not be from the same subgroup.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All fruits and vegetables are credited based on volume served (1/4 cup dried fruit = 1/4 cup fruit & 1/2 cup spinach = 1/2 cup vegetable) Exception with tomato paste and tomato puree, which credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Serving two forms of the same fruit or vegetable in the same meal is not allowable. The two vegetables and/or fruit served at lunch and supper meals must be different from each other.

Meal Pattern Requirements - Milk

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Fat Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-year-olds can be served unflavored whole milk 2-5-year-olds can be served unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk 6-year-olds and older can be served unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk 	Milk must be served at breakfast and lunch/supper	No restrictions
Flavored Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibited for children 0-5 years old Must be low-fat or fat-free when served to children 6 years old and older 	Allowed to serve at every meal and snack for 6-year-olds and up	No restrictions
Non-Dairy Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When serving children, non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent (defined by regulation) to cow's milk may be served to non-disabled participants with medical or special dietary needs; must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian Breastmilk may be served in lieu of fluid milk; a written request is not required Water must be offered throughout the day, but is not reimbursable 	Other beverages, including water, may not be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal or snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk may only be serve in place of fluid milk when it is supported by a medical statement signed by a licensed physician or health care professional recognized by the State It is recommended that water be offered throughout the day
Crediting		Based on serving size using cup measurements	

Meal Preparation

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Cooking Methods	Frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods on-site. "Frying" is defined as deep-fat frying (i.e. cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat). Centers may continue to sauté, pan-fry, and stir-fry food. Purchased foods that are pre-fried, flash-fried, or par-fried by the manufacturer will still be allowed, but must be reheated using a method other than frying	Acceptable cooking methods include: roast, bake, broil, sauté, pan fry, stir-fry, and grill	Frying is allowed as a way of preparing foods

Meal Service Options

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Pre-Plating		Allowed for both programs	
Offer Versus Serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At lunch or supper, participants must select at least 3 food components out of the 5 food components offered At breakfast, at least 4 food items must be offered and participants must select 3 items Not allowed in other CACFP settings 	Not allowed at snack service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed at all SFSP sites, regardless of location type or sponsorship At least the following 5 food items at lunch and supper meals must be offered (1 serving of meat/meat alternate, 2 different servings of fruit and/or vegetable, 1 serving of grains and 1 serving of fluid milk) and children must select 3 food components At breakfast, at least 4 food items must be offered and children must select 3 items
Family-Style Meals	Allowed in all CACFP settings		Allowed only at camp and closed enrolled sites

Monitoring

	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Pre-Operational Visits		Required for new sites	
Visits			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsors must visit new sites, sites with operational problems in year prior, and any site where state agency deems necessary during the first week of operation. Sponsors that manage more than 10 sites have a one-week extension and must visit these sites in the first two weeks of operation Food service reviews (which must still be conducted within the first four weeks of operation) for all sites and site visits can occur at the same time
Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within first four weeks for new sites Three reviews per year At least two must be unannounced At least one unannounced review must include observation of a meal service No more than 6 months may elapse between reviews Review averaging may be employed 	Sponsors of year-round programs may follow CACFP monitoring requirements year-round as long as one review occurs during the summer and includes the unannounced observation of a meal service, and another visit during the school year also includes a meal service observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least once during first four weeks of site operation each summer "Reasonable" monitoring after first review, based on operations Food service reviews and site visits can occur at the same time

Participants			
	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Ages	A 19 year-old could participate if they are 18 at start of school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children and teens through age 18 Persons with disabilities regardless of age 	Persons with disabilities aged 19+ must have a recognized disability (State Agency or LEA) and participate in a regular school meal program
Eligibility		No enrollment or eligibility information required	Household income information is required for children at camp sites and at closed enrolled sites (if not area eligible based on school or census data)
Sponsor Eligibility			
	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Entity	Eligible for-profit child care centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public School Food Authority (SFA) Private non-profit school State or local government agency Private non-profit organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public or private non-profit colleges or universities participating in National Youth Sports Programs (NYSP) Public or private non-profit camps
Services			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide year-round service to community (<i>except NYSP sponsors</i>) State Agencies may grant exceptions to sponsors of migrant sites and residential camps
Capacity		Demonstrate financial and administrative capability (<i>may be defined differently across programs</i>)	Limited to 200 sites and total average daily attendance of 50,000 unless granted an exception by the State Agency
Site Types			
	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Affiliation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliated (<i>share sponsor's legal identity</i>) Unaffiliated (<i>separate legal entity from sponsor</i>) 	
Unaffiliated Agreements	Cash agreements (<i>sponsor disburses reimbursement minus administrative fee</i>)	Non-cash agreements (<i>sponsor assumes all costs and retains full reimbursement</i>)	
Types	No official site type designations, but programs may be drop-in (open) or enrolled		Defined types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open/open restricted Closed enrolled Camp Migrant NYSP (National Youth Sports Program)

Site Eligibility			
	CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Only	For Both Programs	Summer Food Service Program Only
Health & Safety		Meet applicable state or local health and safety standards <i>(may be different across programs)</i>	<i>State Agency funding available for inspections</i>
Eligibility	Sites that are <i>not</i> area-eligible may participate in CACFP as Outside-School-Hours-Care Centers (OSHCC) if they meet OSHCC eligibility standards	For all CACFP At-Risk Afterschool sites and SFSP open or open restricted sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within attendance zone of public elementary, middle, or high school with ≥50% eligible for free and reduced-price meals • Eligibility determination is valid for 5 years 	For open or open restricted sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within census block group (CBG) or tract with ≥50% FARM eligible. <i>CBGs with 40-50% FARM eligible may be paired with up to two adjacent CBGs that are ≥50% FARM eligible to confer eligibility over the entire area (SFSP 03-2017). See No Kid Hungry's Averaged Area Eligibility Map</i> Closed enrolled and camp sites do not need to be in eligible areas but must serve children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Income eligibility forms may be collected at closed enrolled sites, or school or census data can be used to determine the ≥50% eligibility threshold
Services	Regularly scheduled educational or enrichment programming (Note: Children are not required to participate in programming so long as it is offered to all children)	Supervision	<i>Activities are encouraged as a best practice but are not required</i>
Operations	During regular school year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After school hours • On weekends, holidays, or breaks • During unanticipated closures Year-round in area of year-round school	Programs may operate up to seven days per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During summer break • During vacation breaks for year-round schools • During unanticipated closures during the regular school year

For detailed information, read the most up-to-date guidance:

- [At-Risk Afterschool Meals Guide](#)
- [SFSP Nutrition Guide](#)
- [Streamlining Final Rule and USDA Final Rule Comparison Chart](#)
- [SFSP Rural Non-Congregate Guidance for Summer 2023](#)
 - [USDA Implementation Guidance for Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#)
- [USDA Q&A #2: Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#)
- [SFSP Sponsor Monitoring Guide](#)
 - [USDA Guidance Offering Multiple Meals as Part of the Non-Congregate Meal Service](#)
- [Transitioning to SFSP](#)
- [Transitioning from SFSP](#)

Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns

BREAKFAST MEAL PATTERNS Serve Milk, Grains*, Vegetables or Fruit

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Vegetables, Fruit or Both	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Grains	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq

* Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week. oz eq = ounce equivalents

LUNCH & SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS Serve all 5 components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	1 cup*
Meat & Meat Alternates	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz	2 oz
Vegetables	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grains	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq

*A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults oz eq = ounce equivalents

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS Serve 2 of the 5 components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Meat & Meat Alternates	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Vegetables	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grains	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

oz eq = ounce equivalents

Appendix A

Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns

BREAKFAST MEAL PATTERN

Select all three components for a reimbursable meal

1 milk	1 cup	fluid milk
1 fruit/vegetable	1/2 cup	juice ¹ , and/or vegetable
1 grains/bread ²	1 slice 1 serving 3/4 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup	bread or cornbread biscuit or roll or muffin or cold dry cereal or hot cooked cereal or pasta or noodles or grains

¹ Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength.

² Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

LUNCH/SUPPER MEAL PATTERN

Select all four components for a reimbursable meal

1 milk	1 cup	fluid milk
2 fruits/vegetables	3/4 cup	juice ¹ , and/or vegetable
1 grains/bread ²	1 slice 1 serving 1/2 cup 1/2 cup	bread or cornbread biscuit or roll or muffin or hot cooked cereal or pasta or noodles or grains
1 meat/meat alternate	2 oz. 2 oz. 2 oz. 1 large 1/2 cup 4 Tbsp. 1 oz. 8 oz.	lean meat or poultry or fish ³ or alternate protein product or cheese or egg or cooked dry beans or peas or peanut or other nut or seed butter or nuts and/or seeds ⁴ or yogurt ⁵

¹ Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength. Full strength vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than one-half of this requirement.

² Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

³ A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry or fish.

⁴ Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.

⁵ Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.

SNACK (SUPPLEMENT) MEAL PATTERN

Select all two of the four components for a reimbursable snack

1 milk	1 cup	fluid milk
1 fruit/vegetable	3/4 cup	juice ¹ , and/or vegetable
1 grains/bread ²	1 slice 1 serving 3/4 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup	bread or cornbread biscuit or roll or muffin or cold dry cereal or hot cooked cereal or pasta or noodles or grains
1 meat/meat alternate	1 oz. 1 oz. 1 oz. 1/2 large 1/4 cup 2 Tbsp. 1 oz. 4 oz.	lean meat or poultry or fish ³ or alternate protein product or cheese or egg or cooked dry beans or peas or peanut or other nut or seed butter or nuts and/or seeds or yogurt ⁴

¹ Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength. Full strength vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than one-half of this requirement.

² Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

³ A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry or fish.

⁴ Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.