

Program Comparison of SBP and CACFP Breakfast



The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) ensure that school-aged children receive nutritionally balanced meals, which are provided at a low cost or for free, each school day. When children have not yet reached school-age or are participating in activities outside school hours, they may be served by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). These federally funded programs work together to ensure children of all ages and settings receive the nutrients they need to learn and grow. These programs do not operate in silos, and some schools may operate both NSLP and CACFP in different capacities. For instance, a school that has an on-site preschool must align with the CACFP meal pattern. Schools may also help vend meals to CACFP sites in their area or even sponsor those sites to allow them access to the program. Therefore, it is important to identify the commonalities and differences between NSLP/SBP and CACFP. The chart below provides a comparison of SBP to CACFP Breakfast for children 18 and under in child care settings.

	SBP	Both Programs	CACFP Breakfast
Reimbursement			
Days of Operation	When school is in session as established by the school district, including summer school		Year round including, weekdays, weekends, holidays and school breaks
Determination	Reimbursement is provided at the free, reduced price or paid rate for each child based on their income eligibility		Child care centers are reimbursed at the free, reduced price or paid rate for each child based on their income eligibility Emergency Shelters are reimbursed at the free rate Family child care homes are reimbursed at a Tier I or Tier II rate based on their area eligibility or income eligibility of the provider's household
Rates	The most up to date rates can be found at https://www.fna.usda.gov/schoolmeals/fr-072425	Rates are updated annually in July and are in effect from July 1 through June 30 of the following year	The most up to date rates can be found at cacfp.org/rates-of-reimbursement
Reimbursable Meals	Schools can be reimbursed for breakfast, lunch and/or afternoon snack each day		CACFP sites can be reimbursed for two meals and a snack, or two snacks and a meal each day. This could be any combination of breakfast, lunch, supper and/or snack Emergency Shelters can serve up to three meals
Meal Service			
Meal Components	Fruits, grains and/or meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk are required components		Fruits and/or vegetables, grains, and fluid milk are required components
Weekly Calculations	Schools must ensure that the combination of all meals throughout the week are within the average calorie range: 350-500 (Grades K-5), 400-550 (Grades 6-8), 450-600 (Grades 9-12) Schools must ensure that the combination of all meals throughout the week are less than or equal to the average sodium limit: 540mg (Grades K-5), 600mg (Grades 6-8), 640mg (Grades 9-12) Average saturated fat content of the meals offered to each age/grade group must be less than 10 percent of total calories		No weekly calculations
Cooking Methods	No restrictions on cooking methods		Deep-fat frying on-site is not allowed
Offer Versus Serve	Schools must offer at least four food items from the three required meal components. Students must select at least three of the four offered food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables		Not allowed

Grains			
Components	Grains and meats/meat alternates count towards a combined component. Schools may offer grains, meats/meat alternates, or a combination of both to meet the daily and weekly ounce equivalents for this combined component		Meats/meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week
Crediting		Grains are credited based on ounce equivalents	
Whole Grain-Rich	At least 80% of weekly grains offered must be whole grain-rich based on ounce equivalents of grains offered Remaining grains offered must be enriched		Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day when grains are served Remaining grains offered must be made from ingredients that are whole grain, enriched, bran or germ
Grain-Based Desserts	No restrictions		Grain-based desserts cannot count towards the grains requirement at any meal or snack
Added Sugars		Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce	
Meats/Meat Alternates			
Components	Grains and meats/meat alternates count towards a combined component. Schools may offer grains, meats/meat alternates, or a combination of both to meet the daily and weekly ounce equivalents for this combined component		Meats/meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week
Crediting		Meats/meat alternates are credited based on ounce equivalents of the edible portion served	
Beans, Peas and Lentils		Cooked dry beans, peas and lentils may be counted as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal	
Tofu and Soy Products		Allowed to meet the entire meats/meat alternates component Must be commercially-prepared Tofu must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight)	
Nuts, Seeds and Nut/Seed Butters		Nuts, seeds and nut/seed butters can credit for the full meats/meat alternates component	
Yogurt		Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces	
Vegetables			
Components	Vegetables may be served in place of fruits. If vegetables are substituted two or more days a week, then at least two vegetables subgroups must be offered		Vegetables, fruits or a combination of both may be served
Crediting		Vegetables are credited based on volume served Exceptions: Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetables) Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide	
Juice	No more than half of the weekly vegetables component can be in the form of full-strength (100%) juice		Full-strength (100%) juice may count towards the entire vegetables or fruits component no more than once per day

Fruits			
Components	Vegetables may be served in place of fruits. If vegetables are substituted two or more days a week, then at least two vegetables subgroups must be offered		Vegetables, fruits or a combination of both may be served
Crediting		Fruits are credited based on volume served Exception: Dried fruit credits as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit serving)	
Juice	No more than half of the weekly fruits component can be in the form of juice		Full-strength (100%) juice may count towards the entire fruits or vegetables component no more than once per day
Fluid Milk			
Components		Fluid milk may be offered as a beverage, on cereal, or both	
Crediting		Fluid milk is credited based on volume served	
Fat Contents	Saturated fat from milk used to meet the fluid milk component requirements is excluded from the weekly dietary specification Schools offering preschool programs must follow CACFP requirements	Whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%) and/or fat-free (skim) milk can be served to all participants ages 2 and up	Birth - 11 months: breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula 12-13 months (transition period) : breastmilk, iron-fortified infant formula or whole milk One-year-olds: whole milk
Flavored Milk	Flavored milk must contain no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces Schools must offer at least two different options of fluid milk and at least one must be unflavored milk		Flavored milk can only be served to participants ages 6 and up No added sugar limit

Check with your State agency for state-specific requirements.
For more detailed information read:

[CACFP Crediting Handbook](#)
[Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
[NSLP Regulation 7 CFR Part 210.10](#)
[SBP Regulation 7 CFR Part 220.8](#)
[CACFP Regulation 7 CFR Part 226.20](#)
[NSLP Snack vs. CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Comparison Chart](#)

Program Comparison of NSLP and CACFP Lunch/Supper



The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) ensure that school-aged children receive nutritionally balanced meals, which are provided at a low cost or for free, each school day. When children have not yet reached school-age or are participating in activities outside school hours, they may be served by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). These federally funded programs work together to ensure children of all ages and settings receive the nutrients they need to learn and grow. These programs do not operate in silos, and some schools may operate both NSLP and CACFP in different capacities. For instance, a school that has an on-site preschool must align with the CACFP meal pattern. Schools may also help vend meals to CACFP sites in their area or even sponsor those sites to allow them access to the program. Therefore, it is important to identify the commonalities and differences between NSLP/SBP and CACFP. The chart below provides a comparison of NSLP to CACFP Lunch/Supper for children 18 and under in child care settings.

	NSLP	Both Programs	CACFP Lunch/Supper
Reimbursement			
Days of Operation	When school is in session as established by the school district, including summer school		Year round including, weekdays, weekends, holidays and school breaks
Determination	Reimbursement is provided at the free, reduced price or paid rate for each child based on their income eligibility		Child care centers are reimbursed at the free, reduced price or paid rate for each child based on their income eligibility Emergency Shelters are reimbursed at the free rate Family child care homes are reimbursed at a Tier I or Tier II rate based on their area eligibility or income eligibility of the provider's household
Rates	The most up to date rates can be found at https://www.fna.usda.gov/schoolmeals/fr-072425	Rates are updated annually in July and are in effect from July 1 through June 30 of the following year	The most up to date rates can be found at cacfp.org/rates-of-reimbursement
Reimbursable Meals	Schools can be reimbursed for breakfast, lunch and/or afternoon snack each day		CACFP sites can be reimbursed for two meals and a snack, or two snacks and a meal each day. This could be any combination of breakfast, lunch, supper and/or snack Emergency Shelters can serve up to three meals
Meal Service			
Meal Components		Fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates and fluid milk are required components	
Weekly Calculations	Schools must ensure that the combination of all meals throughout the week are within the average calorie range: 550-650 (Grades K-5), 600-700 (Grades 6-8), 750-850 (Grades 9-12) Schools must ensure that the combination of all meals throughout the week are less than or equal to the average sodium limit: 1,110mg (Grades K-5), 1,225mg (Grades 6-8), 1,280mg (Grades 9-12) Average saturated fat content of the meals offered to each age/grade group must be less than 10 percent of total calories		No weekly calculations
Cooking Methods	No restrictions on cooking methods		Deep-fat frying on-site is not allowed
Offer Versus Serve	Schools must offer all five meal components. Students must select at least three of the five required meal components, including at least ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables		Only allowed at At-Risk Afterschool Sites

Grains			
Components		Grains are a required component	
Crediting		Grains are credited based on ounce equivalents	
Whole Grain-Rich	At least 80% of weekly grains offered must be whole grain-rich based on ounce equivalents of grains offered Remaining grains offered must be enriched		Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day when grains are served Remaining grains offered must be made from ingredients that are whole grain, enriched, bran or germ
Grain-Based Desserts	Schools may count up to two ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts per week at lunch		Grain-based desserts cannot count towards the grains component at any meal or snack
Added Sugars		Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce	
Meats/Meat Alternates			
Components		Meats/meat alternates are a required component	
Crediting		Meats/meat alternates are credited based on ounce equivalents of the edible portion served	
Beans, Peas and Lentils		Cooked dry beans, peas and lentils may be counted as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal	
Pasta	Enriched macaroni with fortified protein may be used to meet part of the meats/meat alternates requirement	Noodles made from 100% bean/legume flour may credit towards the meats/meat alternates component when a minimum serving size of an additional visible M/MA is also served	
Tofu and Soy Products		Allowed to meet the entire meats/meat alternates component Must be commercially-prepared Tofu must contain 5 grams of protein per 1.0 ounce equivalent (¼ cup or 2.2 ounces by weight)	
Nuts, Seeds and Nut/Seed Butters		Nuts, seeds and nut/seed butters can credit for the full meats/meat alternates component	
Yogurt		Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces	
Vegetables			
Components	Vegetable offerings at lunch over the course of the week must include the following vegetable subgroups: Dark green vegetables Red/orange vegetables Beans, peas and lentils Starchy vegetables Other vegetables	Vegetables are a required component	No subgroup requirements A second, different vegetable can be served in place of the entire fruits component
Crediting		Vegetables are credited based on volume served Exceptions: Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetables) Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide	

Vegetables Continued			
Beans, Peas and Lentils		Cooked dry beans, peas and lentils may be counted as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal	
Pasta		Pasta products made from 100% vegetable flour may credit towards the vegetables component	
Juice	No more than half of the weekly vegetables component can be in the form of full-strength (100%) juice		Full-strength (100%) juice may count towards the entire vegetables or fruits component no more than once per day
Fruits			
Components		Fruits are a required component	A second, different vegetable can be served in place of the entire fruits component
Crediting		Fruits are credited based on volume served Exception: Dried fruit credits as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruits serving)	
Juice	No more than half of the weekly fruits component can be in the form of full-strength (100%) juice		Full-strength (100%) juice may count towards the entire fruits or vegetables component no more than once per day
Fluid Milk			
Components		Fluid milk must be offered as a beverage	
Crediting		Fluid milk is credited based on volume served	
Fat Content	Saturated fat from milk used to meet the fluid milk component requirements is excluded from the weekly dietary specification Schools offering preschool programs must follow CACFP requirements	Whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%) and fat-free (skim) milk can be served to all participants ages 2 and up	Birth - 11 months: breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula 12-13 months (transition period) : breastmilk, iron-fortified infant formula or whole milk One-year-olds: whole milk
Flavored Milk	Flavored milk must contain no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces		Flavored milk can only be served to participants ages 6 and up No added sugar limit

Check with your State agency for state-specific requirements.
For more detailed information read:

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