

Serving Snacks in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Snacks can be a great way to give Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) participants the nutrients and energy they need between meals. Reimbursable snacks in the CACFP contain foods from two of the five food components:



Sample Snack Menu				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Water Sugar Snap Peas With Low-Fat Dip String Cheese	Blueberry Smoothie	Whole-Wheat Crackers Milk	Water Berries Low-Fat Yogurt	Carrots With Hummus 100% Apple Juice
+	+	+	+	+

! *Note: Water is not considered a food component in the CACFP. However, you should offer and make water available to participants throughout the day. Water is a great choice at snacks when milk is not offered.*



Minimum Serving Sizes at Snack

Choose **two** different food components for a reimbursable snack. See below for minimum serving sizes for each food component at snack. You can serve more than the amount listed.

Minimum Serving Sizes at Snack				
Food Component	Age Group			Keep in Mind
	Ages 1-2 years and 3-5 years	Ages 6-12 years and 13-18 years	Adults	
Serve at least...				
 Milk	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup	See “Serving Milk in the CACFP” at https://teamnutrition.usda.gov for more information.
 Vegetables	½ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	Raw leafy vegetables credit for half of the amount served. For example, 1 cup of raw spinach credits as a ½ cup of vegetables.
 Fruits	½ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	Dried fruit credits for double the amount served. For example, ¼ cup of raisins credit as a ½ cup of fruit.
 Meats/Meat Alternates	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	Nuts and seeds may be used to meet the full meats/meat alternates requirement at snack.
 Grains	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	Grain-based desserts, such as cereal bars, granola bars, and toaster pastries, cannot count toward a reimbursable meal or snack in the CACFP. See “Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP” at https://teamnutrition.usda.gov for more information. If snack is the only CACFP meal provided, any grains served must be whole grain-rich. See “Adding Grains to Your CACFP Menu” at https://teamnutrition.usda.gov for more information.



Oz eq = Ounce Equivalent



Shelf-Stable Snacks

Looking for snacks that do not require refrigeration? Here are some ideas:

- Applesauce, Shelf-Stable Cups
- Beef Jerky*
- Dried Fruit (such as raisins, dried cranberries, etc.)
- Fruit Cups, Shelf-Stable
- Juice (100%)
- Milk, Shelf-Stable
- Popcorn
- Sunflower Seed or Nut Butter
- Whole Fruit (such as bananas, oranges, etc.)
- Whole Grain-Rich Breads, Cereals,** Crackers, or Tortillas



**A Product Formulation Statement is needed for crediting.*

***Cereals must meet the CACFP sugar limit.*

Planning Snacks for Different Age Groups

- Some foods, like popcorn and surimi seafood, require a larger amount of food to credit toward a food component. This amount may help older children feel full, but may be too much for younger children. You can find food crediting information in the Food Buying Guide at: <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.
- Consider participants' ability to chew and swallow foods safely when preparing snacks. Cutting raw fruits and vegetables into pieces can make them easier to eat.
- If serving children 4 years and younger, you can help reduce the risk of choking by:
 - Cutting round, soft foods, like cherry tomatoes and grapes, into small pieces no larger than one-half inch (1/2").
 - Cooking food until it is slightly soft.
 - Spreading nut or seed butters thinly, or thinning nut butters before serving.
 - Avoiding foods that may pose a choking risk, such as popcorn, dried meats, dried fruit, and nuts.





Try It Out!

Use the information on this worksheet to answer the following questions.

1

Margaret works in an afterschool program and serves only an afternoon snack in the CACFP. She wants to serve diced peaches and whole grain-rich crackers. Is this a reimbursable snack?

2

José wants to serve a fruit and a grain for snack. He picks a fig cereal bar and raisins. Is this a reimbursable snack?

3

Isabella wants to make carrot and apple slaw to serve to adult participants at snack. Is this a reimbursable snack?

Answers:

1. Yes, diced peaches and whole grain-rich crackers are a reimbursable snack. Because this center only serves one CACFP meal per day, any grains served must be whole grain-rich.
2. No, this snack is not reimbursable. Although the raisins count toward the fruits component, the cereal bars are a grain-based dessert and cannot count toward a reimbursable meal or snack in the CACFP.
3. Yes, carrot and apple slaw can be served as a reimbursable snack. Isabella should make sure there are enough carrots in each serving to meet the minimum serving amount for vegetables ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup), and enough apples to meet the minimum serving amount for fruit ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) for adults.