
Subject: **NUTRITION OBJECTIVES FOR SCHOOL MEALS**

PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to identify the objectives of the school foodservice program.

GUIDELINES

Nutrition Objectives for School Meals

The purpose of National School Lunch Program is to "... safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's Children". Current Dietary Guidelines provide science-based advice to promote health and to reduce risk for major chronic diseases through diet and physical activity.

Child Nutrition Programs are required by law to comply with the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 8th Edition and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFK). The lunch menu is designed to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for protein, vitamins A and C, iron, calcium and calories for school-age children. Breakfast menus are designed to provide one-fourth of the RDA for these nutrients. In addition, breakfast and lunch menus must not exceed thirty percent (30%) of total calories from fat and ten percent (10%) of total calories from saturated fat when averaged over a week.

The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025](#) emphasizes the following four overarching guidelines:

1. Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.
2. Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.
3. Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages and stay within calorie limits.
4. Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.

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To meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025, USDA's "My Plate" food icon and the new USDA federal guidelines, school food service programs will include the following:

- A. Offer fat-free and/or one percent (1%) low-fat milk and/or fat-free chocolate or strawberry milk daily (milk must be offered to students in a minimum of two fat contents).
- B. Offer assorted fresh fruit daily at both breakfast and lunch. Fresh, canned fruit and/or juice are to be available as part of the meal and as an a la carte selection daily.
- C. Offer a variety of vegetable options such as steamed/oven-grilled vegetables, entrée salads, side salads and/or salad bar daily to all students. Include fresh-cut vegetables like baby carrots or sticks, steamed broccoli florets, and low-fat salad dressings as a choice daily.

To meet the requirements for the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#), water must be made available free of charge in the school's cafeteria (water fountain).

Breakfast and Lunch Menus

Breakfast and lunch menus are on a four (4) - week cycle. Lunch menus are planned for student choices in accordance with the [Federal Regulation 210.10, National School Lunch Program](#), which states in part: "whenever possible provide a selection of foods from which the children may choose the reimbursable lunch".

Menu items are based on student responses to food preference surveys, student taste-testing, bid evaluations and available USDA commodity foods. Alternates are offered throughout the serving period to provide choices for students and staff. Healthy choices must be offered as planned on the centralized menu. In addition, assorted fresh fruit, salads, juice, vegetables and two types of fat content (1% or fat-free/skim) milk must be available daily at both breakfast and lunch to ensure compliance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020.

Standardized Recipes

Food service managers/satellite assistants are responsible for using standardized recipes in the schools. Standardized recipes are those in which the amount of food, the proportion of ingredients and the method of preparation has been tried and tested to produce a high quality product, as well as the required yield for the designated portion size.

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Any specific problems with standardized recipes should be noted on the Evaluation and Recipe form [FM-5603](#) and forwarded to the Department of Food and Nutrition, Food and Menu Management Director.

Experts in food service management state the following advantages of using standardized recipes:

- A. Helps increase the acceptability of the foods served.
- B. Assures consistency in the menu items and establishes standards of quality.
- C. Produces standard yields with a minimum of waste in production.
- D. Provides for the desired portions and helps prevent leftovers or a shortage of menu items.
- E. Helps control food and labor expenditures:
 - 1. Food cost is reduced because the standardized recipe produces only the amount of food needed, reducing overproduction.
 - 2. Labor cost is reduced because employees become more efficient in their work habits, which reduces the number of employees needed to operate a food service program.
- F. Provides for the nutritional adequacy of the menu items served as a basis for reimbursement for the lunch and/or breakfast.
- G. Helps determine the kinds and amounts of foods to purchase.
- H. Provides procedures for combining ingredients.
- I. Provides a list of ingredients with weights and measures.
- J. Provides procedures for the correct placement of menu items into serving pans, thus assuring portion control and providing an estimate of the amount of food to be transported for satellite food service.

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Menu Changes

Due to the HHFK regulations, when a school site (food service manager/school site administrator) needs to make a change to the district-wide menu, the food service administrator/supervisor should be advised and approve of the change(s) to ensure compliance for the federal requirements and reimbursement. Food service managers/satellite assistants must ensure the school site administration is aware of all menu changes.

Grants and Federally Assisted Programs

The "[Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#)" (FFVP), is a federally assisted program that provides all children and staff in participating elementary schools with a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack of a fresh fruit or vegetable. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options.

The "[Farm to School Program](#)" is a district-wide and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services initiative to use Florida-grown, fresh fruits and vegetables. It is an effective way of incorporating a variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables in school meals.

For Action By: Principals, Food Service Managers and Satellite Assistants

Refer Questions to: Department of Food and Nutrition

Revised: July 2003 (2nd), July 2006, July 2008, July 2010, July 2011, July 2012, July 2013, June 2014, July 2016, August 2022, April 2023

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