

Child Care, What Will My Child Eat?



Many childcare centers and family day care home providers are part of a special government program called the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Your child's day care center or day care home provider may be, too. CACFP assures that meals and snacks served to your child meet government nutrition guidelines for healthful eating.

What Can You Expect?

Here's what a CACFP meal or snack provides:

MEAL GUIDELINES: The type and amount of food served vary according to the age of the child.

Infants:

- Birth through 3 months: iron-fortified formula or breast milk for all meals
- 4 months through 7 months: iron-fortified formula or breast milk for all meals, iron fortified dry infant cereal and fruits and vegetables are optional
- 8 months through 11 months:
 - Breakfast: iron-fortified formula or breast milk, iron fortified dry infant cereal, and fruit or vegetable
 - Lunch: iron-fortified formula or breast milk, iron fortified infant cereal or meat, egg yolk, dry beans or peas, cheese or cottage cheese, and fruit or vegetable
 - Snack: iron-fortified formula, breast milk, or full strength fruit juice, enriched bread or crackers are optional

Children over 1 year:

- Breakfast: juice, fruit or vegetable, bread, cereal, rice or noodles, and milk
- Lunch: meat or meat alternate, 2 portions of fruit or vegetable, bread, cereal, rice or noodles, and milk
- Snack: two of any of these foods -juice, fruit or vegetable; bread; meat or meat alternate; milk

You Can Help

Childcare staff can help make child feeding easier for you. Together you can help your child eat healthfully and enjoy all kinds of food. Here's how you can be "partners":

- **Tell childcare staff** – if your child has a food allergy or other food concern. Let staff know if your child must eat or avoid any foods for religious or other reasons, too.
- **Put your child's name on containers** – if you are permitted to send food.
- **Volunteer** – if you can. Tell about a new food, and help with a tasting. Help with field trips to a food store or garden or with cooking activities. Eat with the children.
- **Attend family or parent events.** Offer to bring another parent if you drive.
- **Talk to your child** about what they ate during the day. If it's a new food, make it at home, too. Children need to try new foods several times before they like them.

Adapted from NIBBLES FOR HEALTH Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children, USDA, Food and Nutrition Services