



CACFP

HEALTHY MENU PLANNING GUIDE

IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

ASSISTING CHILD CARE CENTERS IN PROVIDING NUTRITIOUS MEALS AND SNACKS IN THE **CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**.





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CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

HEALTHY MENU PLANNING GUIDE

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Introduction to the CACFP Healthy Menu Planning Guide

Child care staff have the opportunity to help children learn and develop life-long healthy eating habits. Sharing nutritious meals and snacks in a nurturing environment with friends and caregivers is an ideal opportunity for children to develop table manners and positive social skills all the while becoming familiar and comfortable with consuming a wide variety of healthy foods.

This manual contains sections on menu planning tips and suggestions; nutrition recommendations and best practices based on the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans; meal time best practices; and sample menus that utilize *USDA Recipes for Child Care*. These recipes are standardized, easy to prepare and have been well received by children.

It is the sincere hope of the Idaho Child Nutrition Programs that this menu planning guide will be beneficial to you in your daily child care food program.





Menu Planning

Menu planning is a vital step in preparing well-balanced meals and snacks. Variety, color, texture and required meal pattern components must be taken into consideration when planning menus.








































































Menu Planning Suggestions

An excellent way to incorporate variety into your menu is to develop a cycle menu. A four- to six-week cycle menu allows for variety while still providing children with periodic exposure to new and different foods.

Recommendations for Planning Nutritious Menus with Variety

- **Strive for Balance** — Balance flavors. Incorporating sweet, tart, sour, savory, and slightly spicy in the same menu can awaken those taste buds.
- **Emphasize Variety** — Include a wide variety of foods from day to day. Vary the types of main courses you serve. Include different foods and prepare them in a variety of ways. Try a new or unfamiliar food periodically.
- **Add Contrast** — Think about texture of foods as well as their taste and appearance. Fluffy, crunchy, crisp, and smooth textures are some to keep in mind. Avoid having too much of the same type of food in the same meal. Use an eye-catching combination of different sizes and shapes.
- **Think about Color** — Avoid using too much of the same color in the same meal. Remember that vegetables and fruits are great for adding natural color to side dishes as well as entrees. Use colorful foods in combination with those that have little or no color.
- **Consider Eye Appeal** — Think of the total presentation. Envision the way the meal will look on the plate. Is it something you would enjoy eating?
- **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** — Follow the recommendations provided in the nutrition section of this booklet to assure planned meals and snacks are nutritious.
- **CACFP Meal Pattern** — Review all menus to assure they meet the minimum USDA requirements of the CACFP Meal Pattern. Review the meal pattern chart on the next page to ensure appropriate food components and portions sizes are being offered.

* or an equivalent serving of an acceptable bread alternate such as corn bread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc., made of whole-grain or enriched meal or flour, or a serving of cooked enriched or whole-grain rice or macaroni or other pasta products.
 ** for snack, juice may not be served when milk is served as the only other component.
 *** or any equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternates

	Age:	1 and 2 years	3 through 5 years	6 through 12 years
BREAKFAST				
 Fluid Milk		1/2 cup	 3/4 cup	 1 cup
 100% Juice or fruit or vegetable		1/4 cup	 1/2 cup	 1/2 cup
 Bread or bread alternate		1/2 slice*	 1/2 slice*	 1 slice*
or cold dry cereal		1/4 cup (or 1/3 oz.)	 1/3 cup (or 1/2 oz.)	 3/4 cup (or 1 oz.)
or cooked cereal		1/4 cup	 1/4 cup	 1/2 cup
SNACK				
 Fluid Milk		1/2 cup	 3/4 cup	 1 cup
 100% Juice or fruit or vegetable		1/2 cup	 1/2 cup	 3/4 cup
 Meat or meat alternate		1/2 ounce	 1/2 ounce	 1 ounce
 Bread, bread alternate, or cereal		1/2 slice*	 1/2 slice*	 1 slice*
LUNCH/SUPPER				
 Fluid Milk		1/2 cup	 1/2 cup	 1 cup
 Meat or poultry or fish		1 ounce	 1.5 ounces	 2 ounces
or cheese		1 ounce	 1.5 ounces	 2 ounces
or cottage cheese, cheese food, or cheese spread		2 ounces (1/4 cup)	 3 ounces (3/8 cup)	 4 ounces (1/2 cup)
or egg		1	 1	 1
or cooked dry beans or peas		1/4 cup	 3/8 cup	 1/2 cup
or peanut butter, soybean butter or nut or seed butters		2 tbs	 3 tbs	 4 tbs
or peanuts, soybeans, tree nuts or seeds		1/2 oz.=50%	 3/4 oz.=50%	 1 oz.=50%
or yogurt***		1/2 cup (4 oz.)	 3/4 cup (6 oz.)	 1 cup (8 oz.)
 Vegetables &/or fruits (2 or more)		1/4 cup Total	 1/2 cup Total	 3/4 cup Total
 Bread or bread alternate		1/2 slice*	 1/2 slice*	 1 slice*

Sample Healthy Cycle Menus

The following four week sample menus for Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack are to guide centers when planning menus. The menus meet the CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements and follow the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The specific serving sizes need to be determined by the ages served by each individual site. Sites can incorporate these exact menus or can pick and choose individual days to implement into their menu.

All of the recipes include the USDA recipe reference number and can be found in *USDA Recipes for Child Care*. This resource can be found online at www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/childcare_recipes.html.

Breakfast					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Whole Grain English Muffin w/ Egg 🍳 Fresh Idaho Plum 🍑 Milk	Whole Grain Waffle 🍷 Fresh Idaho Strawberries 🍓 Milk	Oatmeal Muffin (A-16) Fresh Idaho Melon 🍈 Milk	Granola w/ Yogurt Mixed Berries Milk	Whole Grain Toast w/ Peanut Butter 🍪 Fresh Kiwi Milk
Week 2	Whole Grain French Toast 🍞 Fresh Idaho Peaches 🍑 Milk	Whole Grain Bagel 🍞 Fresh Orange Milk	Oven Baked Whole Grain Pancake 🍷 (A-06A) Fresh Idaho Nectarines 🍑 Milk	Whole Grain Cereal 🍷 Fresh Idaho Apple 🍏 Milk	Oatmeal with Raisins 🍇 Fresh Banana Milk

Snack					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Whole Grain Crackers 🍪 Fresh Idaho Sliced Tomatoes and Cucumber 🍆 Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Cottage Cheese Fresh Idaho Sliced Pears 🍐	Whole Grain Cereal 🍷 Fresh Idaho Strawberries 🍓 Milk	Graham Crackers Fresh Fruit Salad	Whole Grain English Muffin with Melted Cheese 🍷 100% Juice
Week 2	Peanut Butter Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread 🍞 Fresh Idaho Sliced Peaches 🍑	Peach Muffin Squares (A-16A) Milk	Mini Whole Grain Bagel with Peanut Butter 🍷 100% Juice	Low-Fat Yogurt Fresh Idaho Sliced Apples 🍏	Whole Grain Muffin Squares (A-11A) 🍷 Milk

Lunch

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Bean & Cheese Burrito (D-21A) on Whole Grain Tortilla ☞ Mexicali Corn (I-15) Fresh Idaho Strawberries 🍓 Milk	Sweet and Sour Chicken (D-06) Brown Rice ☞ Fresh Sugar Snap Peas Mandarin Oranges Milk	Turkey & Cheese Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread ☞ Vegetable Soup (H-11) Fresh Banana Milk	Spaghetti Casserole (D-03) Fresh Idaho Mixed Spinach and Green Salad 🍓 Fresh Idaho Cantaloupe 🍓 Milk	Oven Baked Parmesan Chicken (D-05) Whole Grain Breadstick ☞ Orange Glazed Sweet Potatoes (I-12) Fresh Green Apple Milk
Week 2	Beef Taco (D-24) Fresh Idaho Sliced Cucumber and Tomatoes 🍓 Fresh Idaho Peaches 🍓 Milk	Tuna Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread ☞ Fresh Broccoli and Cauliflower Fresh Idaho Blueberries 🍓 Milk	Pork Stir Fry (D-16B) Brown Rice ☞ Fresh Sliced Oranges Milk	Beef Vegetable Stew (D-16) Whole Grain Crackers ☞ Fresh Idaho Plum 🍓 Milk	Mexican Pizza (D-13) on Whole Grain Tortilla ☞ Fresh Sliced Peppers 🍓 Fresh Idaho Nectarines 🍓 Milk
Week 3	Sloppy Joe (F-12) on Whole Grain Bun ☞ Broccoli Salad (E-11) Fresh Fruit Salad Milk	Chicken & Noodles (D-17) Vegetable Medley (I-02) Fresh Idaho Red Apple 🍓 Milk	Turkey Burrito (D-30) on Whole Grain Tortilla ☞ Refried Beans Fresh Idaho Honeydew 🍓 Milk	Taco Salad (E-13) Fresh Idaho Carrots 🍓 Fresh Idaho Pears 🍓 Milk	Ham and Cheese Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread ☞ Three Bean Salad (E-04) Fresh Idaho Watermelon 🍓 Milk
Week 4	Oven Baked Chicken (D-30) Whole Grain Roll ☞ Idaho Acorn Squash 🍓 Fresh Idaho Raspberries 🍓 Milk	Whole Grain Tortilla Rollup (F-07) ☞ Fresh Romaine Salad Fresh Idaho Pitted Cherries 🍓 Milk	Vegetable Chili (D-26) Corn Muffins (A-02) Fresh Kiwi Milk	Teriyaki Chicken (D-12) Brown Not Fried Rice (A-08) ☞ Stir Fry Vegetables (I-10) Fresh Clementine Milk	BBQ Pork Sandwich (F-08) on Whole Grain Bun ☞ Idaho Zucchini 🍓 Mixed Fruit Milk

KEY:



☞ Whole Grain Food



🍓 Local Food Item



Shopping and Food Ordering Tips

Planning ahead is the key to any successful shopping trip. Review your menu to determine what foods and supplies are needed. Production records are also helpful tools when creating shopping lists if done far enough in advance. Production records tell you exactly how much of each food item you will need to have on hand for the number of children planned to participate in each meal. Complete a quick inventory to find what you already have on hand. Once you know what needs to be purchased, it is a good idea to create a shopping list prior to venturing out so nothing will be forgotten. The Grocery List on the next page may be of benefit to you when creating your shopping list.

Shopping and ordering can be a much easier process with a cycle menu. Once you have created a master list of what foods need to be purchased, shopping requires less planning as the cycle menu repeats. Maintain the master shopping list and you will just need to check supplies and staples as you plan your shopping/ordering.

CACFP requires programs to shop around for the best pricing annually. Choose two or three local stores and do price comparisons on products you would normally purchase. Determine what store best meets your individual facility needs while also offering competitive pricing. Be aware of weekly sales at local stores. You might be able to find money-saving opportunities if you seek them out.

If space permits, it may benefit you to buy in bulk. Local warehouse stores offer larger quantities which may be cost effective for your child care center. Be sure to calculate the cost of each unit if buying in bulk. What seems like a cost saving deal isn't always the case.

If you are part of a larger program that orders from a vendor that delivers, keep in mind that vendors maintain a large warehouse with many options of similar products. Your sales representative is there to help you compare products. Let him/her assist you in finding quality products that meet the nutritional needs of the children while also being budget friendly.

Purchasing Local Foods

Serving locally grown foods is a great way to provide children with nutritious healthy meals and snacks and increase their awareness of where food comes from. There are several benefits to buying locally: fresher, better tasting foods; increased awareness of food production; and supporting local farmers and the local community are just a few.

Produce that is purchased from local sources is fresher and tastes better because it is picked at the peak of flavor. Often, locally grown fruits and vegetables are sold within 24 hours of harvest which maximizes flavor and nutrient retention. In addition to produce, many other products used in your center can come from local companies. Look for bread, tortillas, processed meat products, dry beans and dairy products all produced in Idaho. Examples for including local foods in CACFP menus are noted on the Healthy Cycle Menus in this booklet.

There are several ways to procure local food products, and the best way depends on your current purchasing system. If you buy smaller quantities at a local grocery store, simply check the labels and look for products made or grown in Idaho. During the fresh produce season from April through October, use the *Fruit and Vegetable Calendar* on the following page as your guide. There are several local bakeries throughout the state that produce quality breads, rolls and tortillas. The majority of milk sold in Idaho was produced in Idaho – just check the label to be sure. You will even find Idaho products in the frozen food section – look for Idaho grown potato products that provide convenient and nutritious meal and snack options.

If you purchase through a distributor, simply ask what local products they carry. Let them know you want to purchase locally and request local products when available. Be familiar with the local growing season and request local apples, peaches, pears, plums, pluots, sweet corn, watermelon, asparagus and other locally grown produce when they are in season. Also ask about other products you order regularly including milk, cheese, sugar, and even flour.

For those who have time and want to buy directly from the farmer, check out your local Farmers Market. You can buy at the market or perhaps develop a partnership with a local farmer to produce products specifically for your center. For a list of local farmers markets go to www.idahopreferred.com/consumers/farmers-markets.htm .

For more information on Idaho foods visit the Idaho Preferred website www.idahopreferred.com. This website contains helpful information to assist you in locating local foods, producers, Farmers Markets and more.

Idaho Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
Apples	○	○	○	○	○			○	○	○	○	○
Apricot							○	○				
Asparagus				○	○							
Beans (snap)							○	○				
Blueberries								○	○			
Carrots								○	○	○	○	
Cherries						○	○					
Corn							○	○	○			
Cucumbers							○	○	○			
Fresh Herbs							○					
Gourds									○	○	○	
Grapes									○	○		
Lettuce						○						
Melons								○	○			
Nectarines							○	○	○			
Onions	○	○	○					○	○	○	○	○
Peaches								○	○	○		
Pears									○	○	○	
Peas (Garden)						○	○	○	○			
Peas (Snap)						○	○	○				
Plums/Pluots								○	○			
Potatoes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pumpkins									○	○	○	
Radishes						○	○	○				
Raspberries						○	○	○	○			
Rhubarb						○	○	○				
Spinach						○						
Strawberries						○	○	○				
Tomatoes							○	○	○	○		
Winter Squash								○	○	○	○	○
Zucchini							○	○	○			

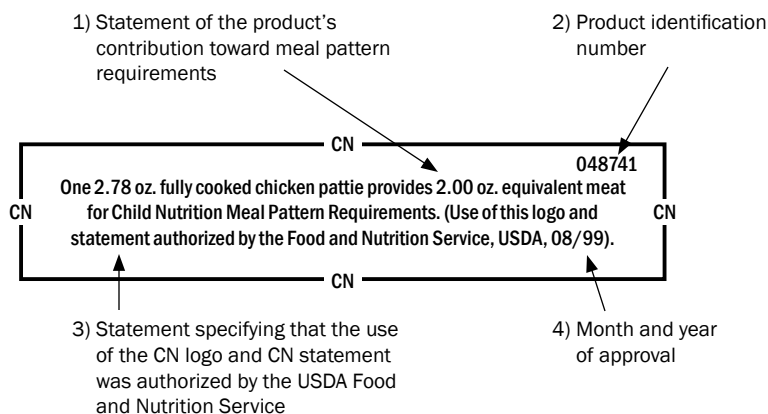
What is a CN Label and What Products Need Them?

The Child Nutrition (CN) label lists information about a food's contribution toward the meal pattern. The CN labeling process involves a review by USDA of the manufacturer's recipe to determine the contribution that a serving of the commercially prepared product makes toward the meal pattern requirements. Foods that require a CN label are any commercially prepared foods that contain more than one component. For example, chicken nuggets contain both meat and breading and thus require a CN label. Even though a child care center could use the chicken nugget only as meat/meat alternate in a meal it still has the breading on it. Without a CN label, there would be no way to know how much of the chicken nugget is chicken and how much is breading. Another way to know if a food needs a CN label is to check the Food Buying Guide. Foods not found in the credible foods sections of the Food Buying Guide must have a CN label. Some examples of commercially prepared products that require a CN label include items such as: chicken strips/nuggets/patties, corn dogs, ravioli, lasagna, egg rolls, pizza and burritos.

CN labeled products are usually packaged in bulk quantities. CN labeled products are usually found in large warehouse-type food stores or through food brokers and food service distributors. However, some CN labeled products may occasionally be found in local grocery stores.

How to Identify a CN Label

The CN label is a food product label that contains a CN label statement and CN logo. The logo is a distinct border around the edges of the CN label statement which has the letters CN on the top, bottom and on both sides. The CN label statement includes the following four pieces of information shown on the label below:



A CN label on a product does not mean that a food provides an entire serving of a meal component. When using CN labeled items, be sure that the amount served meets the CACFP meal pattern quantity requirements. CN labels do not address the nutritional value of a product. They only address a product's contribution to the meal pattern. The intent of the CN label is not to provide nutrition information. For information on the food's nutritional value, review the nutrition facts label and ingredient list.

The CN label is a voluntary program, so not all commercially prepared foods contain a CN label. A second option to try if a product does not have a CN label is to contact the manufacturer and request a Manufacturer's Product Analysis Sheet. Like CN labels not all manufacturers will have these available. To find out contact the manufacturer. The manufacturer's contact information will be somewhere on the packaging. Call the phone number and request a Manufacturer's Product Analysis Sheet. The Manufacturer's Product Analysis Sheet usually comes on the manufacturer's letter head and will have a signature certifying that the information is true and correct. It will also contain:

- The date
- A description of all ingredients, i.e. grain products must be specified whole grain or enriched
- The weight of ingredients specified as raw or cooked weight
- The ingredient weight per serving of each ingredient to be credited
- The weight or volume of the product serving size, or the number of pieces per serving

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size

1 medium apple
(154g/5.5 oz)

Amount per Serving
Calories 80

Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*

Total Fat	0g	0%
Saturated Fat	0g	0%
Cholesterol	0mg	0%
Sodium	0mg	0%
Potassium	170mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate	22g	7%
Dietary Fiber	5g	20%
Sugars	16g	
Protein	0g	

Vitamin A 2%

Vitamin C 8%

Calcium 0%

Iron 2%

*Percent values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Your daily values be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Calories per gram:

Fat 9

Carbohydrates 4

Protein 4

Nutrition Recommendations

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide expert advice, for people age two years and older, regarding how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce the risk for major chronic diseases. The Dietary Guidelines serve as the basis for Federal food and nutrition programs.

This guide will discuss several healthful menu planning topics and provide suggestions to follow these Guidelines and the Idaho Recommended Best Practices.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide several important recommendations that have been summarized in the chart below using simple, easy to remember terms such as “focus on fruits” and “vary your veggies.” Use the chart (right) as a reminder of the important nutrition recommendations to follow when planning menus. This Nutrition Recommendations section provides more detailed information on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and includes the Idaho Recommended Best Practices for CACFP which were developed to help CACFP sites implement the Dietary Guidelines. Following these recommendations along with the label reading steps on the following page provides the basic nutrition information needed to plan healthy meals and snacks.



Mix up your choices within each food group.

	Focus on fruits. Eat a variety of fruits—whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried—rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need 2 cups of fruit each day (for example, 1 small banana, 1 large orange, and ¼ cup of dried apricots or peaches).
	Vary your veggies. Eat more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies, such as carrots, sweetpotatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash; and beans and peas, such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils.
	Get your calcium-rich foods. Get 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk—or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese (1½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk)—every day. For kids aged 2 to 8, it's 2 cups of milk. If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.
	Make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. One ounce is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as “whole” in the list of ingredients.
	Go lean with protein. Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. And vary your protein choices—with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
Know the limits on fats, salt, and sugars. Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and <i>trans</i> fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars (caloric sweeteners).	

How to Read a Nutrition Label

Most packaged foods come with a nutrition facts label. This nutrition facts label is an excellent tool to use in choosing healthy foods to serve at your center.

1. When using a nutrition facts label start by looking at the serving size. Serving sizes are standardized to make it easier to compare similar foods.
2. Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of food. Look at the calories on the label and compare them with the nutrients you are also getting to decide whether the food is nutrient rich. A general guide to calories: 40 calories is considered a low calorie food, 100 calories is moderate, and 400 calories or more is a high calorie food.
3. The top of the yellow and blue sections below show key nutrients that impact health. The nutrients listed first (in yellow) are nutrients to limit. Eating too much fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, or sodium may increase risk of certain chronic diseases.
4. The nutrients in blue are those that Americans need to focus increasing. Eating enough of these nutrients can improve your health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions.
5. The % Daily Values (% DVs) are based on the Daily Value recommendations for key nutrients. The %DV helps you determine if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient.

① Start Here

② Check Calories

③ Limit these Nutrients

④ Get Enough of these Nutrients

⑤ Quick Guide to % DV

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

Eating a Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables Daily

Fruits and vegetables are sources of several key vitamins and minerals, including Vitamins A and C, folate, and potassium. Fruits and vegetables also provide fiber and antioxidants. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.

Healthy fruit and vegetable choices come packaged in several ways including: fresh, frozen, canned or dried. It is best practice to use products that are packed in natural juice, water, or light syrup rather than heavy syrups. Fruits packed in heavy syrups will provide unnecessary sugar. Nutrition experts also suggest the consumption of whole fruits and vegetables rather than juices to ensure fiber needs are met.

When menu planning, make sure to include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Varying colors ensures that a number of vitamins and minerals will be provided. Current research suggests Americans need to consume more dark green and orange vegetables. Refer to the fruit and vegetable color chart on page 22 to review the wide range of fruits and vegetables available.

Fruits: Focus on Fruits	
The Dietary Guidelines emphasize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a variety of fruits. • Consumption of whole fruits rather than fruit juice to ensure adequate fiber intake.
Idaho Recommended Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 different fruits should be offered each week. (Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) • 2 servings should be fresh per week. • Canned fruit should be packed in juice or light syrup. • Juice should only be counted as a fruit once per week.

Vegetables: Vary Your Veggies	
The Dietary Guidelines emphasize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a variety of vegetables • Increasing intakes of dark green and orange vegetables as well as legumes (beans and peas)
Idaho Recommended Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 different vegetables should be offered each week. • Dark green or orange vegetables should be offered three or more days per week. • Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) should be offered once per week (includes canned dry beans and peas).

Recommendations for Incorporating a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables into Menus

- Children enjoy finger foods. Cutting fruits and vegetables up makes them more appealing to children and easier to eat.
- Make sure to buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season. They will be at the peak of flavor and possibly less expensive.
- Try offering a fruit topping to garnish pancakes, waffles, or French toast. Apples, berries, or peaches are good options.
- Entrée items such as meatloaf, lasagna, stir fry, soups, and pasta dishes are great dishes to add shredded or chopped vegetables.
- Many items can be baked with added fruits and vegetables. Muffins, breads, and pancakes are items that can be baked with applesauce or bananas.
- Improve the visual appeal of sandwiches by layering sliced vegetables.
- Add flair to your salads by adding colorful fruits, vegetables, and legumes.
- Your meal will be more eye-catching when varied shapes and colors of fruits and vegetables are offered.



Choosing from a RAINBOW of Fruits and Vegetables

BLUE/ PURPLE	GREEN	WHITE	YELLOW/ ORANGE	RED
Purple Asparagus	Apples, Green	Bananas	Apples, Yellow	Apples, Red
Purple Belgian Endive	Artichokes	Brown Pears	Apricots	Beets
Blackberries	Arugula	Cauliflower	Beets, Yellow	Blood Oranges
Black Currants	Asparagus	Corn, White	Butternut Squash	Cherries
Black Salsify	Avocados	Dates	Cantaloupe	Cranberries
Blueberries	Green Beans	Garlic	Cape Gooseberries	Grapefruit, Pink/Red
Purple Carrots	Broccoli	Ginger	Figs, Yellow	Grapes, Red
Dried Plums	Broccoli Rabe	Jerusalem Artichokes	Grapefruit	Onions, Red
Eggplant	Brussels Sprouts	Jicama	Golden Kiwifruit	Pears, Red
Elderberries	Cabbage, Green	Kohlrabi	Lemons	Peppers, Red
Purple Figs	Celery	Mushrooms	Mangoes	Pomegranates
Purple Grapes	Chayote Squash (Napa/Boc Choy)	Nectarines, White	Nectarines	Potatoes, Red
Purple Peppers	Cucumbers	Onions	Oranges	Radicchio
Plums	Endive	Parsnips	Papayas	Radishes
Potatoes (purple flesh)	Grapes, Green	Peaches, White	Peaches	Raspberries
Purple Cabbage	Honeydew Melon	Potatoes, White	Pears, Yellow	Rhubarb
Raisins	Kiwifruit	Shallots	Peppers, Yellow	Strawberries
	Leafy greens	Turnips	Persimmons	Tomatoes
	Leeks		Pineapples	Watermelon
	Lettuce		Potatoes, Yellow	
	Limes		Pumpkin	
	Okra		Rutabaga	
	Onions, Green		Summer Squash, Yellow	
	Peas (Green, Snap, Snow)		Sweet Corn	
	Pears, Green		Sweet Potatoes	
	Peppers, Green		Tangerines	
	Spinach		Tomatoes, Yellow	
			Watermelon, Yellow	
			Winter Squash, Yellow	



Strong Bones and Teeth are a Low-Fat Dairy Product Away

Young children are growing at a rapid rate. Adequate calcium and Vitamin D intakes are essential to support bone growth and tooth maintenance. Dairy products are an excellent source of calcium and Vitamin D and provide phosphorus, protein, riboflavin, and vitamin A. It is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics that children age 12 to 24 months be provided whole milk to promote brain development. Children between the ages of 2-8 years should be offered 2 cups of low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk daily.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products on a daily basis.

Dairy: Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods	
The Dietary Guidelines emphasize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 2-8 years should consume 2 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk products. • Children 9 years of age and older should consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products per day.
Idaho Recommended Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Only</u> low-fat or fat-free milk products are offered to children over 2 years of age. • Whole milk is offered to children 12-24 months.

Recommendations for Incorporating Low-Fat Dairy Products into Menus

- Milk is tastiest when kept cold. Make sure your refrigerators are holding milk at appropriate temperatures.
- Cheese please! Cheese is a good source of calcium, but remember to offer low-fat versions. Some white cheeses are a lower fat option than yellow cheeses.
- Don't forget to offer low-fat yogurt. A low-fat granola topping may be beneficial to increasing acceptance.
- Recipes can be adjusted to use low-fat milk products in cooking and baking. This will decrease the amount of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol in foods served.

Building Muscle with Lean Protein Sources

Protein is an essential part of our daily diet. Individuals, especially children, require protein to help build and maintain muscle. Meats and meat alternates provide protein as well as iron. Iron is necessary to promote optimal learning and development. Iron also provides children with energy for playtime. It is important to choose lean sources of protein to limit fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol in the diet.

Meats: Go Lean with Protein	
The Dietary Guidelines emphasize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose lean meats • Bake it, broil it, or grill it. • Vary your protein choices with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
Idaho Recommended Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean meats (not breaded, fried, or pre-fried) are offered 3 days a week. • High Fat meats (such as sausage, hot dogs, and bologna) shall be limited.

Recommendations for Incorporating Lean Protein Into Menus

- Add beans to your menu. Beans are a great source of protein while also being a low-fat product. Beans are also a good source of fiber. Try adding a bean dish to your menu once a week.
- Increase the seafood on your menu. Most types of seafood are excellent sources of low-fat protein.
- When selecting meat, choose skinless white-meat poultry, pork tenderloin, or lean cuts of beef. All of these meats are relatively low in fat but full of protein.
- Don't forget the dairy products. Good sources of quality dairy that can be counted as a meat/meat alternate in the CACFP include: low-fat and fat-free cheese, cottage cheese and yogurt. These foods contain protein as well as calcium.
- Choose extra lean ground beef. A food label that says "90% lean" is a healthy choice.
- Trim visible fat away before cooking.
- Choose low-fat cooking methods. Smart ways to cook meat include broiling or boiling, grilling, poaching, or roasting. Avoid deep-frying or pan-frying meat and limit cooking methods that require breading.
- Drain off any fat that appears during the cooking process.
- Choose nuts as a snack.
- Check the Nutrition Facts Label for the saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium content of packaged foods. Keep in mind lower fat versions of many processed meats are available.

Tasty and Healthy Whole Grains

Children require whole grains for energy. Whole grains provide fiber, minerals, antioxidants and B-vitamins (thiamin, niacin, and riboflavin) that help bodies convert food into energy. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage half of the grain products consumed daily to be whole grains.

What is in a Whole Grain? Whole grain foods contain all parts of the grain kernel (the bran, germ, and endosperm) and all of the naturally occurring nutrients. A refined grain food has had the bran and germ removed with only the endosperm remaining. By removing the bran and germ portions of the grain kernel, the grain's nutrient content has been significantly diminished.

Grains: Make Half Your Grains Whole	
The Dietary Guidelines emphasize	Of the grains consumed have half of them be whole grain.
What is a whole grain?	A grain that is brown in color is not necessarily a whole grain food. <u>Homemade Products:</u> at least 51% of the ingredients are whole grains. <u>Purchased Products:</u> a whole grain is listed as the first ingredient on the ingredient list.
Idaho Recommended Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least half of the grain products served should be whole grain.

Listed below are some common and less common types of whole grains to keep in mind.

Common Types of Whole Grains	Less Common Types of Whole Grains
Brown rice	Quinoa
Wild rice	Bulgur
Oatmeal or rolled oats	Buckwheat
Barley (pearled is not a whole grain)	Whole grain corn
Whole Wheat	Wheatberries
	Whole Rye

*Many of the above mentioned whole grain products can be found in the bulk food section of your local grocery store.

Identifying Whole Grains

Be aware of what terms to look for on food labels. The first ingredient listed must state it is “whole” such as “whole wheat” or “whole grain” to be considered a whole grain product.

There are several misleading phrases such as: “100% wheat”, “multigrain”, or “stone ground”. If the product ingredient list begins with one of these phrases, it is not necessarily a whole grain.

The color of a food cannot be used to identify it as whole grain. Artificial colorings may have been added to an item to give it a darker color. The only way to determine if a food item is a whole grain is to refer to the ingredient list on the back of the package.

Recommendations for Incorporating Whole Grains Into Menus

- Select breads, buns, bagels, and pasta products that are whole grain.
- Gradually add whole grain flour to your recipes. Eventually substitute over half of the white flour in a recipe with whole grain flour.
- Bake your own cookies or desserts using oats. The enticing aroma will float through your child care center, awakening the senses.
- Add whole grains to side dishes. Take a look at your current recipes and determine where whole grains such as brown rice, bulgur, quinoa, or whole barley could be included.
- Choose a ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook whole grain cereal.



Fiber for Good Digestive Health

All of us, including children, require fiber to promote good digestive health. Fiber is the non-digestible carbohydrate that provides bulk to foods. Only foods that come from plant sources provide fiber.

Foods high in fiber include: whole grains, oats, bran, nuts, seeds, legumes, fruits and vegetables.

Familiarize yourself with the fiber content of foods by reviewing the Nutrition Facts Label. Fiber is listed as Dietary Fiber and the amount contained in foods is listed in grams.

Recommendations for Incorporating Fiber Into Menus

- Substitute over half of the white flour called for in your recipes with whole grain flour. Try oatmeal, oat bran, or rye in bread and muffin recipes.
- Throw in some beans, peas or legumes to your main dishes. Add a legume based dish to your menu on a weekly basis. Children may enjoy chili or bean and cheese burritos. Try some beans to top a salad or baked beans as a side dish as well.
- Serve fresh fruits and vegetables. Provide the peel or skin when appropriate.
- Include grated vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, or zucchini in main dishes and salads. Lean beef entrees such as meatloaf and meatballs are a place to start.
- Lentils or bulgur added to hamburger dishes is an easy way to increase the fiber.
- Try some higher fiber, ready to serve cereals. Read the Nutrition Facts Label to determine good choices.



Limiting Fats, Salts, and Sugar

It is important to limit foods that are high in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium (salt), and sugar and focus on meals and snacks that provide nutrient rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy foods, and lean meats. The best way to determine if foods are high in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar is to read the food label. The sample food label on page 19 shows a step-by-step process for reading a food label. It also highlights the nutrients to get enough of as well as the nutrients to limit. Label reading is a quick and simple process once you understand the important components of a food label.

Fats, Salts, and Sugars: Know the Limits	
The Dietary Guidelines emphasize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and adolescents: Keep total fat intake between 30-35% of calories. • Limit solid fats as well as foods that contain them. • Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fat. • Prepare foods and beverages with little salt and/or added sugars.
Idaho Recommended Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweets and high fat snacks shall only be offered once per week.

Saturated Fats:

Saturated fats are primarily found in animal products such as meat, poultry, and whole milk dairy products. Cheese, sour cream, ice cream, and butter are examples of whole milk dairy products. Processed and fast foods are usually also high in saturated fats. Saturated fats are those fats that are solid at room temperature.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend no more than 10% of total calories come from saturated fat sources.

Recommendations for Limiting Saturated Fats in Menus

- Substitute low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products for their full-fat counterparts.
- Choose lean cuts of meat. Look for signs of marbling in your meats. Marbled meats contain more saturated fat.
- Remove the skin from poultry after cooking.
- Use liquid vegetable oils. Canola or olive oil is a better choice over solid fats such as butter.
- Decrease the number of pre-fried foods on your menu. These items have been cooked in oil and are generally high in fat content and calories.

Trans Fats:

Processed foods are a major source of trans-fat in the American diet. Sources of trans fat include: cakes, cookies, crackers, pies, breads, animal products, margarine, fried foods, and shortening.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend keeping trans-fatty acids intakes as low as possible.

Recommendations for Limiting Trans Fats in Menus

- Read the Nutrition Facts label. Trans-fat levels have been required to be noted on labels since 2006.
- When baking consider using applesauce as a substitute for fat in recipes you currently use.

Cholesterol:

Cholesterol is found in animal products. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend cholesterol intakes be kept at 300 milligrams per day or less. Too much cholesterol can put children and adults at risk for poor heart health.

Recommendations for Limiting Cholesterol in Menus

- Offer low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Use low-fat cheeses in sandwiches. White cheeses are generally lower in fat than yellow cheeses.
- Be sure to offer high-fiber foods. Fiber binds cholesterol and helps remove it from the body. Review the fiber section to determine high fiber food sources.
- Offer beans, lentils, and dried peas as they are low in cholesterol and high in fiber.
- Limit the use of egg yolks when baking breads, cakes, and cookies.

Sodium:

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage a diet lower in sodium than is customarily eaten in this day and age. The taste for salt is an acquired one. If a child is provided with salty foods early in life, it is likely he/she will develop a lifelong taste for salty foods. Care providers can help children learn to enjoy the natural taste of healthy foods without adding salt.

It has been estimated that approximately 75% of the salt consumed in a typical American diet comes from the manufacturer's food processing techniques. It is important to keep this in mind as Americans, children included, consume more and more processed or pre-prepared foods annually.

Recommendations for Limiting Sodium in Menus

- Read the Nutrition Facts label. Food labels list sodium content rather than salt content. Review the amount of sodium listed and select a lower sodium option. Best practice is to prepare as many foods on-site as possible.
- Reduce the amount of higher sodium foods on your menu by taking favorite recipes and gradually reduce the sodium in each menu item. This will allow the taste buds of the children to adjust.
- Do not add additional salt to foods during the cooking process.
- Fresh foods are naturally lower in sodium than processed foods. Offer more fresh foods on your menus. Limit canned vegetables, commercially canned soups, lunch meats, and frozen entrees as they often are high in sodium. If you do serve canned vegetables, and cannot find low sodium versions, rinse them off with running water prior to serving.
- If you order from a vendor, keep up communication with food vendors and let them assist you with product comparisons. Be vigilant and order lower sodium versions of processed foods.

Sugar:

Sugars can be naturally present in foods (such as the fructose in fruit) or added to foods. Added sugars supply calories but few to no nutrients. Individuals who regularly consume food or beverages high in added sugars may consume lower amounts of important nutrients while consuming excess calories. The nutrition facts label provides the amount of total sugars in a food. Ingredients are listed in order of predominance, by weight on the ingredient list. If a product has sugars listed in the first few ingredients it is most likely predominantly sugar. Child care centers should avoid offering foods that primarily contain sugar.

Recommendations for Limiting Saturated Fats in Menus

- Read food labels and ingredient lists and avoid offering foods with sugar as the primary ingredient.
- Be aware of snacks that are high in sugar (such as granola bars, muffins, cookies, etc).
- Fruit drinks are a major source of sugar in children's diets, only serve juices that are 100% fruit juice.
- Look for breakfast items that are low in sugar; some cereals, muffins, breads, and waffles can be high in sugar.

Healthy Snacks: An Important Part of Every Child's Day

Children are busy and require lots of energy to be productive throughout the day. A child usually cannot eat enough at one meal to last them until the next meal. Providing healthy snacks is a great way to provide nutrients and energy as well as introduce a wide variety of new foods to a child.

When planning a snack menu, be sure to refer to the meal pattern chart snack section for required serving sizes.

Recommendations for Offering Healthy Snacks

- Children enjoy finger foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables that are cut into smaller pieces are good options for finger foods. Eating finger foods also aids the development of fine motor skills.
- Children like to dip fruits and vegetables. Offer healthy dips such as flavored low-fat yogurt for fruits, and fat-free dressings such as ranch, for vegetables.
- Try offering typical breakfast foods for snacks. Whole grain cereals, pancakes, and French toast are well-received options.
- Try a recipe that may be used as a main entrée. This will expose the children to a new item and let you determine whether or not it will be a good choice to add to the lunch menu.
- Offer a variety of whole grains. Fresh-baked whole grain snacks will provide an enticing aroma throughout the child care center that will arouse the appetite. Whole grain snack options are provided within the sample menus for you to choose from.
- Offer low-fat dairy products. Milk is a great way to wash down that freshly baked whole grain snack.
- Try offering sandwiches such as egg or tuna salad. Peanut butter sandwiches are sure to please.



Meal Time Best Practices

Providing healthy meals and snacks can be a perplexing but also a rewarding experience. Menus and recipes can be used to teach children about the color, taste, and texture of a variety of foods. Child care staff can be positive role models for healthy eating. The following sections provide suggestions and concepts to ensure mealtime is a pleasant experience for all.

Incorporating Family Style Meal Service

Eating habits and food preferences are developed early in life. Because of this, it is important to offer a familiar routine at meals. Family style meal service is an excellent way to provide that familiar routine. The Child and Adult Care Food Program encourages family style meal service in the child care setting.

In family style meal service, all food is placed on the table at the same time. Adequate amounts of each food item must be placed on the table to provide at least minimum portions for each child and child care staff to be served. Children pass the food around the table and serve themselves with help from child care staff as necessary. This practice promotes development of fine motor skills and allows children to decide how much and which foods to put on their plates. Choose bowls and utensils that will allow for optimal independence and can be easily handled by children. Family style dining encourages children to try new foods as they see others trying these foods. Child care staff should actively encourage children to take the full required portion of each food component. If a child initially refuses a food the child care staff should offer the food item again later in the meal.

As child care staff sits and eats with the children, they enjoy the same meal and share conversation in a relaxed setting. Child care staff can try asking questions that require more than just a yes or no answer. Questions like: “What is something you learned today?” or “What made you laugh today?” are good places to start. This relaxed atmosphere allows the child care staff to act as role models to promote healthy eating habits and positive social skills.

Family style meals offer a positive routine that provides children with a comfortable and secure environment in which to enjoy food. A family style routine will also assist children in developing social skills, such as helping set the table, learning to pass food, taking turns, as well as saying please and thank you.

Be a Role Model for Healthy Eating

Children learn from what they see every day. As caregivers, you are an important influence on the children in your care. There are many things you can do to help children learn and develop life-long healthy eating habits. Providing menus that incorporate a variety of nutritious foods helps children become familiar with foods they might not have had an opportunity to try at home. This repeated exposure can help children become more willing to try unfamiliar foods. When children become less apprehensive about trying a wide variety of foods, menu planning becomes a simpler process. Caregivers can set a good example by demonstrating a positive attitude toward all foods served.

A child may need to have multiple exposures to a new food before they even decide to taste it. Try asking children to put a small amount of the new food on their plate and ask them to feel the texture and note the color, but do not make them eat it. It is the responsibility of the caregiver to offer foods that will promote the child's growth and development. Keep in mind that it is the child's choice as to what and how much they will consume. It is important to respect the choice of each child. It is the responsibility of the child care provider to make mealtime as pleasant an experience as possible.

Recommendations for Healthy Role Modeling at Meal Times

- Lead by example. If you are role modeling eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, children will be more willing to follow your lead.
- Let the creative juices flow. Try cutting food into different shapes that will interest children.
- Everyone should eat the same foods. It is much easier to plan meals if everyone eats the same foods. If accommodations are necessary due to health reasons, use this as a teaching tool. Explain why sometimes different foods are necessary for an individual.
- Never use food as a reward. Children love to receive praise and positive attention. Reward with love rather than sweets and other treats.
- Focus on those sharing the same table. Discussions during the meal should be about happy and fun topics. Sharing good conversation will promote healthy eating.
- Don't be apprehensive to try new foods yourself. Trying new foods can lead to conversation about the texture, taste, color, and smell. It is a good idea to offer a new food along with something that is familiar and well liked. A child should be encouraged, but never forced, to try new and unfamiliar foods.

Meal Time is a Time for Learning

During meal times, care providers can lead and encourage interesting and pleasant table conversation across a variety of topics. The meal table is an excellent place to teach nutrition. Children can be exposed to concepts such as how food is grown. Encourage conversation by asking where they think something might have grown: a tree, vine, or bush. Is the food a fruit or a vegetable? Is it a bread product? What do healthy foods do for our bodies? The foods on the table are a great way to discuss concepts such as colors, tastes, shape, texture, and size. Encourage children to use their five senses to explore and enjoy foods.

Conversation does not need to be limited to nutrition, however. Children will learn and absorb knowledge if the child care provider asks open-ended questions that involve all in the conversation. It is important that adults model good listening skills and encourage turn-taking. Draw children out by asking their specific thoughts on whatever the discussion is about.

Meal times are also a good opportunity to promote social skills by encouraging clean up duties. Children are more than capable of helping to clean the table top and helping with any sweeping that may be necessary under the tables. Parents will be most appreciative if these social skills carry over to the home.



RESOURCES USED

Idaho CNP Cooking with Whole Grains
Instructor Guide

New Nutrition Standards for Idaho School
Meals

2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Mypyramid.gov

Kidseatwell.org

American Academy of Pediatrics

National Food Service Management Institute-
CARE Connection

Healthy Child Care December 2009-January
2010 edition Volume 13, Issue 1

Making it Balance and Kickin' It Up A Cycle
Menu for Maine Child Care Spring 2008
manual.



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