



Ohio's School Meal Programs Fact Sheet

Welcome to Ohio's Child Nutrition Programs. The Ohio Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Services, in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture, administers the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, After School Care Snack, and Government Donated Food (Commodity) Programs among others.

Nationally, over 25 million children in over 90 thousand schools participate in Child Nutrition Programs, making them one of the country's largest food service operations. Ohio's food service programs serve over 1 million meals daily at over 4,000 sites.

The goals of the Child Nutrition Programs are to:

- Safeguard the health and well being of this nation's children
- Encourage domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural foods
- Give children an understanding of the relationship between proper eating habits and good health

Who can apply to participate in the lunch and breakfast programs?

- ◆ Any school of high school grade or under recognized by the State of Ohio as operating under public or nonprofit private ownership
- ◆ Any public or nonprofit classes of pre-primary grades when conducted in the aforementioned schools
- ◆ Any public or nonprofit, private licensed Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI).

What qualifies a child to participate?

Any child under age 21 who is enrolled in a school or RCCI that participates in a Child Nutrition Program.

Additional benefits may be available to a child when his or her guardian submits an income eligibility application to the school. Based on the household's size and income, the child may be eligible for meals free or at a reduced price.

Schools may charge no more than \$0.40 for a reduced-price lunch and \$0.30 for a reduced-price breakfast. Schools set their own prices for meals served to students who pay the full meal price (paid full-price), though they must operate their meal services as non-profit programs.

What are the meal service requirements for lunch and breakfast?

To be eligible for cash reimbursement and government donated foods, participating schools must prepare and serve meals that meet federal nutrition requirements. The reimbursable meal must be priced as a unit and available to all children regardless of their ability to pay. Meal service for lunch must be between 10:00am – 2:00pm.

Schools have the option to choose one of four patterns for menu planning: NuMenus, Assisted NuMenus, Traditional Meal Pattern or the Enhanced Meal Pattern. Both the NuMenus and Assisted NuMenus patterns are nutrient-based. A computerized nutritional analysis is used to plan these menus. Permission from the Office of Child Nutrition Services and USDA approved software is required to use these Patterns. Traditional and Enhanced patterns are food-based and are planned using minimum quantities of milk, meat or meat alternate, vegetables and/or fruits, grains and breads.

The Food-Based Menu Patterns for lunch in elementary grades must include daily:

8 ounces of fluid milk (low-fat plain must be offered)
¾ cup total of two different fruits and/or vegetables
2 ounces of meat or meat alternate
1 serving of grain/bread (8 per week for Traditional)

**In the Enhanced Menu Pattern, additional fruits and/or vegetables and grain/breads are required per week based on grade/age groups. The Enhanced Menu Pattern allows one creditable serving of grain/bread per day to be a dessert item.

The Food-Based Menu Pattern for breakfast must include daily:

8 ounces of fluid milk
½ cup of fruit or vegetable (or full-strength juice)
AND
2 servings of grain/bread
OR
2 meat or meat alternate servings (one ounce each)
OR
1 grain/bread serving and 1 ounce of meat or meat alternate

What reimbursement will the school receive?

The school is reimbursed for each complete meal served to an eligible child. Reimbursement rates are applied based on the child's eligibility: paid full-price, reduced-price, or free. The school is responsible for accurately counting the meals served to children daily by eligibility category. In addition, a government donated food entitlement is earned for each lunch served. Government donated food is allocated monthly based on the preceding year's entitlement.

What records must be kept?

The following are required records that must be kept for three school years plus the current year:

- ◆ Daily menus and production records
- ◆ Daily meal count and cash receipt worksheets
- ◆ Income eligibility applications for free and reduced-price meals
- ◆ Monthly inventories of foods and supplies
- ◆ Monthly participation and cost reports
- ◆ Verification records
- ◆ Records of On-site Accountability Reviews (if more than one site)

To apply for one of the Child Nutrition Programs or to obtain additional information, please contact the Office of Child Nutrition Services. A regional consultant will be available to assist you.

**The Ohio Department of Education
Office of Child Nutrition Services
25 South Front Street, Mail Stop: 304
Columbus, OH 43215-4183
1-614-466-2945**

Additional information, including current reimbursement rates and student income eligibility guidelines, is available at:

www.cns.ode.state.oh.us -or- www.fns.usda.gov

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