

Food Mood

Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

Preparation Time

Activity 1A: 30 min
 Activity 1B: 5 min
 Activity 2: 5 min
 Activity 3: 10 min

Duration of Lesson

Introduction: 5 min
 Activity 1A: 25 min
 Activity 1B: 15 min
 Activity 2: 20 min
 Activity 3: 20 min
 Closing: 5 min

Handouts

*Let's Take a Look
 What You Say Really
 Matters
 Parent Letter
 Follow-the-Leader*

Goal

To teach teachers, cooks and administrators about the benefits and components of family-style meal service and to motivate them to incorporate this style of meal service into everyday practice at their center.

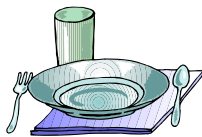
Participant Objectives

Participants will:

1. Define family-style meal service and explain the difference between family style and pre-plated meals.
2. Name two benefits of family-style meal service.
3. Describe two ideal practices when feeding children family style in the child care setting.
4. Identify two keys to success when implementing family-style meal service.
5. Determine the appropriate amounts of foods to prepare and serve in family-style meal service.



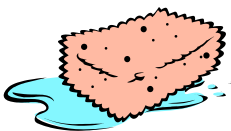
Points To Cover/Trainer's Notes

Points To Cover	Trainer's Notes
What are family-style meals? 	In the child care setting, family-style meals are meals in which children sit at child-size tables with age appropriate plates and utensils. All foods are prepared and placed on the table in small serving bowls with child-size serving utensils. Children serve themselves and pass the serving bowls to the other children at the table. They also have the choice of determining which foods to take and which foods to eat.
What is pre-plating?	Pre-plating means that each child's plate is prepared for them by child care center staff using age appropriate portions.
Benefit to the provider of serving family-style meals	Saves food cost: Children are allowed to take just the foods they want in the amounts they want, thus creating less waste.
Benefit to both provider and children of serving family-style meals	Developmentally appropriate/best practice: Family-style meal service supports best practices for feeding young children in a group environment and moves the center toward best practices in child care. [See <i>Let's Take a Look</i> handout]

Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

Benefits to the children of serving family-style meals



- Fosters independence: Gives children the opportunity to make choices.
- Helps children respond appropriately to their own appetite: When children self-select, they tend to take the right amounts. When adults serve the food, they sometimes serve too much, which can teach children to overeat.

Staff role:

- Encourage children to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full.
- Do not force children to eat a particular food or to finish everything on their plate.
- Develops social skills: Children learn to wait their turn to talk, listen respectfully and politely interrupt if necessary.

Staff role:

- Involve all children in mealtime conversation by facilitating turn-taking in discussions
- Support children as they learn to wait.
- Address each child by name and encourage children to do the same.
- Help solve any mealtime issues that arise between children at the table.
- Use this opportunity to help children discuss shared experiences from past events.
- Teaches cooperation: Children learn to cooperate in a group by taking turns, sharing serving bowls and acknowledging and addressing each other's needs and conversations.

Staff role: Model appropriate strategies for group cooperation.

- Teaches table manners: Children learn such skills as saying, "Please" and "Thank you," paying attention to see that everyone has been served before eating, passing food and drinks from common bowls and pitchers, serving themselves without touching the food in the serving bowls, and eating the food on their plate, not off of the serving utensils or out of the serving bowls.

Staff role:

- Encourage children to say, "No thank you" if they choose not to partake of something at the table.
- Expect children to spill. This as an opportunity to teach the child what to do to clean it up and to help the child cope with that failure.
- Develops motor skills: Children develop fine and gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and timing by passing serving bowls and using serving utensils.

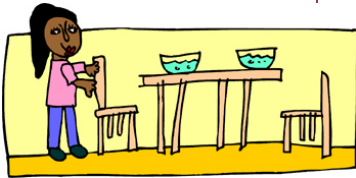
Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

Benefits to the children of serving family-style meals (continued)

- Builds self esteem: Family-style meals help to bolster children’s self esteem as they are participating in grown up activities and making grown up choices.
Staff role: Accept children’s reactions to food and allow them the opportunity to take risks like trying something new or mixing foods together.

Other aspects of family-style meal service



- Setting the table
 - Most children can help set the table for meal and snack time. First, have them wash their hands before helping. Then, ask them to set their own place setting.
 - Use child-size utensils and plates. The serving dishes should be child size so they are easy to handle when serving and passing. The serving utensils should be appropriate for the food being offered. Drinking water should be available at the table in child-size pitchers.
 - [Review and discuss the child size implements available through the tool kit.]
- Preparing the meal/snack: Although not part of family-style meals, allowing children to prepare a meal or snack provides a learning opportunity. Also, children are more likely to try a food that they helped prepare. Discussing the menus with the children helps to increase their ownership of the foods being offered and may motivate them when they see the food they requested appear at the table for mealtime.
- Cleaning up: Everyone is responsible for his/her own dishes during clean up; therefore everyone should be encouraged to participate. Teachers should always make sure that all wash their hands after they are finished cleaning up.

Keys to success when implementing family-style meal service

- Review expectations: Before the meal begins, children should know what is expected for eating and sitting at the table. This might include: waiting until everyone is served before eating, being polite to each other when passing foods, keeping their voices down, only taking what they think they will eat knowing that they can go back for more, etc.
- Incorporate one new dish at a time: When implementing family-style meals, incorporate one dish at a time starting with a simple snack that is easy to make and easy to serve to minimize the spills.
- Prepare enough food for everyone: Prepare enough of each food so that children aren’t afraid of not getting enough. In order for children to feel comfortable only taking the amount of food they feel they will eat, they need to trust that there will be

Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

Keys to success when implementing family-style meal service (continued)



more if they want more. If there is not enough food, children may begin to feel anxious and take more food than they will eat. Assure children that there is enough food and make sure this is the case.

- Seat children strategically: Seat choosy eaters next to hearty eaters. Watching hearty eaters accept new foods will motivate the choosy eaters to try those foods as well. Make sure that each child has enough space to serve themselves, eat and pass food to others.
- Assist children during mealtime: Assist the children throughout mealtime. While children should have the opportunity to solve their own challenges and to help each other, adults should help children to negotiate when they experience a conflict.

Adults should always be present during mealtime; sitting at the table, attending to children's needs, ensuring a safe environment, and making sure each child is offered all foods. They should eat the same foods as the children, modeling appropriate verbal and motor skills. However, to make sure that attention is on children's mealtime needs, adults may choose to have a separate break for their actual meal.

Activities

Activity 1A: Family Style vs. Pre-plated Meals (for centers currently serving pre-plated meals)

Activity 1B: Ideal Practices (for centers already serving family-style meals)

Activity 2: Keys to Success

Activity 3: Determining Amounts to Prepare and Serve

Closing

1. Review participant objectives.
2. Discuss the next class.

References

Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships: An Inventory for Feeding Young Children in Group Settings

Food Buying Guide

From the Trainer's Tablet: Lessons for Family/Home Child Care Providers Family Style Meals

Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids

Position of the American Dietetic Association: Nutrition standards for child-care programs

The Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program: Touching Hearts, Touching Minds

Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

**Activity 1A: Family-Style vs. Pre-plated Meals
(for centers currently serving pre-plated meals)**

Preparation Time: 30 min

Activity Time: 25 min

Supplies

child-size dishware from the tool kit
serving bowls
utensils
large plates
cups
napkins
water pitchers



Preparation Prior to Class

1. Based on kitchen facilities at the center and the time available, select and prepare a simple meal for participants. (If there are a large number of participants, prepare a meal with a minimum of eight child-size servings.)
2. Pre-plate half the meal for the participants and prepare the other half for family-style service using child-size serving implements from the tool kit.
3. Set up one table with the pre-plated sample size meals.

Implementation

1. Explain that participants will be having a sample size meal using two different table set ups.
2. Ask participants to wash their hands.
3. Ask for volunteers to help set the table that will be used for the family-style meal. Then ask participants to have a seat at either table. (If there are a large number of participants, ask for volunteers to sit at the tables while the other participants observe.)
4. Explain that children can help set the table at meal and snack time. (See: Other aspects of family-style meal service*)
5. Explain the differences between family-style meals and pre-plated meals and preview the child-sized utensils and serving dishes available in the tool kit and being used for the family-style meal. (See: What are family-style meals?, What is pre-plating?)
6. Ask the participants at the family-style table to pass the dishes around and serve themselves their meal.
7. Ask participants at the pre-plated table to begin their meal.
8. Allow enough time for participants at the family-style table to serve themselves and for everyone to begin eating. Then, begin a facilitated discussion of family-style versus pre-plated meals. When appropriate during the discussion, have participants at the

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Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

**Activity 1A: Family-Style vs. Pre-plated Meals
(for centers currently serving pre-plated meals)**

Preparation Time: 30 min

Activity Time: 25 min

family-style table model behaviors or demonstrate skills needed.

9. Ask staff at the pre-plated table how they would feel if they were told they had to take at least one bite of everything that is on their plate. Then, ask them how they would feel if they were at the family-style table and were allowed to choose what to put on their plate and how much of it they ate.
10. Explain that in family-style meal service, children choose what and how much they eat. Discuss how this teaches children to respond to their own hunger cues and may actually result in less food waste. (See: What are family-style meals?, Benefit to the provider of family-style meals, Benefits to the children of serving family-style meals)
11. Point out that the participants at the family-style meal table had to interact with each other in order to begin their meal. Ask the group to identify learning opportunities for children when using family-style meal service. Would any of these be missed with pre-plated meals? (See: Benefits to the children of serving family-style meals)
12. Ask the group to name two benefits of serving family-style meals.



Food Mood

Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators

**Activity 1B: Ideal Practices
(for centers already serving family-style meals)**

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 15 min

Supplies

photocopies of *Let's Take a Look* handout
pens/pencils

Preparation Prior to Class

1. Photocopy one handout for each class participant.
2. Review the handout and be prepared to discuss contents.

Implementation

1. Pass out the *Let's Take a Look* handout.
2. Explain that the bullets listed represent practices that offer a comprehensive, highly supportive feeding environment for children.
3. Ask each individual to place a check mark next to each of the practices that their center is already doing.
4. Facilitate a group discussion among participants regarding what they are already doing.
 - What changes have you seen since implementing these practices? (See: Benefit to both provider and children of serving family-style meals*)
 - How have these practices benefited the children? (See: Benefits to children of serving family-style meals)
5. Then, ask the group what new practices they think they could start doing.
6. Ask the group to agree on one ideal practice they could implement now.

Additional Discussion during the Activity

- Preview the family-style eating and serving utensils available in the tool kit.
- Preview the tool kit items that encourage children to learn about cultural/ethnic foods and dining.



* Underline denotes Points to Cover discussed in the Trainer's Notes in the lesson plan.

Let's Take a Look!



The bullets listed below represent best practice in a feeding environment for children. Indicate which of the practices your center is doing by placing a check mark in the box.

- Food is arranged in bowls or on platters to be visually appealing and appetizing.
- When a new food is offered, it is offered more than one time during the meal and repeatedly in the menu cycle so children become familiar with the new food.
- Children have opportunities to solve their own challenges.
- Children have opportunities to provide input on food and menus.
- Children have opportunities to take risks (e.g. choosing food, taking turns, trying new foods, and mixing foods together).
- Opportunities are offered for children to help each other.
- Adults accept children's reactions to foods.
- Adults embrace children's mistakes as opportunities for children's learning.
- Adults lead discussions to help solve mealtime issues that affect all of the children.
- Adults have a system for informing parents about what and how much their child ate throughout the day.
- Adults help focus children on shared experiences from past events.
- To assure that adult's attention is on children's mealtime needs, adults have a separate meal break for their actual meal, though they eat a small meal with the children.
- Menus are approved by a nutrition professional.
- Nutrition professional is regularly involved in staff training.

Reference: Fletcher, J; Branen, L; Price, E. [Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships: An Inventory for Feeding Young Children in Group Settings](#). University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. 2005.

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Food Mood

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Activity 2: Keys to Success

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 20 min

Supplies

easel
easel pad
markers
photocopies of *What You Say Really Matters* handout
photocopies of *Parent Letter* handout
photocopies of *Follow-the-Leader* handout



Preparation Prior to Class

Assemble the easel and place a pad on the easel.

Implementation

1. Begin by explaining the keys to success when implementing family-style meal service. These are to: review expectations, incorporate one new dish at a time, prepare enough food for everyone, seat children strategically, and assist children during mealtime. (See: Keys to success when implementing family-style meal service*)
2. Introduce the purpose of the brainstorm, which is to share ideas that will help make the transition to family-style meals as efficient and effective as possible.
3. Review brainstorming rules:
 - Any idea is fine – no comments on the ideas of others.
 - It is okay to build on someone else's idea.
 - Yell out your ideas.
 - We will discuss ideas later.
4. Record participant responses to icebreaker and brainstorming questions on the easel pad.
5. Start with an icebreaker: What do you like best about mealtime at the child care center?
6. Then, move into the brainstorming questions. Use prompts, if necessary, to move conversation along:
7. What mealtime practices would make family-style meal service easier to introduce?
 - Start by serving a simple snack family style.
 - Use child-size serving utensils and bowls.
 - Assure children that you have enough food and make sure this is the case.
 - Adults should eat with children and assist them throughout the meal.
 - Adults should have their own separate meal break to make sure their attention is on the children during mealtime.

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Activity 2: Keys to Success

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 20 min

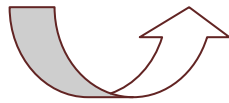
- Seat choosy eaters next to hearty eaters.
 - Make sure children have enough space to serve themselves, eat and pass food to others.
8. What expectations for eating and sitting at the table should you review with children?
- Say “Please” and “Thank you.”
 - Refuse food by saying “No thank you.”
 - Wait until everyone is served before eating.
 - Don’t eat from serving bowls and utensils.
 - Take turns when talking and passing food.
 - Take only the food they think they will eat knowing that they can go back for more food.
9. What expectations should you have for yourself when eating with the children?
- Be positive.
 - Role model appropriate behavior.
 - Involve all children in the conversation.
 - Ask the children non-food related questions.
 - Distribute the *What You Say Really Matters* handout after participants have had a chance to contribute their own ideas.
10. How could you promote family-style meals at the child care center with parents?
- Send letter home to parents (distribute the *Parent Letter* handout to participants).
 - Invite parents to join their child at a meal.
 - Host a pot luck for parents and children.
11. After the brainstorming is over, ask each participant to name one way their center could move toward family-style meal service.
12. Distribute the *Follow-the-Leader* handout for participants to post in the child care center.





What You Say Really Matters!

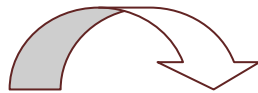
Conversation at the table gives children a variety of messages. What adults say at the table is powerful. Comments have short-term consequences for helping children have a successful or disappointing meal. In time, comments accumulate to give children messages about how much control they have over hunger and satisfaction. Think about how you may influence children's mealtime experiences. Listen to what is said at the table and decide if it is a phrase that helps or a phrase that hinders the child's choices at the table.



Phrases That Help

Look at the phrases below. Can you tell why these help?

- Yes, these radishes are crunchy!
- This is kiwi fruit. It's sweet like a strawberry.
- Do you like that?
- Would you like more?
- Is your stomach telling you that you're full?
- Use your napkin.
- Move the serving bowl closer to your plate.



Phrases That Hinder

Look at the phrases below. Can you tell why these hinder?

- Eat that for me.
- You're such a big girl; you finished all your peas.
- See, that didn't taste so bad, did it?
- You have to take one more bite before you leave the table.
- Carli, look at Maria. She ate all of her bananas.







Reference: Laurel Branen and Janice Fletcher – College of Agriculture, University of Idaho

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Help Children be Successful at Serving Themselves and Passing






Scooping or spooning is easier for children when:

-  Spoons aren't too large, spoon handles aren't too long
-  Spoons are deep
-  They are scooping from a container with sides so that they have something to push against
-  The container they are scooping from is placed at a comfortable distance
-  The food is not too hot
-  The food is more solid than liquid (if children are serving foods like stew or soup, try letting them scoop it with a plastic cup with a handle. Ladles are difficult for younger children to use.)




Pouring is easier for children when:

-  They are pouring from a small, clear, plastic pitcher that is less than half full
-  They are sitting in a comfortable stable position
-  They try to fill their cup or glass no more than half full
-  Someone is holding the glass on the table

Passing food containers is easier for children when:

-  Containers are not too hot, too large, too heavy or too full
-  They're encouraged to use both hands
-  They pick up the container from the table rather than taking it from another child's hands

Cleaning up messes is easier for children when:

-  They are using a paper towel rather than a cloth
-  They are not made to feel bad for making a mess in the first place
-  They get help if they need it



Dear Family,


During mealtime, we will be letting your children serve themselves from common bowls and pitchers.

Doing so will help your child to:

- Develop more advanced motor and social skills
- Learn table and meal time manners
- Become more independent
- Increase their self-esteem
- Build their language base

We invite you to discuss this exciting learning opportunity with our staff and encourage you to include family-style meals as an important part of your family's daily routine.

Wishing You Happy Meal Times!



meals are a great time
to play FOLLOW-THE-LEADER

Set a smart example.
Sooner or later, kids
will do as you do.

and you're the leader

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Activity 3: Determining Amounts to Prepare and Serve

Preparation Time: 10 min

Activity Time: 20 min

Supplies

easel

easel pad

marker

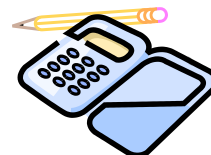
Food Buying Guide – photocopy of pages for apples (p. 2-7), milk (p. 4-2) and oatmeal (p. 3-23)

photocopies of *Healthy Child Meal Pattern* for each participant

calculators

pencils

paper



Preparation Prior to Class

1. Photocopy enough pages of the *Food Buying Guide* for each participant to have one set.
2. Assemble the easel and place a pad on the easel.

Implementation

1. Distribute a copy of the *Healthy Child Meal Pattern*, *Food Buying Guide* pages, calculator, pencil and paper to each participant.
2. Tell the group that they will be determining the amount of oatmeal, milk and apples to serve family style to 20 preschool children and 4 teachers at breakfast. It is important for teachers to eat with children to assist them and model appropriate behaviors. To make sure their attention is on children at mealtimes, they may choose to have a separate break for their actual meal. (See: Keys to success when implementing family-style meal service*)
3. Let them know that they should calculate the amounts to serve based on teachers having child-size portions - additional food will be required if teachers will be having adult-size portions. For this activity we will add 15% to the minimum amount of food required to allow for some extra servings, always rounding up the number.

Note: For a meal to be CACFP creditable, at least the minimum number of servings must be prepared. (The amount of food prepared should be increased beyond the 15% over minimum quantities if participants find there isn't enough food for the children to have additional servings when they are hungry.) (See: Keys to success when implementing family-style meal service)

4. Using the marker and easel pad, demonstrate how to calculate the number of child size portions required: $20 \text{ children} + 4 \text{ adults} \times 1.15 = 27.6$ child-size portions that can be rounded up to 28 servings.

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Food Mood

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Preparation Time: 10 min

Activity Time: 20 min

5. Have participants calculate the quantity of oatmeal to prepare for breakfast while you demonstrate on the easel pad.
 - Ask the participants to use the *Healthy Child Meal Pattern* to determine the minimum required portion size for cooked cereal for children 3 to 5 years of age (1/4 cup at breakfast).
 - Ask one of the participants to use the page from the *Food Buying Guide* for oatmeal to determine the amount of rolled quick oats to prepare for 28 – 1/4 cup servings. Assist as needed.
 - Ask the participants to use their calculators and the *Food Buying Guide* to determine how much oatmeal needs to be prepared (0.59 lbs., 3.68 cups raw).
 - Ask the participants how much they would prepare after rounding up (4 cups of oatmeal).

6. Have participants calculate the quantity of milk to prepare for breakfast while you demonstrate on the easel pad.
 - Review that the minimum required portion size for milk for children 3 to 5 years of age is 3/4 cup at breakfast.
 - Ask one of the participants to use the page from the *Food Buying Guide* for milk to determine how many gallons of milk to pour into pitchers for 28 – 3/4 cup servings. Assist as needed.
 - They will find that 1.3 gallons are needed.
 - Remind them to calculate the amount to put into a pitcher based on the number of children sitting at the table. Young children generally cannot handle pitchers containing more than 2 cups of liquid, so multiple pitchers might be needed for each table.

7. Have participants calculate the quantity of apples to prepare for breakfast while you demonstrate on the easel pad.
 - Review that the minimum required portion size for fruit for children 3 to 5 years of age is 1/2 cup at breakfast.
 - Ask one of the participants to use the page from the *Food Buying Guide* for apples to determine the amount of sliced, unpeeled apples to prepare for 28 – 1/2 cup servings. Assist as needed.
 - They will find that 3.78 lbs. are needed. Suggest rounding this up to 4 lbs.



HEALTHY CHILD MEAL PATTERN

	FOOD COMPONENTS	FOOD ITEMS	Required Minimum Quantities			
			Ages 1 and 2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	
BREAKFAST	Milk¹ (Whole milk for ages 1-2 only)	Fat-free or Low-fat (1%)	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	
	Vegetable/Fruit²	Vegetable or Fruit or 100% Juice	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	
<i>Serve all 3 components</i>	Grains/Breads	Bread <i>or</i>	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice	
		Cornbread, Biscuit, Roll, Muffin <i>or</i>	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving	
		Dry Cereal <i>or</i>	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup	
		Cooked Cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	
SNACK	Milk¹ (Whole milk for ages 1-2 only)	Fat-free or Low-fat (1%)	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup	
	Vegetable/Fruit²	Vegetable or Fruit or 100% Juice	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	
<i>Select 2 of 4 components</i> Water must be served with snack if no beverage is provided.	Grains/Breads (see lists above and below)		1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving	
		Meat/Meat Alternate (see list below)	Lean Meat, Poultry or Fish <i>or</i>	1/2 oz.	1/2 oz.	1 oz.
			Peanut Butter <i>or</i>	1 Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
			Peanuts, Nuts or Seeds <i>or</i>	1/2 oz.	1/2 oz.	1 oz.
			Fat-free or Low-fat Yogurt	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
LUNCH OR SUPPER	Milk¹ (Whole milk for ages 1-2 only)	Fat-free or Low-fat (1%)	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	
	Vegetables/Fruits²	Two Vegetables and/or Fruits	1/4 cup total	1/2 cup total	3/4 cup total	
<i>Serve all 4 components</i>	Grains/Breads (see list above)	Bread <i>or</i>	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice	
		Cooked Pasta, Noodles or Grains <i>or</i>	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	
		6" Tortilla	1/2 tortilla	1/2 tortilla	1 tortilla	
	Meat/Meat Alternate	Lean Meat, Poultry or Fish <i>or</i>	1 oz.	1-1/2 oz.	2 oz.	
		Cottage Cheese <i>or</i>	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup	
		Cheese <i>or</i>	1 oz.	1-1/2 oz.	2 oz.	
		Egg <i>or</i>	1/2 large	3/4 large	1 large	
		Cooked Dry Beans, Peas or Lentils <i>or</i>	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup	
		Peanut Butter <i>or</i>	2 Tbsp.	3 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.	
		Peanuts, Nuts or Seeds <i>or</i>	1/2 oz. = 50%	3/4 oz. = 50%	1 oz. = 50%	
Fat-free or Low-fat Yogurt	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup			

¹Unflavored milk is required for children 1-5 years of age and recommended for school-age children. Refer to the *Crediting Foods in CACFP* for information about specific meal components.

²No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.