

Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs

The Child Care Commission approved the use of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal patterns as the minimum amount of food which can be served to comply with the licensing standards for adequate nutrition. The Recommended Dietary Allowance is based on the age, sex, weight, and height of an individual.

	Child Meal Pattern		
	1-2 year olds	3-5 year olds	6-12 year olds
Breakfast			
Milk —must be fluid milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Vegetable or fruit or 100% fruit juice	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Grains/Breads —must be enriched or whole grain			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
OR, Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
OR, Cold dry cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
OR, Hot cooked cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
OR, Cooked pasta or noodles or grains	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Lunch or Supper			
Milk —must be fluid milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Meat/Meat alternate			
Lean meat, poultry, or fish without bone	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz
OR, Alternate protein product	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz
OR, Cheese	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz
OR, Egg (large)	1/2 egg	3/4 egg	1 egg
OR, Cooked dry beans or peas	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup
OR, Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tbsp	3 tbsp	4 tbsp
OR, Nuts and/or seeds	1/2 oz	3/4 oz	1 oz
OR, Yogurt, plain or sweetened	4 oz	6 oz	8 oz
Vegetable or fruit or 100% fruit juice —serve two different vegetables and/or fruits to equal	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Grains/Breads —must be enriched or whole grain			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
OR, Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
OR, Cold dry cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
OR, Hot cooked cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
OR, Cooked pasta or noodles or grains	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Snack—select 2 of the 4 components			
Milk —must be fluid milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup
Vegetable or fruit or 100% fruit juice	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Grains/Breads —must be enriched or whole grain			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
OR, Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
OR, Cold dry cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
OR, Hot cooked cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
OR, Pasta or noodles or grains	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Meat/Meat alternate			
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
OR, Alternate protein product	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
OR, Cheese	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
OR, Egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg
OR, Cooked dry beans or peas	1/8 cup	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
OR, Peanut or other nut or seed butters	1 tbsp	1 tbsp	2 tbsp
OR, Nuts and/or seeds	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Or, Yogurt, plain or sweetened	2 oz	2 oz	4 oz