



Dear ECEC Parent:

When meals are served by ECEC staff on-site during the program day, our center's DHS license compliance requires that all lunches meet the USDA regulated food groups and serving portions, even if the meal is provided by individual parents and sent from home. Even though parents provide the meal items, these meals are considered under the DHS jurisdiction because the point of service is during our licensed program operation hours, supervised by early childhood center staff. Therefore, we are required by state law to ensure that all children's lunches are inclusive of all five required meal components, including fluid milk.

Attached is the child meal pattern that we are required to follow for each child that is eating lunch in our facility. Each room will follow the appropriate age guidelines for their class. This being either "Ages 1-2" or "Ages 3-5".

The 5 main components that must be included according to the child meal pattern are:

- Meat/meat alternate – protein item (choices noted in column)
- Vegetable (such as carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, green beans, etc.)
- Fruit (must be at least one vegetable **and** one fruit item – cannot be just two fruits but could be two vegetables)
- Grains – typically a bread item, cereal, or pasta
- Fluid Milk (see additional chart for allowed cow's milk alternatives due to health/special dietary needs)

**Lunch and Supper (Select all five components for a reimbursable meal)**

Food Components and Food Items	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
<b>Fluid Milk</b>	4 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
<b>Meat/meat alternate</b> Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 ounce	1 1/2 ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Tofu	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Cheese	1 ounce	1 1/2 ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Cottage cheese	2 ounces or 1/4 cup	3 ounces or 3/8 cup	4 ounces or 1/2 cup	4 ounces or 1/2 cup
Large egg	1/2	3/4	1	1
Cooked dry beans or peas	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 ounces or 1/2 cup	6 ounces or 3/4 cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	8 ounces or 1 cup
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1/2 ounce = 50%	3/4 ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%
<b>Vegetables</b>	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
<b>Fruits</b>	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
<b>Grains</b> Whole grain-rich or enriched bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice	1 slice
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll or muffin	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving	1 serving
Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, and/or pasta	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup

<b>Nutrient</b>	<b>Per cup (8 fl oz)</b>
Calcium	276 mg.
Protein	8 g.
Vitamin A	500 IU.
Vitamin D	100 IU.
Magnesium	24 mg.
Phosphorus	222 mg.
Potassium	349 mg.
Riboflavin	0.44 mg.
Vitamin B-12	1.1 mcg.

We provide milk for each snack and lunchtime. If your child must vary from our served milk, we must have a compliance form completed and kept in the school file.

***Fluid milk substitutes.*** Non-dairy fluid milk substitutions that provide the nutrients listed in the following table and are fortified in accordance with fortification guidelines issued by the Food and Drug Administration may be provided for non-disabled children who cannot consume fluid milk due to medical or special dietary needs when requested in writing by the child's parent or guardian. A school or child care center may offer the non-dairy beverage that it has identified as an allowable fluid milk substitute according to the following table.