

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in the Summer Food Service Program

OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. OVS allows children to decline a certain number of food components in the meal and select the foods they prefer to eat, while reducing food cost and waste. SFSP sponsors have the option of implementing OVS for breakfast, lunch, and supper. OVS cannot be implemented for snacks.

OVS is implemented differently for breakfast and lunch/supper. The OVS requirements for each meal service are summarized below. For specific guidance on the SFSP meal pattern requirements, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [SFSP](#) website.

Breakfast

The three food components of the [SFSP breakfast meal pattern](#) include vegetables/fruits (VF), grains/breads (GB) and milk (M). Meat/meat alternates (MMA) are optional. A "food component" is one of the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts in the SFSP.

At breakfast, OVS is based on food items not food components. A "food item" is a specific food from the three food components. For example, a yogurt and fruit parfait that contains at least ½ cup of yogurt and ½ cup of fruit provides two food items (MMA and VF) for OVS.

To implement OVS at breakfast, SFSP menus must offer at least four food items from the three food components and children must select at least three food items. Breakfast accompaniments such as maple syrup, cream cheese, butter, and jam do not credit toward the SFSP meal pattern. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Noncreditable Foods in the SFSP](#). The chart below summarizes the OVS meal pattern requirements for breakfast.

For a breakfast to be reimbursable under OVS, SFSP sites must meet the criteria below.

- The planned serving size for each food item must be at least the minimum required quantity specified in the SFSP meal pattern. SFSP sites must offer the full serving of at least four different food items to all children.
- Children decide which foods to decline, if any. Children must select the full serving of at least three of the four food items offered. Children may take smaller portions of declined food items; however, these foods do not count toward the reimbursable meal.
- Children may decline any one of the required food items, including milk.

Table 2 shows examples of OVS at breakfast.

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Table 1. OVS requirements for breakfast in the SFSP





Table 1. OVS requirements for breakfast in the SFSP				
Required meal pattern components for OVS ¹	Minimum number of food items			
	Offered	Selected		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One serving of VF One serving of GB One serving of M One serving of additional food item from VF, GB or MMA ² 		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50px;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50px;">3</td> </tr> </table>	4	3
4	3			
<p>¹ The serving size for each component must be at least the minimum amount specified in the SFSP meal pattern.</p> <p>² The additional food item must be different from the other food items. Breakfast menus cannot include two servings of the same food item, e.g., two servings of toast. In addition, larger food items that provide more than one serving by weight or volume, such as a 2-ounce roll or 1 cup of fruit, count as only one food item under OVS at breakfast.</p>				

Table 2. Examples of OVS at breakfast

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Planned breakfast menu		Meal selections		Reimbursable meal?
Meal component	Food items	Child selects	Food items Must be at least 3	
GB VF VF M	Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces Strawberries, ½ cup Orange slices, ½ cup Low-fat milk (8 fluid ounces)	Bagel Milk	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (GB and M).
		Bagel Orange slices Milk	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (GB, VF, and M).
		Bagel Strawberries Milk	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (GB, VF, and M).
		Strawberries Orange slices Milk	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (two VF and M).

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Table 2. Examples of OVS at breakfast, continued

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Planned breakfast menu		Meal selections		Reimbursable meal?
Meal component	Food items	Child selects	Food items Must be at least 3	
GB VF MMA M	Whole-grain bread (1 ounce) Red grapes (½ cup) Peanut butter (2 Tablespoons) Low-fat milk (8 fluid ounces)	Bread Peanut butter Milk	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (GB, MMA, and M).
		Peanut butter Grapes Milk	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (MMA, VF, and M).
		Bread Peanut butter Grapes	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (GB, MMA, and VF).
		Bread Peanut butter	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (GB and MMA).
GB GB VF M	Whole-grain cereal (1 ounce) Whole-grain toast (1 ounce) Cantaloupe (½ cup) Low-fat milk (8 fluid ounces)	Cereal Milk	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (GB and M).
		Cereal Cantaloupe	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (GB and VF).
		Cereal Toast Milk	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (two GB and M).
		Cantaloupe Toast	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (VF and GB).


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Lunch and Supper

The four food components of the [SFSP lunch/supper meal pattern](#) include meat/meat alternates (MMA), vegetables/fruits (VF), grains/breads (GB) and milk (M). A “food component” is one of the four food groups that comprise reimbursable lunches/suppers in the SFSP.

At lunch/supper, OVS is based on food components not food items. A “food item” is a specific food from the four food components. It may contain one or more food components or more than one serving of the same component. For example, a hamburger patty on a whole-grain bun is one food item that contains two food components (MMA and GB). A selection of three different ½-cup servings of fruit such as peaches, applesauce and pears, contains three food items from one food component (VF).

To implement OVS at lunch/supper, SFSP menus must offer all four food components and children must select at least three food components. Lunch accompaniments such as salad dressing, ketchup, mustard, relish, butter and potato chips do not credit toward the SFSP meal pattern. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Noncreditable Foods in the SFSP](#). Table 3 summarizes the OVS meal pattern requirements for lunch/supper.

Table 3. OVS Requirements for Lunch and Supper in the SFSP		
Required meal pattern components for OVS ¹	Minimum number of food components	
	Offered	Selected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One serving of MMA • Two servings of VF • One serving of GB • One serving of M 	4	3
<p>¹ The serving size for each component must be at least the minimum amount specified in the SFSP meal pattern. Two servings from the same food component count as only one food component for OVS, e.g., two ½-cup servings of corn, or one ½-cup serving of peaches and one ½-cup serving of broccoli. In addition, larger food items that provide more than one serving by weight or volume, such as a 2-ounce whole-grain roll or 1 cup of fruit, count as only one food component for OVS at lunch.</p>		

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For a lunch/supper to be reimbursable under OVS, SFSP sites must meet the criteria below.

- The planned serving size for each food component must be at least the minimum required quantities specified in the SFSP meal pattern. SFSP sites must offer the four food components to all children, which includes five food items.
- Children decide which foods to decline, if any. Children must select the full serving of at least three of the four food components offered. Children may take smaller portions of declined foods; however, these foods do not count toward the reimbursable meal.
- Children only need to select one of the two servings of vegetables and/or fruits to count as one VF component for OVS. If children select both servings of vegetables and/or fruits, they still count as only one VF component for OVS.
- Children may decline any one food component (MMA, VF, GB, and milk).

Table 4 shows examples of OVS at lunch.


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Table 4. Examples of OVS at lunch

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Planned lunch menu		Meal selections		Reimbursable meal?
Meal component	Food items	Child selects	Food components Must be at least 3	
MMA GB	Turkey (1 ounce) and cheese (1 ounce) sandwich on whole-wheat bread (2 slices)	Turkey and cheese sandwich Milk	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (MMA, GB and M).
VF VF M	Carrot sticks (½ cup) Red apple (½ cup) Low-fat milk (8 fluid ounces)	Turkey and cheese sandwich Apple	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (MMA, GB, and VF).
		Apple Carrots Milk	2	No. The meal contains two food components (VF and M).
		Turkey and cheese sandwich	2	No. The meal contains only two food components (MMA and GB).
		Apple Milk	2	No. The meal contains only two food components (VF and M).

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Table 4. Examples of OVS at lunch, continued

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Planned lunch menu		Meal selections		Reimbursable meal?
Meal component	Food items	Child selects	Food components Must be at least 3	
MMA MMA GB VF VF M	Yogurt (½ cup) * Swiss cheese cubes (1 ounce) * Whole-grain roll (1 ounce) Fresh peach (½ cup) Green apple (½ cup) Low-fat milk (8 fluid ounces)	Yogurt Peach Apple Roll	2	No. The meal contains only two food components (VF and G). Children must take the yogurt and cheese cubes together to provide one serving of MMA.
		Yogurt Cheese cubes Roll Milk	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (MMA, GB, and M). The yogurt and cheese cubes together provide one serving of MMA.
		Roll Peach Apple Milk	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (GB, VF, and M).
		Roll Apple Milk	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (GB, VF, and M).
	* A ½-cup serving of yogurt and 1 ounce of cheese together provide one serving (2 ounces) of MMA at lunch/supper.	Yogurt Peach Roll Milk	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (VF, GB, and M). The yogurt alone does not credit as MMA because it is less than one serving.

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Table 4. Examples of OVS at lunch, continued

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Planned lunch menu		Meal selections		Reimbursable meal?
Meal component	Food items	Child selects	Food components Must be at least 3	
MMA GB VF VF M	Cheese pizza (2 ounces of cheese and 3 ounces of pizza crust) Coleslaw (½ cup) Green grapes (½ cup) Low-fat milk (8 fluid ounces)	Cheese pizza	2	No. The meal contains only two food components (MMA and GB)
		Cheese pizza Coleslaw	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (MMA, GB, and VF).
		Coleslaw Grapes	1	No. The meal contains only one food component (VF).
		Cheese pizza Milk	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (MMA, GB, and M).
		Cheese pizza Grapes	3	Yes. The meal contains three food components (MMA, GB, and VF).



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Resources

Administration Guide: Summer Food Service Program (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSP_Admin_Guide_Sept2016.pdf

Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents>

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditTofu.pdf>

Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrains.pdf>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Noncreditable Foods in the SFSP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/NoncredSFSP.pdf>

Nutrition Guide: Summer Food Service Program (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/sfsp/USDA_SFSP_NutritionGuide.pdf

Summer Food Service Program Meal Pattern (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/SFSPMealPattern.pdf>

OVS in the SFSP



For more information, visit the CSDE's [SFSP](#) website or contact Caroline Cooke at caroline.cooke@ct.gov or 860-807-2144, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/OVSSFSP.pdf>.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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