Eating Through Meal Patterns
Child and Adult Care Food Program
Fruits & Vegetables

The new CACFP meal patterns (effective October 1, 2017) encourage more vegetables and fruits and less juice for infants and children. There are many steps that child care homes and centers can take to begin implementing these changes.

NEW INFANT MEAL PATTERNS
A vegetable, fruit, or both will need to be served at claimed snacks for infants 6 through 11 months old, as developmentally appropriate, and juice will no longer be able to be claimed for infants.

WHY THE CHANGE?
Many infants who are ready for solid foods eat no fruits or vegetables in a given day and receive little benefit from fruit juice. These changes will encourage more fruits and vegetables and less juice.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?
Begin introducing fruits and vegetables to infants as they become ready to eat solid foods (usually around 6 months) and decrease or stop serving juice to infants. Claimable fruit and vegetable baby foods must list a vegetable or fruit as the first ingredient on the label. Combination baby foods (containing multiple food groups) are not creditable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of claimable commercially prepared baby food vegetables and fruits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>green beans, green peas, squash, sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, spinach, applesauce, apricots, bananas, peaches, pears, plums</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of claimable home-prepared vegetables (prepared to appropriate texture)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, green beans, green peas, potatoes, summer or winter squash, and sweet potatoes.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Examples of claimable home-prepared fruits (mash after peeling if ripe and soft)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apricots, avocado, banana, cantaloupe, mango, melon, nectarines, papaya, peaches, pears, plums.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The new CACFP Meal Patterns go into effect on October 1, 2017.

For more information, visit us on the web at www.acdkids.org or like us on Facebook!
NEW CHILD MEAL PATTERNS

The combined fruit and vegetable component will be a separate fruit and a separate vegetable component. This means at least one fruit and one vegetable or two vegetables will need to be served at claimed lunch or dinner. Additionally claiming juice will be limited to once per day.

WHY THE CHANGE?
The new meal patterns assure that providers are serving both fruits and vegetables to children. Reducing juice encourages more whole fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried). Fruit juice has twice as much sugar as whole fruit and has little to no fiber. It is a top source of calories for young children.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?
Review menus to make sure you are serving at least one vegetable at lunch/dinner and serving juice no more than once per day. Try new recipes that feature fruits and vegetables.

IS A TOMATO A FRUIT OR A VEGETABLE?
Because the fruit and vegetable component will be separate a lunch, dinner, and snack, providers will need know what counts. Fruits and vegetables can be defined in two different ways.

- **Botanical (plant) definition:** Defines the fruit as the part of the plant that develops from the flower. Other parts of the plant are vegetables such as leaves, stems, and roots.

- **Culinary definition:** Defines fruits and vegetables by whether they’re typically used in sweet or savory foods. This is the definition that CACFP typically uses. Using this definition, tomatoes and avocados are considered vegetables, and rhubarb is a fruit. Refer to the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs for clarification: [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs).

FUN FACT
Because fruits and vegetables will be separate categories, the entire snack will be able to be fruits and vegetables.

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