



CH.1

Child Nutrition and School Meals



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Since their start, school meal programs have safeguarded the health and well-being of America's children. As school nutrition professionals, you and your staff play a huge role in ensuring students are properly nourished and ready to learn. You do that by planning, preparing, and serving great-tasting, nutritious, and safe meals—every day of the school year! Thanks to your efforts in implementing today's school meal patterns, school meals are bursting with flavorful fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk. School meals are aligned with dietary specifications that ensure meals contain important vitamins and minerals and are sufficient in calories, but limited in saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat.

In this chapter, you will take a general look at:

The role of school meals in enhancing students' well-being, for today and the future:

- Key aspects of menu planning
 - Grade groups
 - Meal components
 - Meal patterns
 - Dietary specifications.
- Food-safe schools
 - School-related food safety laws and regulations
 - The importance of fostering a culture of food safety in your schools.
- The science behind nutrition standards in school meals.
- Flexibility in the nutrition standards so you can plan your menus to meet the needs of your district, schools, and students.

MEETING THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOOL MEALS

Generally, most people know about nutrition. It is the process by which our bodies take in and use food. Why is it so important? What are special issues of concern for today's children?

Good nutrition provides the calories students need for energy and the nutrients essential for:

- Proper growth, repair, and maintenance of body tissues
- Resistance to disease and infection
- Prevention of nutrient deficiencies.

In recent decades, medical researchers have found that proper nutrition, as well as physical activity, can also help reduce the risks of heart disease and certain types of cancer.

A healthy diet provides:

- Essential nutrients and energy to prevent nutritional deficiencies and excesses
- The right balance of carbohydrates, fats, and protein to reduce risk for chronic diseases

- A variety of foods including low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.

Today's Nutrition Challenges for Children

While many children in the United States consume healthy diets and engage in physical activity, a significant number do not. For example:

- Approximately 10.2 percent of households experience food insecurity.
- Nearly one in five school age children is obese.
- Over 74 percent of high school students do not engage in physical activity for at least 60 minutes daily (the recommended amount).

A student can experience food insecurity and be overweight at the same time. Reasons include lack of access to a variety of health-promoting foods; excess intake of low-nutrient, high-calorie foods and beverages; and sedentary lifestyles.

Updated Science-Based Standards for School Meals

While school meals have always provided a nutritional safety net for children, the prevalence of overweight, obese, and/or physically inactive students led the Federal Government to update

the requirements for school meals. In 2010, USDA made the first major changes to school meals in 15 years to help raise a healthier generation of children.

The updated standards align school nutrition programs with the latest nutrition science. The goal of the school meal programs is to provide meals that meet the dietary needs of children, while safeguarding their health. This is accomplished by serving meals packed with nutrients and limiting excess calories, saturated fat, sodium, and *trans* fat.

Several interrelated laws, regulations, and publications provide the rationale for school meal patterns and dietary specifications:

- *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>)
- National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nsla-amended-pl-116-94>)
- *Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Dietary Guidelines)* (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>)

Nutrient Dense

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* define “nutrient dense” as follows:

Nutrient-dense foods and beverages provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry—when prepared with no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium—are nutrient-dense foods.



- The Health and Medicine Division’s (HMD, formerly the Institute of Medicine, IOM) recommendations set forth in the 2009 report *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children* (HMD School Meals Report) (<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/12751/school-meals-building-blocks-for-healthy-children>).

The following sections cover each of these in a little more detail. First, let’s review the basics of menu planning and creating a culture of food safety.

MENU PLANNING – THE FOUNDATION OF SCHOOL MEALS

Ultimately, you want to provide nutrient-dense meals (high in beneficial nutrients and relatively low in calories) that better meet the dietary needs of school children and promote good health. This means increasing the availability and intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk. It also includes reducing the levels of saturated fat, sodium, and *trans* fat, while meeting nutrient and calorie requirements of school children.

To meet these goals, USDA has developed a food-based menu planning (FBMP) system. If followed correctly, this system helps ensure your menus will meet the nutrition standards.

Let’s take a quick tour of planning menus to meet the Federal standards before diving into details in the following chapters. In the next few pages you will review grade groups, meal components, and dietary specifications. These regulations have flexibility to fit the needs of your district, schools, and students.

Menu Planning Allows Flexibility

Districts and schools across America vary in many aspects. Diversities include:

- Urban, suburban, and rural settings
- Economic health of local communities
- Ethnic and cultural makeup of students, faculty, and staff
- District and school sizes
- Different school-level grade categories
- Differences in State and local policies
- Availability and cost of local and regional foods.

You understand the needs of your district, schools, and students. That’s why flexibility is built into planning school meals that meet Federal requirements.

Grade Groups

Meal patterns and dietary specifications have been established for grade groups:

- Grades K–5 (ages 5–10)
- Grades 6–8 (ages 11–13)
- Grades 9–12 (ages 14–18).

These grade groups reflect typical school grade configurations. Additionally, the groupings are consistent with the school age categories for various nutrients in the HMD School Meals Report. Each grade group meal pattern is designed to provide these nutrients on a weekly average: approximately one-third of the total daily calories and other key nutrients at lunch, and approximately one-fourth of the total daily calories and key nutrients at breakfast.

The food quantity requirements for grade groups K–5 and 6–8 overlap, allowing schools to use one meal pattern for students in grades K through 8 at lunch. The patterns for breakfast overlap for all grades K–12 chapter 3 includes menu planning tips for blended grade groups.



Meal Components

Meal patterns are based on meal components:

- Fluid milk
- Fruits
- Vegetables, including subgroup requirements
 - Dark green
 - Red/orange
 - Beans and peas (legumes)
 - Starchy
 - Other
- Grains
- Meats/meat alternates.

Let's take a look at the highlights of the menu planning system:

- Provide a variety of fluid milk that is fat-free and 1% (low-fat) unflavored or flavored.
- Provide fruits daily at lunch and breakfast.
- Provide vegetables daily at lunch and meet weekly requirements for specific vegetable subgroups.
- Provide whole and enriched grains: at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched.
- Include fruits or vegetables as part of required items for a reimbursable meal.
- Meet the ranges or limits for dietary specifications.

Dietary specifications establish ranges or limits for each grade group for:

- Calories
- Saturated fat
- Sodium
- *Trans* fat.

Here is a snapshot of dietary specifications in menu planning:

- Offer meals that meet specific calorie ranges for each grade group.
- Limit saturated fat content of meals.
- Reduce the sodium content of meals.
- Prepare meals using food products or ingredients that contain 0 grams (<0.5 grams) *trans* fat per serving.

Chapter 2 covers the meal components, meal patterns, and dietary specifications in detail. With this overview, you can see how the FBMP system will result in nutrient-dense meals (high in nutrients for the amount of calories).

Further in this chapter, you will find more details about the nutrition science that forms the foundation of the school meals planning system. Next let's turn to new developments in food safety in the school environment.



School District:
Pinellas County
District Schools

Located:
Largo, Florida

Enrollment:
104,000

Website:
www.pcsb.org

Training the Trainer About Food-Based Menu Planning

Pinellas County District Schools (PCDS) Food Service Department has developed a train-the-trainer program for managers on Food-Based Menu Planning. Assistant Director Brianna Mahoney, M.S., R.D., conducted summer training in small groups of 10 people, providing the opportunity for individualized attention and group discussion. Managers received materials specific to their school. Additionally, all participants received:

- A dietary specifications sheet
- A vegetable subgroups chart
- Menus for each grade level
- Meal component handouts with changes noted.

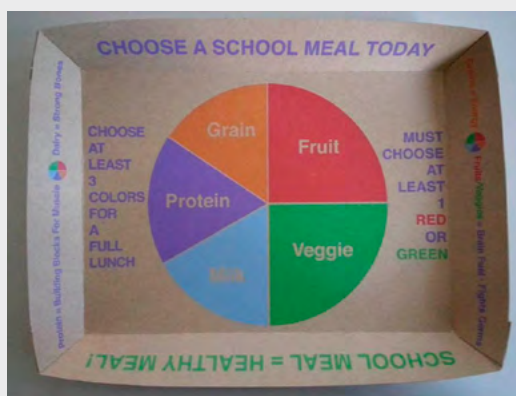
Here are some highlights of the training:

- Detailed overview and discussion of the regulations
- Hands-on activity comparing current menus to the dietary specifications
- Indepth look at vegetable subgroups
- Group discussion about ways to add more vegetables to current menus
- Tests to measure managers' understanding of the information presented.

Managers now train their staff using these materials, which they can tailor to the needs of their school. Additional PCDS training materials include:

- An e-learning program for Offer vs Serve
- A video showing correct and incorrect breakfast trays
- A question and answer game adding fun to training days
- School posters and flyers.

These examples show how training can be fun and educational. PCDS' overall training goal is to bring value to students with each meal served.



Pinellas County Schools' training tool helps staff understand requirements for a reimbursable meal.

Whether you use some of the many low-cost or free trainings available through the USDA Professional Standards Training Database (<https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>), resources from the Institute of Child Nutrition, or develop training materials, it's important to regularly train, in creative ways, both seasoned and newly hired staff on school meal standards. Check to see whether the training you provide credits toward USDA Professional Standards requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>). For access to hundreds of low-cost or free trainings, visit the USDA Professional Standards Training Database (<https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>).



Food Insecurity in America and the Role of School Meals

Most U.S. households are food secure, having consistent, dependable access to enough food for active, healthy living. But some American households do experience food insecurity, which means that some families have limited access to food at times during the year due to a lack of money and/or other resources. USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs increase food security by providing low-income households access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education to get the most out of each food dollar.

The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) monitors food insecurity in U.S. households through an annual, nationally representative survey. Here's a snapshot of food insecurity in the United States:

- 10.2 percent of American households (about 13.5 million) are food insecure, meaning they lacked access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.
- 3.8 percent of U.S. households (about 5.1 million) had very low food security; in other words, when food was in short supply, some family members ate less food and less often than their normal pattern.
- For households with children, 6.2 percent were food insecure. At times, about 2.3 million households were unable to provide adequate, nutritious food for their children.
- Rates of food insecurity in 2021 were significantly higher than the national average (10.2 percent) for the following groups:
 - All households with children (12.5 percent)
 - Households with children under age 6 (12.9 percent)
 - Households with children headed by a single female (24.3 percent) or a single male (16.2 percent)
 - Households with Black, non-Hispanic (19.8 percent) and Hispanic (16.2 percent) household reference persons
 - Households with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty threshold (26.5 percent).
- Fifty-six percent of food-insecure households reported participating in one or more of the three largest Federal food and nutrition assistance programs in the prior month.

USDA's child nutrition programs provide a nutritional safety net for children. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is our country's second largest food and nutrition assistance program. While all schools are eligible to offer the School Breakfast Program (SBP), not all do. Offering breakfast in schools is one way to address food insecurity within your local community:

- Nearly 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools (grades K-12) and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) participated in the NSLP.

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 30 million children received low-cost or free lunches on an average school day.
- School cafeterias served almost 5 billion lunches, about three-quarters of them free or reduced-price.

In participating NSLP/SBP schools, any student may purchase a reimbursable meal. Income-eligible families can receive free- or reduced-price meals for their children:

- Children in households with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals.
- Children in households with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals.
- Children from food-insecure and marginally secure households were more likely to eat school meals, and these students received more of their total food and nutrient intake from school meals than did children from food-secure households.

The school meals you plan and serve relieve food insecurity in your local area in three ways: food is offered, meals are healthful, and nutrition education is part of the school meal experience. It may seem as though you have a lot on your plate as a menu planner. Your efforts affect all students' nutrition and health, especially those from food-insecure households.

References

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, National School Lunch Program Fact Sheet (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/nslp-fact-sheet>).

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Poverty Guidelines, Research, and Measurement (<https://www.aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility>).

FOOD-SAFE SCHOOLS

When it comes to school meals, food safety is just as important as nutrition. School Food Authorities (SFAs) follow regulations provided by USDA and State or local health departments to maintain safe food. In this section, you will learn about creating a culture of food safety.

School Meals Food Safety Laws and Regulations

Let's take a moment to see which regulations affect your school food safety program. The NSLA stipulates that the USDA provide assistance to States in establishing, maintaining, operating, and expanding child nutrition programs offered through schools. The law requires school meal programs to meet minimum food safety requirements.

In 2010, the NSLA was amended. The Act now includes the food safety requirements and the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. The NSLA requires:

- SFAs to implement a school food safety program based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles anywhere food is stored, prepared, or served
- Each school participating in the NSLP or SBP to:
 - Obtain at least two food safety inspections each school year.
 - Post most recent food safety inspection in a publicly visible location.
 - Provide a copy of the food safety inspection report to the public upon request.

Assuring the safety of the food for the customers you serve goes beyond requirements. Buy-in from the broader school community is necessary to create a culture of food safety.

A Culture of Food Safety – Creating Food-Safe Schools

What is a culture of food safety? Think of it as the school community's behaviors and beliefs about food safety. A culture of food safety will be evident when food-safe behaviors are *second nature* to members of the school community – the school nutrition team, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. These behaviors are *consistently* practiced to help keep everyone healthy and safe, students and adults alike.

Unsafe human behavior is a major contributing factor to foodborne illness. Simply put, food safety and behavior go hand in hand. Historically, food safety efforts have focused on regulatory inspections and training, but research shows these efforts alone are only partially effective. Basing your food safety efforts on sound science lays the foundation for a culture of food safety. Not only must you know which practices are important to keep food safe (for example, temperature control of food), but also why these practices are critical (for example, food held at improper temperatures can grow microbes that can make your students sick).

Developing plans, policies, and procedures are important to establish expectations and standards, as well as create a food safety blueprint for the entire school community. However, you also must strive to change the way people do things – their behavior. Your goal should be to create a culture of food safety by focusing not only on *processes*, but also on *people*.



*In creating this culture, **food safety needs to be viewed as a value rather than a priority. Priorities can change; values should not.***



Food Safety Training Resources

The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) has an indepth employee food safety curriculum, Food Safety in Schools (<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/food-safety-in-schools>). This entire resource is available in both English and Spanish (Seguridad de alimentos en las escuelas). Food Safety in Schools is designed to provide school nutrition employees with up-to-date information on food safety. This training contains lessons and activities that teach the food safety concepts needed to prepare and serve food safely and to keep school nutrition facilities safe and sanitary. The chapters cover topics such as: food safety, prevention of foodborne illness, basics of microorganisms, how to keep a clean and sanitary school nutrition facility, process for foodborne illness prevention, and food safety programs in schools.

The USDA has established The Center of Excellence for Food Safety Research in Child Nutrition Programs (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/ofs/center-excellence-food-safety-research-child-nutrition-programs>) at Kansas State University. The Center offers a weeklong food-safety training program, Serving Up Science: The Path to Safe Foods In Schools (<https://www.cnsafefood.k-state.edu/resources/serving-up-science/>).

Food safety training can provide credit toward USDA Professional Standards requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>).

Throughout the Menu Planner is valuable, science-based food safety information as it applies to each topic. The USDA *Food-Safe Schools Action Guide* (Action Guide) (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food-Safe-Schools-Action-Guide.pdf>) is a valuable resource that can help you build on this information and create a culture of food safety throughout the school community. You are the food safety expert and champion to lead efforts to build a culture of food safety in your schools.

Creating a culture of food safety means more than managing food safety practices. It calls for you to use established and innovative approaches to communicate and partner with various groups to weave food safety practices into day-to-day school activities. The Action Guide identifies Federal food safety requirements for schools, as well as other important areas to address for a top-notch food safety program. The Action Guide also identifies the roles that others (teachers, parents, school nurses, etc.) in the school community play in the school's food safety efforts. A culture of food safety within your school community will be evident when food safety behaviors are routinely practiced and demonstrated.

Food-Safe Schools Action Guide

USDA's *Food-Safe Schools Action Guide* (Action Guide) (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food-Safe-Schools-Action-Guide.pdf>) provides quick access to practical resources for creating a culture of food safety. The Web-based version provides links to a host of online resources to help you manage food safety in your school district. The Action Guide contains three parts:

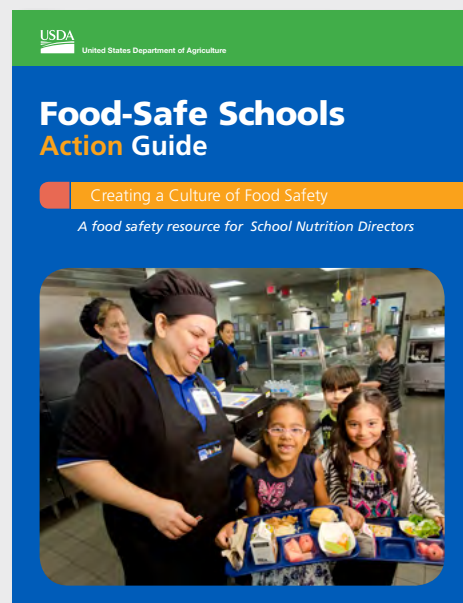
- A checklist to help assess your current food safety efforts
- Action sheets on areas of food safety to improve your program and move it to the next level of excellence
- Communication tips and strategies to enlist the support of your school community in creating a culture of food safety.

The Action Guide starts with a checklist to assess your current food safety practices for strengths and areas for improvement. Completing this checklist is one of the first steps in developing a food safety plan that encompasses the entire school community. Remember, building food-safe schools isn't just completing a checklist. You are building a culture of food safety throughout the school community. That means fostering food safety as a value in the whole school community.

The second part of the Action Guide consists of action sheets, each covering the same food safety areas surveyed in the checklist. You will find basic background information, specific next steps, and guidance resources.

The final step in creating a culture of food safety involves communication. Communication and culture are two sides of the same coin. Your commitment to food safety needs to be visibly demonstrated to the school community. When you talk about food safety, you show food safety is a value. Ask for input from your school community partners and encourage them to become long-term partners in working toward shared goals. The Action Guide includes tips for communicating with key groups—school administrators, teachers, parents, students, school nutrition managers, school nurses, your local health department, emergency management planners, and cooperative extension educators. This part also offers communication strategies specific for each group, and resources to support these strategies.

Throughout this Menu Planner, the Action Guide will be referenced along with other resources to help you create your local food safety program and a schoolwide culture of food safety.



A CLOSER LOOK AT SCIENCE-BASED DIETARY GUIDANCE RELATED TO SCHOOL MEALS

By law, the science behind the *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* is based on these three resources:

- *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
- *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*
- **Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs).**

This section gives an overview of these resources related to school nutrition. Additionally, it addresses the USDA Food Guidance System, MyPlate, which can be used:

- To reinforce the food group-based approach to menu planning
- In educational and marketing outreach to the school community
- To coordinate and reinforce classroom and lunchroom nutrition education efforts.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

What are the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*?

Developed jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are the Nation's science-based guidance on how to eat for good health. The Guidelines encourage all Americans to start and maintain a healthy eating routine. Along with physical activity, improving what you eat can help you reduce your risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, and obesity.

The *Dietary Guidelines* focuses on these main takeaways for Americans:

- Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.
- Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.

- Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits.
- Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

The Guidelines

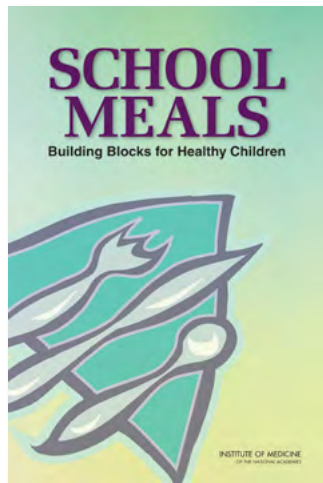
Make every bite count
with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Here's how:



The NSLA requires that school meals reflect the latest *Dietary Guidelines*. The NSLP and SBP meal patterns ensure school meals are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines*.

While physical activity is not part of menu planning, it is integral to *Dietary Guidelines* recommendations, and you can play a big role in advocating for physical activity as part of a comprehensive approach to safeguarding students' well-being. See Take a Closer Look feature *Promoting Physical Activity* for physical activity promotion resources.

HMD Report: “School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children”



At the USDA's request, the Health and Medicine Division (HMD) convened a committee to develop recommendations to revise school meal standards and requirements so that school meals would be more healthful. This committee included experts in health, nutrition, school food service,

and economics. In its 2009 report, *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children* (HMD School Meals Report), the committee advised that the USDA adopt standards for menu planning for:

- Increasing the amount and variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Setting a minimum and maximum level of calories.
- Focusing more on reducing saturated fat and sodium.

More specifically, in its report, the committee advised:

- Aligning school meals with the latest Dietary Guidelines and DRIs.
- Setting maximum calorie levels for meals for the first time.

- Reducing the sodium content of school meals gradually over time.
- Planning weekly menus around foods rather than a set of nutrients.
- Including greater amounts and variety of vegetables and fruits.
- Replacing a substantial amount of refined grain products with products rich in whole grains.
- Substituting fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk for whole or 2% milk.

USDA issued updated regulations based on the HMD School Meals Report recommendations. Thus, the HMD report provides the basis for the school meal patterns.

School Meal Standards

Students need nutritious foods for growth, development, and academic success. School meals play a key role in student health. Your meals can give students the energy and nutrients they need for good health. This, in turn, provides greater opportunity for success in school and beyond.

The school meal pattern seeks to ensure that all the foods and beverages children access in school optimize their health and do not put them at a higher risk for chronic conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease. The USDA relied on the HMD School Meals Report as the basis for nutrition standards. These science-based standards reflect the dietary needs of students and an appropriate balance among food groups. The committee recommended daily nutrient specifications for breakfast and lunch averaged over 5 days for over 20 different nutrients (including calories, protein, fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, fiber, sodium, and other select vitamins and minerals). Adopting these recommendations also brought school meal requirements up to date with the Dietary Guidelines to provide children an array of vital nutrients in a feasible way for schools.

USDA's FBMP system is designed to meet these nutrition goals. The meal patterns provide approximately one-third of the DRIs for selected nutrients for lunch and approximately one-fourth of the DRIs for selected nutrients for breakfast.

Promoting Physical Activity



The *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (<https://health.gov/paguidelines/>), issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recommend that children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily. Yet, many children and adolescents do not meet this goal. Your involvement in promoting physical activity is key to ensuring a healthy future for your students. Work with principals, teachers, and parents to help make schools healthier places to learn, not only by offering quality nutritious food, but also by teaching children about the importance of nutrition and a healthy, active lifestyle.



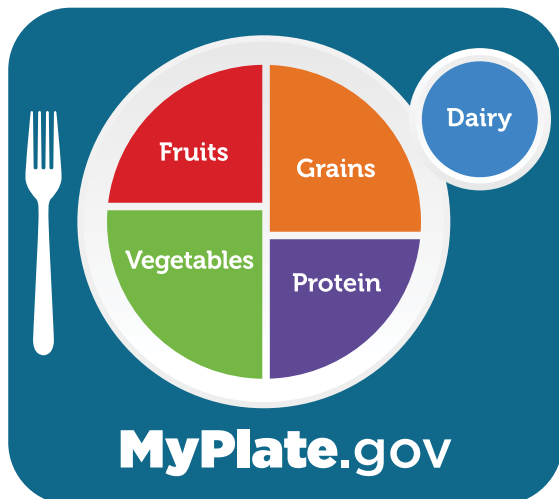
MyPlate

MyPlate (<https://www.myplate.gov/>) is an easy-to-understand tool intended to help consumers make healthier food choices. The graphic represents the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy plate. MyPlate food groups are similar to the meal components in school meal patterns with one exception. Cheese and yogurt are in the dairy group of MyPlate, but are considered meat alternates for school meals. MyPlate is a great educational tool to use with students to reinforce healthful eating behaviors.

Key Messages for MyPlate:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half of your grains whole.
- Vary your protein routine.
- Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt

A variety of interactive tools are available at (<https://www.myplate.gov/>). Help teachers and parents use the latest nutrition education tools; encourage both to visit the website.





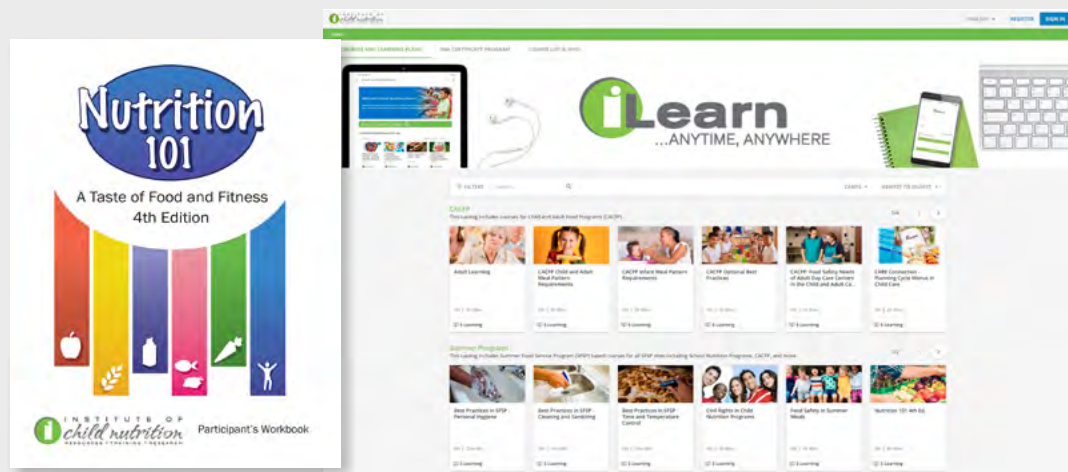
Nutrition 101: A Taste of Nutrition and Fitness – 4th Edition

Nutrition 101: A Taste of Food and Fitness, 4th Edition (<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/nutrition-101/>) provides a basic overview of nutrition and helps to underscore the importance of nutrition in daily life. The program is a professional development course for school nutrition staff. Through a variety of learning activities, participants learn about nutrition on a personal level. The goal of *Nutrition 101* is to provide basic nutrition knowledge and skills that can be applied at home and in schools.

The Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN), *Nutrition 101* consists of an Instructor's Manual, a Participant's Workbook, PowerPoint presentations and an assessment. *Nutrition 101* features seven lessons:

1. Nutrition Is Important to You!
2. Tools for Guiding Food Choices
3. The Energy Nutrients
4. Vitamins and Minerals
5. Alternate Eating Patterns
6. Putting it All Together
7. Nutrition Issues in the Media.

You will find these resources at the ICN iLearn Resource Center (<https://theicn.org/>). An online version of the course is available through ICN's course catalog under School Nutrition. Check to see whether the training you provide credits toward USDA Professional Standards requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/professional-standards>). For access to hundreds of low-cost or free trainings, visit the Professional Standards Training Database (<https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>).



READY, SET, GO WITH SCHOOL MENU PLANNING

Now that you have learned general aspects of FBMP, as well as the nutrition rationale for the recommendations, you are ready to dive into the details of menu planning in chapter 2.

Before moving on, let's summarize some key points of this chapter:

- Since their inception, school meals have played a vital role in protecting the health and well-being of America's children.
- While many children in the United States consume healthy diets and are physically active, a significant number experience food insecurity, do not eat healthfully, are inactive, and/or are overweight or obese.
- The prevalence of overweight, obese, and/or physically inactive students led the Federal Government to update the nutrition standards for school meals.

- The primary aspects of FBMP are:
 - Grade groups
 - Meal components
 - Meal patterns
 - Dietary specifications.
- A culture of food safety is critical in ensuring students' meals are consistently safe and nutritious.
- FBMP has built-in flexibility, so you can plan your menus to meet the needs of your district, schools, and students.

You and your staff plan, prepare, and serve great-tasting, nutritious, safe meals every day of the school year. That is not easy. Just know that you and your team are vital in ensuring students are properly nourished and ready to learn. Now, let's focus on school menu planning.

Review and answer each of these questions. You will find the answer key at the end of the Menu Planner.

1. What are the four primary aspects of Food-Based Menu Planning?
2. What are the five meal components in Food-Based Menu Planning?
3. Dietary specifications give ranges or limits for calories and which three nutrients?
4. School food authorities are required to have a food safety program based on what principles?
5. When food-safe behaviors are valued and are second-nature, a school community has created what?

If you got the answers right, great job! You are ready for the next chapter. If you missed any, review that section of the chapter before moving on to the next chapter.



LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Center of Excellence for Food Safety Research in Child Nutrition Programs, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS (<https://cnsafefood.k-state.edu/>).

The Center of Excellence for Food Safety Research in Child Nutrition Programs, Serving Up Science: The Path to Safe Foods In Schools, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS (<https://www.cnsafefood.k-state.edu/resources/serving-up-science/>).

Institute of Child Nutrition, Nutrition 101: A Taste of Food and Fitness, 4th Edition, 2018, University, MS (<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/nutrition-101/>).

Institute of Child Nutrition, Food Safety in Schools, 2015, University, MS. (<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/food-safety-in-schools>).

Institute of Child Nutrition, Seguridad de alimentos en las escuelas, 2016, University, MS. (<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/seguridad-de-alimentos-en-las-escuelas-spanish-version-food-safety-in-schools/>).

National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board, Dietary Reference Intakes, Washington, DC (<https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dietary-reference-intakes>).

National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children, Washington, DC, 2009 (<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/12751/school-meals-building-blocks-for-healthy-children>).

Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, Final rule. 7CFR § 210 and 220 (2012) – 77 Fed. Reg. January 26, 2012, 4088-4165 (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Child Nutrition Programs Briefing Room, Washington, DC (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/child-nutrition-programs/>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Food-Safe Schools Action Guide, 2014, Alexandria, VA (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food-Safe-Schools-Action-Guide.pdf>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Security Briefing Room, Alexandria, VA (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Washington, DC (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Professional Standards (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, School Meals, Alexandria, VA (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Team Nutrition, Alexandria, VA (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, MyPlate, Alexandria, VA (<https://www.myplate.gov/>).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Childhood Obesity Facts (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/obesity/facts.htm>).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Physical Activity Facts (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm>).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Physical Activity Guidelines (<https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines/about-physical-activity-guidelines>).