

# USING THE UPDATED MEAL PATTERNS TO LOWER COSTS



The updated CACFP meal patterns lay the foundation for children and adults in care to learn healthy habits that can last a lifetime. CACFP centers and day care homes can actually save money while implementing the updated, healthier meal patterns. Don't believe it? Check out these examples and tips!

**Note:** Centers and day care homes must comply with the updated meal patterns by October 1, 2017.



## EXAMPLE 1: CHILD BREAKFAST (AGE 1-2)

Save 4 cents per meal!

CURRENT	UPDATED
1/2 cup whole milk 1/4 cup banana <b>1/4 cup cereal</b>	1/2 cup whole milk 1/4 cup banana <b>1/2 large egg</b>
Average meal cost: \$0.46	Average meal cost: \$0.42

Meat and meat alternatives can substitute for the grains requirement at breakfast three times per week and save some money. **Tip:** Look for lower cost items like eggs.



## EXAMPLE 2: CHILD LUNCH (AGE 3-5)

Save 6 cents per meal!

CURRENT	UPDATED
<b>3/4 cup low-fat chocolate milk</b> 1 1/2 oz. chicken breast <b>1/2 slice white bread</b> <b>1/4 cup strawberries</b> <b>1/4 cup carrots</b>	<b>3/4 cup low-fat plain milk</b> 1 1/2 oz. chicken breast <b>1/2 slice whole wheat bread</b> <b>1/4 cup orange slices</b> <b>1/4 cup broccoli</b>
Average meal cost: \$1.24	Average meal cost: \$1.18

Even when serving whole grain-rich items, you can keep costs low by making changes in other parts of the menu. There are many affordable vegetables available, like broccoli and carrots. **Tip:** Check the frozen foods aisle for low-cost veggies that are just as nutritious.



## EXAMPLE 3: CHILD SNACK (AGE 6-12)

Save 25 cents per snack!

CURRENT	UPDATED
1/2 cup low-fat milk <b>1 fruit-filled pastry</b>	1/2 cup low-fat milk <b>3/4 cup apple slices</b>
Average meal cost: \$0.96	Average meal cost: \$0.71

Many vegetables and fruits are more affordable than grain-based desserts. Trading out a fruit-filled pastry for apple slices can save you money.

## Resources To Help Stay in Budget

Find useful tips and strategies to help you save money while serving healthy, nutritious foods:

- **Eating Healthy on a Budget:** This USDA site provides tips on how to prepare for shopping trips in advance to save money and suggestions for selecting lower cost, healthy items.
- **Meeting Your MyPlate Goals on a Budget:** This guide shows tips for meeting the healthy goals of MyPlate while on a budget and includes plenty of healthy, affordable recipes.
- **Recipes and Tips for Healthy, Thrifty Meals:** Child care providers can use these tips to save money while shopping and get ideas for recipes that use low-cost food items.
- **Using Cycle Menus to Control Food Costs:** This resource from the Institute of Child Nutrition shows how using cycle menus—a series of menus that is repeated over a period of time—can save time and money!
- **Cost Effective Shopping for Child Care:** This “Mealtime Memo” from the Institute of Child Nutrition gives seven basic steps that can help child care providers stretch their food budget.



*Notes: The prices reflected in this handout are from the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion Food Prices Database. See <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFoodPlansCostofFood> for more information. Prices were adjusted for inflation using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for Food. See <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/>.*