

# SHARE TABLES FACT SHEET

Form 397

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## Definition

**Share Tables** are designated stations where children may return whole and/or unopened food or beverage items that are not consumed in compliance with local and state health and food safety regulations. Food and beverage items then become available to other children who may want additional servings. The use of share tables may help to minimize food waste in the Child Nutrition Programs.

## Regulation

For all foods and beverages prepared for the NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP, Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators choosing to use share tables must follow the food safety requirements outlined in 7 CFR 210.13, 220.7, 226.20(l), and 225.16(a), respectively.

In addition, CNP operators must be aware of all applicable local and State health and food safety codes to ensure their use of share tables does not violate any of those codes.

## Best Practices

- Children may take an additional helping of a food or beverage item from the share table at no cost.
- Food or beverage items left on the share table may be served and claimed for reimbursement during **one** additional meal service *only* (i.e., during an afterschool program when leftover from a school lunch).
- Food or beverage items may be donated to a non-profit organization, such as a community food bank, homeless shelter or other non-profit charitable organization. For more information, see SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012, Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP11\\_CACFP05\\_SFSP07-2012os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP11_CACFP05_SFSP07-2012os.pdf)

## Monitoring

- Ensure the packaging of items on the share table is not opened, punctured, or otherwise compromised.
- Maintain proper temperature and temperature logs by storing food components in a temperature controlled storage bin such as an ice tub or cooler.
- Monitor expiration dates on packaged foods and do not mix reused items with items that have not yet been prepared and served. Reused items must be clearly marked.
- Invite students to participate as “share table helpers” or assistant monitors. Teach them about the importance of food safety and recycling. Date and label share table items to ensure they are reused **only once**. Do not mix reused items with items that have not yet been prepared.

## Allowable Products

- Shelf stable pre-packaged products like cereal packs, crackers, muffins, food bars, and beverages
- Perishable pre-packaged products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt placed in cooler, ice bath, or refrigerator consumed within the same lunch period
- Fruits or vegetables that are wrapped or that have inedible skin ex: bananas, oranges, and kiwis

## Unallowable Products

- Food items that can be opened and resealed (i.e. a sandwich or salad in a clamshell, burgers wrapped in foil)
- Foods brought from home
- Opened items of any kind (i.e. opened bag of baby carrots)
- Perishable foods that have *not been placed in a cooler, ice bath, or refrigerator*
- Unpackaged items, such as chicken nuggets, pizza, and pasta



For more information about safety considerations when re-serving food, see section 3-306.14 of the 2013 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code available at: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/>.

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