



**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION
CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**

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CACFP POLICY: MEAL DURATION AND SERVICE TIMES

MEMO#:

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This policy applies when scheduling meal times and when approval is granted for meals claimed for reimbursement in all day care facilities participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), including those facilities that may operate multiple sessions for different participant groups with distinct time periods, within the same facility; and only applies to those meals being claimed for CACFP reimbursement. Any meals claimed to the CACFP that do not comply with these limitations shall not be reimbursed and the agency must absorb the costs associated with the meal. **Meal service times for infants (birth until the first birthday) are not restricted by this policy. Infants should be served “on demand” as needed.**

Reference: Time of meal service {226.20(k)}

State agencies may require any institution or facility to allow a specific amount of time to elapse between meal services or require that meal services not exceed a specified duration. In addition, 7 CFR 226.25 provides that State agencies may establish additional requirements, provided that any such additional requirements are not inconsistent with the CACFP regulations.

Reimbursement for meals will only be made for meals served during the facility’s approved meal times as listed and approved on the Program Application. Meal times or occasional exceptions may be considered for the day care operation within the requirements of this policy by submitting a written request for approval from the CACFP office.

Note: In order for a meal to be claimed, it should be served at a time traditionally considered as the normal serving time for such a meal.

Approved Meals

The meals approved for reimbursement will be based on the facility’s hours of actual operation within the licensed hours. This also applies to license exempt facilities. Claims for reimbursement for meals served are limited to a maximum of three meals per day per participant; specifically, two meals and one snack *or* two snacks and one meal when the participant is in attendance with *the objective of providing only one meal per participant/meal service*, regardless of the length of time in care provided for participants.

Shelters only, may serve each participant up to three reimbursable meals (breakfast, lunch and supper), each day.

“At-Risk” Afterschool care centers may claim a maximum of one meal and one snack per day to eligible participants. Under CACFP, “At-Risk” Afterschool snacks/meals may not be reimbursed during summer vacation. “At-Risk” Afterschool Care Programs that wish to operate programs during the summer when school is not in session may apply for meals and snack reimbursement through the Summer Food Service Program.

To be eligible for CACFP, agencies must provide supervision to ensure that meals and snacks are served and consumed in a congregate meal setting, that the meals meet the meal pattern

requirements, and that records to justify its claims for reimbursement are maintained.

Meal Time Duration

Meal service may be scheduled no earlier than 2 hours after the completion of the previous meal or snack.

The duration of the meal service shall be limited to 2 hours for lunches and supper and 1 hour for other meals per session/group.

Three hours shall elapse between the beginning of one meal service and the beginning of another, except that 4 hours shall elapse between the service of a lunch and supper when no supplement is served between lunch and supper.

Example:

| MEAL TYPE | MEAL SERVICE TIME | MAXIMUM DURATION | 3HRS. LAPSE FROM BEGINNING OF PREVIOUS MEAL OR SNACK |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|
| Breakfast | 6:00 | 1 HOUR | 9:00 |
| AM Snack | 9:00 | 1 HOUR | 12:00 |
| Lunch | 12:00 | 2 HOURS | 3:00 |
| PM Snack | 3:00 | 1 HOUR | 6:00 |
| Dinner | 5:00 | 2 HOURS | 8:00 |
| *Evening Snack | 8:00 | 1 HOUR | - |

Meal Type Limitation - 3 Meals / day / participant. Meal Service Times must meet compliance for each group/session/participant.

In situations of half or part time day care sessions: meals served to the same participant(s) may only be claimed when there is at least 2 hours after the completion of the previous meal or snack.

Reference: 7 CFR 226.20(k) *Time of meal service.*

State agencies may require any institution or facility to allow a specific amount of time to elapse between meal services or require that meal services not exceed a specified duration. In addition, 7 CFR 226.25 provides that State agencies may establish additional requirements, provided that any such additional requirements are not inconsistent with the CACFP regulations.

When scheduling meal times, the following guidelines will be used for approval:

Breakfast

The duration of the breakfast meal service may take no more than one hour from start to finish per session per group.

Breakfast service must end by 10:00 AM.

Snack

A snack may be approved for midmorning, afternoon and evening.

An ***Evening Snack** may only be approved for institutions licensed for evening care, night care and/or regularly operating over 15 hours per day. Evening snacks may not be approved for service before 8:00 PM.

The duration of the snack service may take no more than one hour from start to finish per session per group.

Lunch

Four hours shall elapse between the service of a lunch and supper when no supplement is served between lunch and supper.

The duration of the lunch meal service may take no more than 2 hours from start to finish per session per group.

The service of a lunch may not be scheduled to start before 11:00 AM and shall begin no later than 1:30 PM.

Supper

A supper may not be approved for facilities where the licensed approved operating hours end at or before 6:30 PM, or where licensed for evening care, but not actually operating for evening/night care hours.

The duration of the supper meal service may take no more than 2 hours from start to finish.

The service of a supper may not be scheduled to start before 5:00 PM and shall begin no later than 7 p.m. and end no later than 8 p.m.

Meals served outside of these guidelines are not eligible for CACFP reimbursement and the agency must absorb the costs associated with the meal.

AT-RISK MEAL SERVICE TIME POLICY

Reference: 7 CFR 226.20(k) *Time of meal service.*

State agencies may require any institution or facility to allow a specific amount of time to elapse between meal services or require that meal services not exceed a specified duration. In addition, 7 CFR 226.25 provides that State agencies may establish additional requirements, provided that any such additional requirements are not inconsistent with the CACFP regulations.

The following meal service time policy applies to *At-Risk Meals and Snacks only*:

At-Risk Breakfast Meals may only be claimed during school holidays or weekends during the school year. Breakfast meal service may be no more than one hour in duration;

At-Risk Afterschool Lunch Meals may only be claimed during school holidays or weekends during the school year, except that lunch meals may be claimed for those participants who only attend school half-day, such as pre-school. Lunch meal service may be no more than two hours in duration;

At-Risk Afterschool Supper Meals may be claimed while school is in session, during school holidays and weekends during the school year and must begin no earlier than the end of the normal school day. Supper meal service may be no more than two hours in duration.

At-Risk Afterschool Snack service may be no more than one hour in duration and two hours must elapse between the beginning of a meal service and the beginning of a snack service.

Meals served outside of these guidelines are not eligible for CACFP reimbursement and the agency must absorb the costs associated with the meal.