

The School Lunch Pattern for Various Age/Grade Groups

The United States Department of Agriculture, National School Lunch Program requires that portions of meal components be adjusted by age/grade group to better meet the food and nutritional needs of children according to their ages.

Quantities Required to Offer						
Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Specific Requirements:
Meat or Meat Alternate (MMA)			8 oz /wk	9 oz /wk	10 oz /wk	Must be served in the main dish or as the main dish.
When combining K-5 & 6-8 to establish a K-8 group.			9 oz. / wk			
Lean meat, poultry, fish	1 oz	1 ½ oz	1 oz per day minimum	1 oz per day minimum	2 oz per day minimum	Food and Nutrition Service Fact Sheets on each of these alternate foods give detailed instructions for use.
Cheese	1 oz	1 ½ oz				
Large egg(s)	½	¾				
Cooked, dry beans or peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup				
Peanut butter (or any nut or seed butter)	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp				
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts or seeds*	½ oz. = 50%	¾ oz. = 50%				
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 oz. or ½ cup	6 oz. or ¾ cup				
Grains / Breads			8 oz eq per week	8 oz eq per week	10 oz eq per week	All grains must be 100% whole grain rich (WGR).
When combining K-5 & 6-8 to establish a K-8 group.			8 oz. eq ^x /wk			
Servings of grains or breads must be 100% whole-grain rich.	5 per week at least ½ svg/day	8 per week at least 1svg/day	1 oz. eq. per day minimum	1 oz. eq. per day minimum	2 oz. eq. per day minimum	
Vegetable			¾ cup every day		1 cup every day	No more than ½ of the total weekly requirement may be met with 100% full-strength vegetable juice.
Dark Green	↑ 1/2 cup either or ↓	↑ 1/2 cup either or ↓	½ cup/week	½ cup/week	In grades K-12 the vegetable subgroups need to be offered throughout the week. The amounts listed here are the minimum amount that must be offered during the week.	
Red/Orange			¾ cup/week	1 ¼ cups/week		
Beans/Peas			½ cup/week	½ cup/week		
Starchy			½ cup/week	½ cup/week		
Other			½ cup/week	¾ cup/week		
Fruit			½ cup every day	½ cup every day	1 cup every day	No more than ½ of the total weekly requirement may be met with 100% full-strength fruit juice.
Milk (Fluid offered as beverage)	¾ cup (6 fl. oz)		½ pt (8 fl. oz)			In grades K-12, fluid milk must be 1% unflavored, or fat free flavored or unflavored.
Min and Max Calorie Ranges in an average 5-day week menu	517*		550-650	600-700	750-850	★= Menus for students Ages 1-2 and Ages 3-4 have a minimum calorie requirement of 517 calories averaged over the school week.
When combining K-5 & 6-8 to establish a K-8 group.			600 - 650			
Sodium (maximum average per week)			1230mg	1360mg	1420mg	K-8 group sodium max = 1230mg.

*As listed in program guidance, these items may be used to meet no more than 50% of the requirement and must be combined in the meal with at least 50% of other meat or meat alternates (1 oz nuts/seeds = 1 oz of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish).[^]Schools serving lunch 7 days per week should increase the weekly quantity by approximately 20% for each additional day. Food Buying Guide and FNS Instruction 783-1, Rev. 2, Grains and Bread Instruction provide the information for the minimum weight of a serving.

The School Breakfast Pattern for Various Age/Grade Groups

Quantities Required to Offer				
Required Component Offerings	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Specific Requirements:
Grains	1 oz. eq/day 7 oz. eq/week	1 oz. eq/day 8 oz. eq/week	1 oz. eq/day 9 oz. eq/week	100% of the grains offered must be whole grain rich.
WHEN CREATING A K-8 GROUP	8 OZ EQ			
WHEN CREATING A K-12 GROUP	9 OZ EQ			
Fruit	1 cup / day 5 cups/wk	1 cup / day 5 cups / wk	1 cup / day 5 cups / wk	Reimbursable meal must contain a ½ cup fruit beginning SY 14-15
Milk <small>1% or Fat Free Only</small>	1 cup each day; 5 cups per week			Flavored milk <u>must</u> be Fat Free
Calories	350-500 calories	400-550 calories	450-600 calories	Minimum and Maximum Calorie Ranges in an average 5-day weekly menu
WHEN CREATING A K-8 GROUP	400-500 calories			
WHEN CREATING A K-12 GROUP	450-500 calories			
WHEN CREATING A 6-12 GROUP		450 – 550 calories		
Meat / Meat Alternatives	0 oz eq	0 oz eq	0 oz eq	May be substituted for grains once the <u>daily</u> grain requirement is met.
Sodium (maximum average per week)	540mg	600mg	640mg	When combining grade groups use the lower grade group sodium requirement.