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# Standard Operating Procedures: Offer Vs Serve

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## I. INTRODUCTION

For a meal to qualify for federal reimbursement, federal regulations state that meal served to students, whether breakfast or lunch, must be offered all components of the meal. This is true even if the student intends not to consume an item.

In order to minimize food waste in the National School Lunch Program & School Breakfast Program, Congress has established offer vs. serve requirement. Under offer vs. serve, students are not required to take all components of the school lunch/breakfast meal.

It is important that lunches be prepared and merchandised in such a way as to encourage students to take the complete meal. Offer vs. Serve is the policy in all school cafeterias.

## II. OFFER VS. SERVE-LUNCH

### A. PREPARATION

1. It is required that the whole lunch (all 5 components) be offered to all students.
2. The complete school lunch must be planned and offered to students.
3. Managers will need to study their actual use of foods carefully.
4. Adequate amounts of each item must be purchased and prepared.
5. At the same time, over production should be avoided.

### B. COMPONENTS

1. Meat/Meat Alternative
2. Vegetable
3. Fruit
4. Grain
5. Milk

### C. GUIDELINES/REGULATIONS-LUNCH

1. Student is allowed to decline 2 of the 5 required food components, but must select at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable.
2. After selecting the ½ cup of fruit or vegetable requirement, student must select at least 2 additional FULL components in the full amounts to count toward the reimbursable offer vs. serve meal.
3. Student may take at least 3 to 5 food components.
4. If he/she takes only 2 food components, the lunch is not reimbursable; advise student to make an additional selection. If student does not select ½ cup of fruit or vegetable, kindly instruct student that ½ cup fruit or vegetable must be selected in order to receive a free reimbursable tray. If student refuses, kindly inform student that he/she will have to pay for the items on tray.
5. Double serving an item does not count as 2 food items. (Example: 2 serving of French fries only counts as 1 vegetable component).
6. Milk counts as 1 component, but a student is NOT required to take it if they do not want it.

## III. OFFER VS. SERVE- BREAKFAST

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### **A. COMPONENTS**

1. Milk
2. Fruit
3. Grain

### **B. GUIDELINES/REGULATIONS-BREAKFAST**

1. A school breakfast eligible for federal reimbursement shall offer 3 food components that consist of a minimum of 4 food items.
2. Students are allowed to decline 1 food item, but must select at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit or vegetable.
3. After meeting the  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit/vegetable requirement, students must select the other food components in the full amounts to count toward the reimbursable offer vs. serve meal.

## **IV. OFFER VS. SERVE- AFTER SCHOOL SNACKS**

### **A. COMPONENTS**

1. 1 oz of bread and one 6 oz. serving of 100% juice; or
2. 1 oz of bread and  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of milk

### **B. GUIDELINES/REGULATIONS-SNACKS**

1. Only 2 components are required to be offered for the afterschool snack program.
2. Offer vs. Serve concept dictates that the student must take all parts of the after school snacks.