

## **OFFER VERSUS SERVE**

Offer versus serve or OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and the meal served. OVS allows students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable breakfast and lunch. The goal of OVS is to reduce food waste and to permit students to choose the foods they want to eat. With students choosing which foods to take and which to pass on, guidance is provided to the students on what constitutes a reimbursable meal.

We encourage you to review the school menus with your children to help them decide what to select. If there is an unfamiliar or unpopular food item on the menu, children are encouraged to try a small serving rather than refuse it totally, thus introducing them to new foods.

### **Lunch Program Requirements:**

Lunch consists of the following five food components:

1. Fruits
2. Vegetables
3. Grains
4. Meats/meat alternates (m/ma) and
5. Milk

Under OVS, all students at any grade level must select:

- At least 3 of the 5 food components AND
- One of the choices selected must be at least a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup serving of the fruit or vegetable component or a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup total serving of both fruit and vegetable.

### **Breakfast Program Requirements:**

Breakfast consists of the following three food components:

1. Fruits (or vegetable substitutions)
2. Grains (or optional credited meats/meat alternates) and
3. Milk

Under OVS, a student at any grade level must select:

- At least 3 of the 4 components (4 components must be offered)
- One of the choices selected must be at least a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup serving of fruit or vegetable.

The age/grade groups for lunch and breakfasts are:

- K-5
- 6-8 and
- 9-12

Food components are required for an adequate nutritious meal for students and to warrant the Federal reimbursement. Within each component, different choices may be offered, giving students many combinations for building a reimbursable meal.

Federal Regulations require meals to be priced as a complete unit and students pay the full price even when they choose the minimum of foods offered. In addition, if they take less than the required number of items, they will take less than the required number of items, they will not receive the lunch price, but will be charged individually (ala carte) for each item. The staff will encourage students to select a complete unit to avoid individual (ala carte) charging.