



Child & Adult Care Food Program Culinary Tips & Tricks

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Learning Objectives

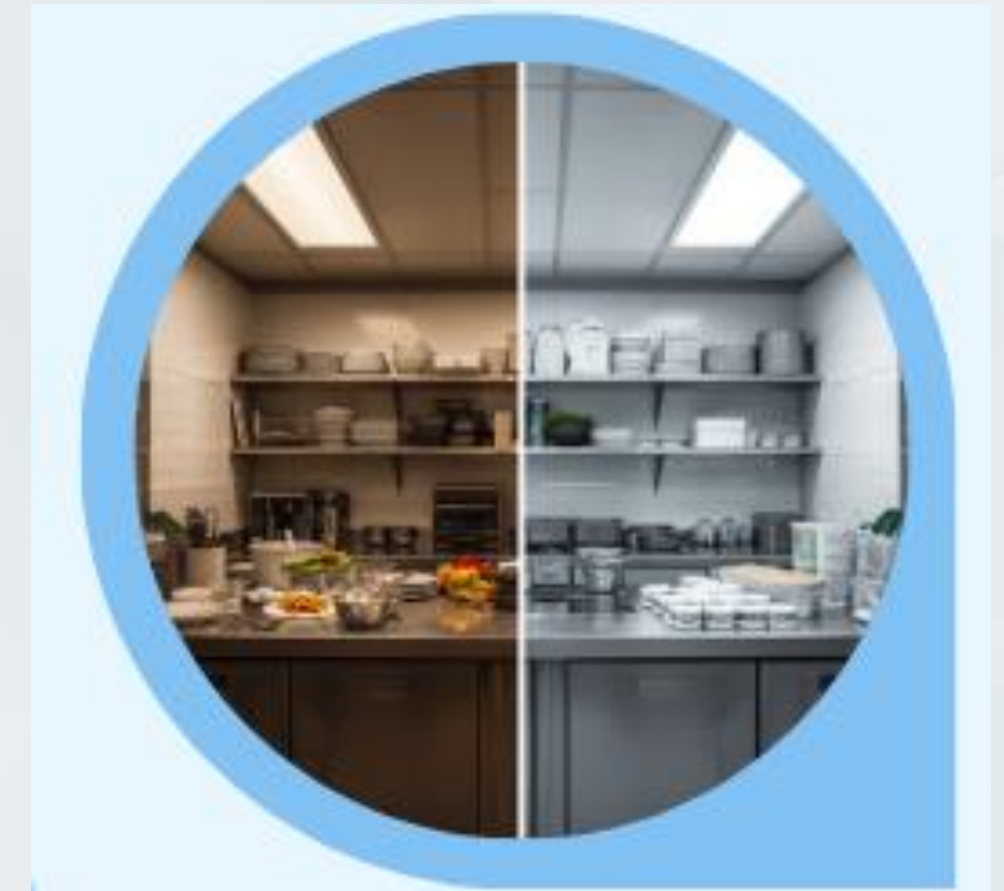
- Understand Practical Strategies to Improve Kitchen Efficiency, Maximize Productivity, and Maintain CACFP Compliance
- Increase knowledge of optimizing your workspace, streamline workflows, and reduce wasted time during meal preparation
- Master techniques to increase output while ensuring all meals meet CACFP meal pattern requirements and food safety standards.
- Identify strategies to enhance your plate along with cost saving strategies in the kitchen.

Optimizing Counter Space: Why It Matters

- A well-organized kitchen counter is the foundation of efficient food preparation.
- Clean, clutter-free workspaces directly impact your team's speed and productivity while ensuring compliance with food safety standards.
- When counters are properly organized, staff can move quickly between tasks, reduce cross-contamination risks, and maintain the sanitary conditions required by CACFP guidelines.

Reduced Clutter Benefits

- Increases usable production space and improves speed and ease of cleaning and sanitizing surfaces between tasks.
- Supports food safety compliance by reducing cross-contamination risks and creating clear zones for different food preparation activities.



Mise En Place

- Organize ingredients and tools before cooking begins.
- Pre-measure all components and arrange them in logical order of use.
- Select and maintain the right tools for each task to maximize efficiency and ensure safe food preparation.
- Design your kitchen layout to minimize cross-traffic and bottlenecks.
- Position prep stations, cooking areas, and plating zones in a logical sequence that allows staff to move efficiently without collision.



Maximizing Workspace for Efficiency

- Arranging counters strategically transforms your kitchen into a productivity powerhouse.
- A well-organized workspace enables assembly line-style preparation, where ingredients flow smoothly from one station to the next.
- This encourages an organized workflow that keeps staff moving efficiently without backtracking.
- Most importantly, distinct prep zones support multitasking without cross-contamination, ensuring food safety while maximizing output.



Assembly Line Production Overview

- Assembly line production is a proven method for streamlining CACFP meal preparation.
- By organizing tasks in a sequential flow, kitchen staff can significantly reduce prep time while minimizing errors.
- This systematic approach ensures every meal component is accounted for, supporting both efficiency and compliance with CACFP requirements



Assembly Line: One Task at a Time

- Understand Practical Strategies to Improve Kitchen Efficiency, Maximize Productivity, and Maintain CACFP Compliance
- Improve Kitchen Efficiency: Optimizing your workspace, streamline workflows, and reduce wasted time during meal preparation
- Master techniques to increase output while ensuring all meals meet CACFP meal pattern requirements and food safety standards.

Assembly Line: Team-Based Workflow

- In an efficient assembly line system, staff members remain stationed at their designated positions while food moves down the line.
- This approach dramatically improves speed and consistency in meal preparation.
- Each team member becomes an expert at their specific task, reducing errors and ensuring every meal meets CACFP standards.
- The coordinated movement creates a rhythm that maximizes productivity while maintaining food safety protocols.



Knife Skills and Proper Equipment

- Master cutting techniques to save time and reduce accidents.
- Mastering proper knife skills for safety
 - *Understanding the correct grip and techniques is essential for safe and efficient cutting, ensuring precision and confidence in the kitchen*
- Essential kitchen tools
 - *Select and maintain the right tools for each task to maximize efficiency and ensure safe food preparation.*



Standardized Recipes & Prep Time Management

- Standardized recipes ensure every meal meets the same quality standards while supporting cost control, portion accuracy, and CACFP menu compliance requirements.
 - *Enables effective menu planning*
 - *Empowers staff to work confidently*
 - *Producing quality meals every time*
- Plan tasks to overlap active and inactive prep time.
 - *While items bake or simmer, prepare the next component.*
- These strategic approaches maximizes productivity and keeps your kitchen running efficiently.



Prefabricated Foods: Pros & Cons

- **Pros:**

- *Save valuable prep time without sacrificing meal quality.*
- *Pre-cut vegetables, pre-portioned proteins, and ready-to-use ingredients reduce labor hours and simplify kitchen operations.*
- *Consistent portion sizes*
- *Extend shelf life options*

- **Cons:**

- *Carefully evaluate nutrition labels and ingredient lists.*
- *Ensure all prefabricated items meet CACFP meal pattern requirements, added sugar limits, and whole grain standards before purchasing.*
- *Compare cost vs scratch cooking*

Key Cooking Methods

- **Sautéing**
 - *Sautéing is a quick cooking technique where food is cooked in a small amount of fat over high heat for added flavor.*
- **Roasting:**
 - *Roasting involves cooking food in the oven, allowing for caramelization and enhancing the natural flavors of vegetables and meats*
- **Boiling:**
 - *Boiling is a gentle cooking method that preserves nutrients by cooking food in water, while steaming provides a similar result with less moisture.*
- **Slow Cooker:**
 - *Utilizing a slow cooker or pressure cooker saves time by allowing meals to cook while you focus on other tasks or errands.*

Enhancing Flavor Naturally

- **Fresh Herbs**

- *Incorporating fresh herbs like basil, cilantro, or parsley can elevate your dish and provide vibrant flavors that dried herbs can't match.*

- **Gradual Seasoning:**

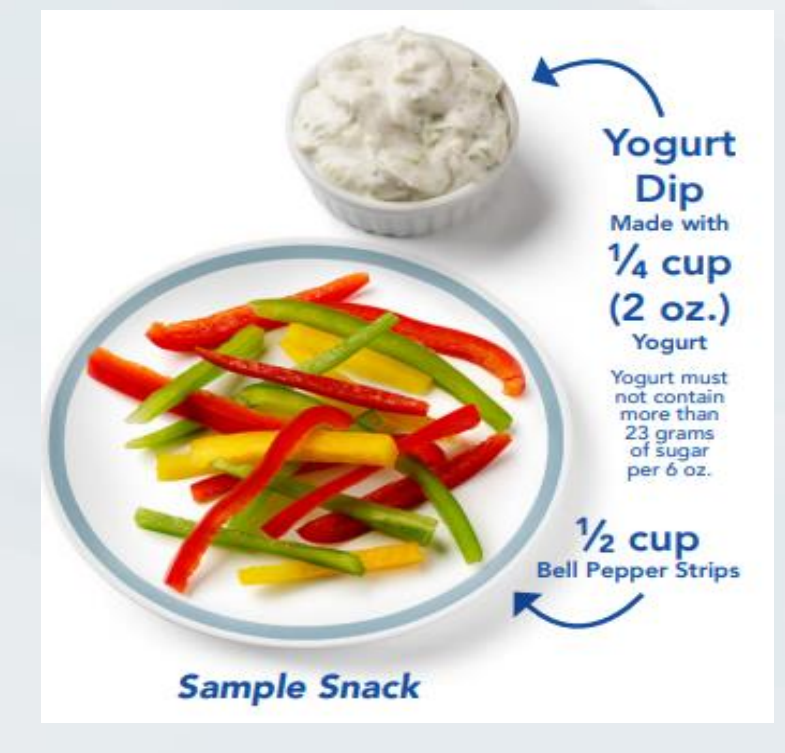
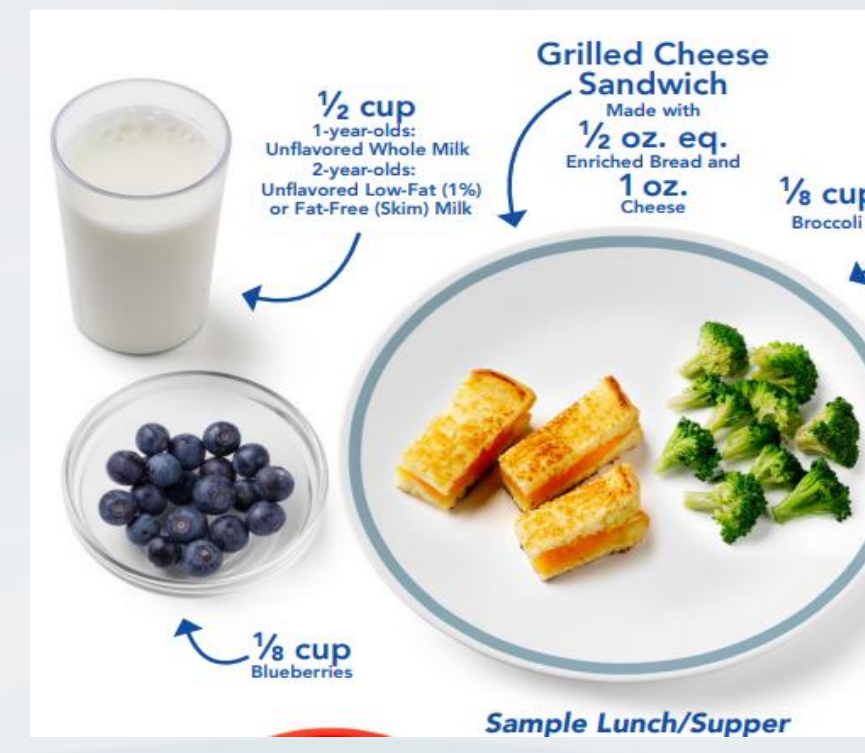
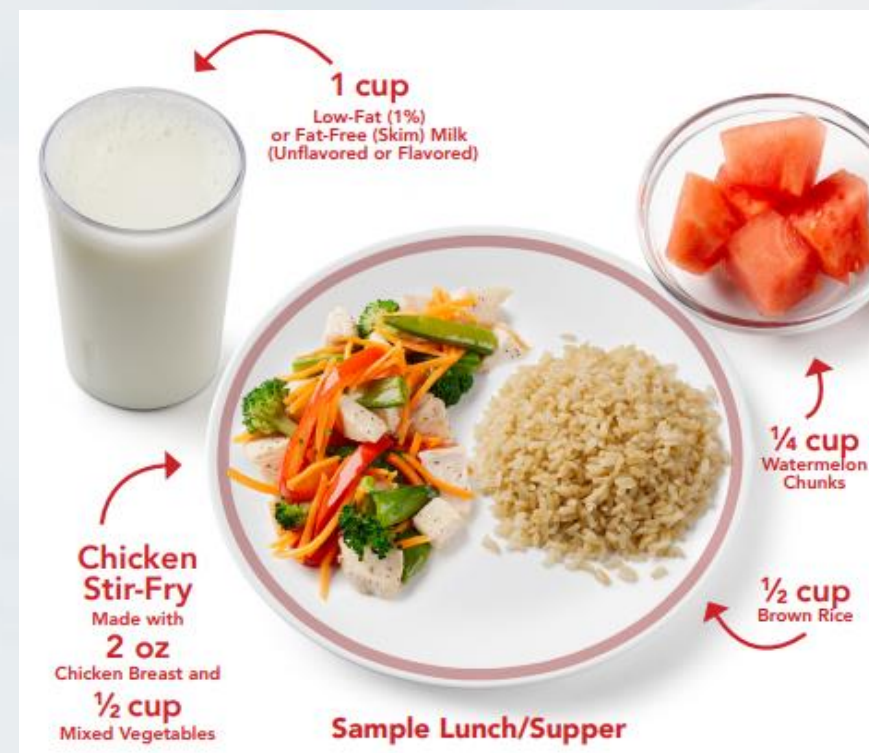
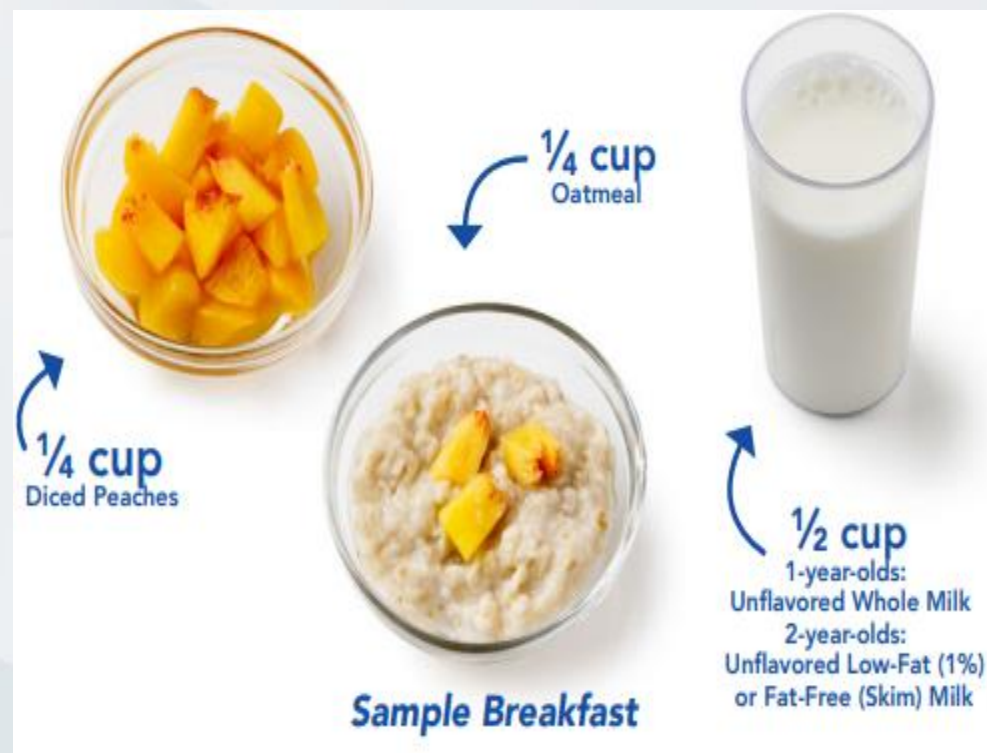
- *Season your dishes gradually as you cook, tasting frequently to achieve the perfect balance of flavors without overwhelming your palate.*

- **Adding Acid:**

- *A splash of acid, such as lemon juice or vinegar, can brighten flavors and add a refreshing contrast to rich dishes.*

Presentation & Plating: Elevate Your Dishes

- Enhancing the visual appeal of your dishes is essential.
- Use contrasting colors, clean plate edges, and thoughtful garnish to impress your guests.
- Cut vegetables or fruits into fun shapes that appeal to children.



Tips for Saving More & Budget Friendly

- **Plan before you shop**
 - *Helps you stay within your budget. Ensures you only buy what you need*
- **Cooperative group purchasing**
 - *Establishing collective buying leverage, purchasing arrangements*
- **Go beyond fresh produce**
 - *Frozen and canned options can be just as budget-friendly*
- **Consider scratch cooking**
 - *Menu planning opportunities to scratch cook when possible*
- **Grow a garden**
 - *Plant seeds are inexpensive, benefits of low cost-access to fresh produce*

Resource: Equipment List

- Chef Knives
- Cutting boards, prep tables
- Vegetable peeler
- Hotel pans, sheet pans, speed rack
- Pots, pans, Cambro containers/lids
- Metro shelving
- Push carts
- Double burner
- Convection oven
- Steamer
- Measuring equipment (spoons, cups, scale, dishers, spoodles, ladles)
- Refrigerator
- Freezer
- Thermometers
- Microplane
- Mixing bowls, spatulas
- Saddle Bags & holder
- Immersion blender vs blender
- Food processor with attachments
- Calculator, recipe book, paper, pencil
- Oven mitts, steamer gloves, disposable gloves

Resource: Measuring Charts

- Institute for Child Nutrition.
 - [Basics at a Glance – Institute of Child Nutrition.](#)
 - [Basics-At-A-Glance-Full-Poster.pdf](#)

Recipe Abbreviations

approx.	= approximate
tsp or t	= teaspoon
Tbsp or T	= tablespoon
c	= cup
pt	= pint
qt	= quart
gal	= gallon
wt	= weight
oz	= ounce
lb or #	= pound (e.g., 3#)
g	= gram
kg	= kilogram
vol	= volume
mL	= milliliter
L	= liter
fl oz	= fluid ounce
No. or #	= number (e.g., #3)
in. or "	= inches (e.g., 12")
°F	= degree Fahrenheit
°C	= degree Celsius or centigrade

Volume Equivalents for Liquids



60 drops	= 1 tsp
1 Tbsp	= 3 tsp = 0.5 fl oz
1/8 cup	= 2 Tbsp = 1 fl oz
1/4 cup	= 4 Tbsp = 2 fl oz
1/3 cup	= 5 Tbsp + 1 tsp = 2.65 fl oz
3/8 cup	= 6 Tbsp = 3 fl oz
1/2 cup	= 8 Tbsp = 4 fl oz
5/8 cup	= 10 Tbsp = 5 fl oz
2/3 cup	= 10 Tbsp + 2 tsp = 5.3 fl oz
3/4 cup	= 12 Tbsp = 6 fl oz
7/8 cup	= 14 Tbsp = 7 fl oz
1 cup	= 16 Tbsp = 8 fl oz
1/2 pint	= 1 cup = 8 fl oz
1 pint	= 2 cups = 16 fl oz
1 quart	= 2 pt = 32 fl oz
1 gallon	= 4 qt = 128 fl oz

Equivalent Weights



16 oz	= 1 lb = 1.000 lb
12 oz	= 3/4 lb = 0.750 lb
8 oz	= 1/2 lb = 0.500 lb
4 oz	= 1/4 lb = 0.250 lb
1 oz	= 1/16 lb = 0.063 lb

Fraction to Decimal Equivalents



1/8	= 0.125
1/4	= 0.250
1/3	= 0.333
3/8	= 0.375
1/2	= 0.500
5/8	= 0.625
2/3	= 0.666
3/4	= 0.750
7/8	= 0.875

Metric Equivalents by Weight



Customary Unit (avoirdupois)	Metric Unit
Ounces (oz)	Grams (g)
1 oz	= 28.35 g
4 oz	= 113.4 g
8 oz	= 226.8 g
16 oz	= 453.6 g
Pounds (lb)	Grams (g)
1 lb	= 453.6 g
2 lb	= 907.2 g

Steamtable Pan Capacity

Pan Size	Approx. Capacity	Serving Size	Ladle (fl oz)	Scoop #	Approx. # Servings
12" x 20" x 2-1/2"	2 gal	1/2 cup 3/8 cup 1/3 cup 1/4 cup	4 oz 3 oz 2.65 oz 2 oz	8 10 12 16	64 80 96 128
12" x 20" x 4"	3-1/2 gal	1/2 cup 3/8 cup 1/3 cup 1/4 cup	4 oz 3 oz 2.65 oz 2 oz	8 10 12 16	112 135 168 224
12" x 20" x 6"	5 gal	1/2 cup 3/8 cup 1/3 cup 1/4 cup	4 oz 3 oz 2.65 oz 2 oz	8 10 12 16	160 200 240 320

Scoops (Dishers)



Size/No. ¹	Level Measure	Color Code ²
6	2/3 cup	
8	1/2 cup	
10	3/8 cup	
12	1/3 cup	
16	1/4 cup	
20	3-1/3 Tbsp	
24	2-2/3 Tbsp	
30	2 Tbsp	
40	1-2/3 Tbsp	
50	3-3/4 tsp	
60	3-1/4 tsp	
70	2-3/4 tsp	
100	2 tsp	

Ladles Portion Servers



Ladle fl oz	Approx. Measure	Portion Server fl oz
1 oz	1/8 cup	1 oz
2 oz	1/4 cup	2 oz
3 oz	3/8 cup	3 oz
4 oz	1/2 cup	4 oz
6 oz	3/4 cup	6 oz
8 oz	1 cup	8 oz
12 oz	1-1/2 cups	—

Metric Equivalents by Volume



Customary Unit (fl oz)	Metric Unit
1 cup (8 fl oz)	= 236.59 mL
1 quart (32 fl oz)	= 946.36 mL
1.5 quarts (48 fl oz)	= 1.42 L
33.818 fl oz	= 1.0 L

Question's ? Discussion. Thank you!



- Efficiency + Compliance = Quality CACFP Meals

Reference Slide

- *Nutrition on a Budget.* [Nutrition on a Budget | Nutrition.gov](#)
- *CACFP Meal Pattern Posters.* [CACFP Meal Pattern Posters | Food and Nutrition Service](#)
- *How to save more on fruits and vegetables.* [How to Save More on Fruits and Vegetables | USDA](#)

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