



## **Moving from Afterschool Snack to a Meal: It is easier than you think!**

Most afterschool programs already serve a snack in order to keep children focused and engaged throughout the afternoon. Yet, for many children the snack is not enough, which is why the Afterschool Meal Program is so important. Children eat lunch hours before the afterschool program, sometimes as early as 10:30 in the morning, and need more than just a snack to make it through the afternoon. In addition, many families are struggling financially and providing a nutritious meal after school can help families stretch limited funds.

**Funding is now available to serve a meal at programs that operate after school, on weekends, and during school holidays.**<sup>1</sup> The Afterschool Meal Program provides funding for a meal in addition to or instead of a snack. Any program that is located in a low-income area can receive funding to serve a meal. Afterschool programs can provide a supper, and programs operating on weekends and school holidays can provide the appropriate meal.

- **The meal can be served at any point during the afterschool program.** Even though it is called a supper, program staff can determine the best time to serve the meal. It can even be right when the children walk through the door.
- **Both a meal and a snack can be served depending on the length of the program.** The state child nutrition agency, which administers the program, is allowed to determine the length of time between meal services. Afterschool programs should serve both if the program operates for three or more hours, and may be able to serve both if the program runs between two and three hours.
- **The meals do not have to be prepared at the afterschool program, and there is no requirement for the afterschool program to have a kitchen.** Afterschool programs can purchase prepared meals or prepare meals on site, depending on what works best for the program. Potential vendors include the school food service department, community kitchens, food banks, and private catering companies. Programs with limited refrigeration space can store meals in coolers.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Afterschool Meal Program is available in ten states: Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and West Virginia. Programs located in areas where 50 percent or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced price meals can receive a federal reimbursement of \$2.57 (plus an additional \$0.2075 in commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities) for each supper (or lunch). The reimbursement rate is adjusted annually on July 1 for inflation.

- **The meals can be served hot, but do not have to be.** In fact, many successful programs serve nutritious and appealing cold meals to children. The main entrée can be a sandwich, wrap, or pita pocket.
- **Meeting the Nutrition Guidelines is easy.** All meals served through the Child and Adult Care Food Program must meet USDA nutrition guidelines. Suppers (and lunches) require: one serving of milk, two servings of fruits and/or vegetables; one serving of grains; and one serving of protein. Snacks must include two out of the four components: milk; fruits and/or vegetables; grains; and protein.

The state child nutrition agency can provide information about the nutrition guidelines and help plan menus that meet the USDA requirements. Also, check out FRAC's model supper and snack menus on <http://www.frac.org/afterschool/menus.htm>.

- **Providing a meal can be an easy process for program staff.** Usually, the afterschool program staff simply keeps an attendance roster, hands out the meals, and takes a meal count.
- **The funding grows as your program grows.** The Afterschool Meal Program provides a reimbursement for each meal served. If the number of children who participate increases, so does your funding for food.

### **Sample supper menus that meet the federal guidelines:**

#### **Hot Meals**

- Baked chicken, whole wheat roll, cucumber sticks, sliced peaches, low-fat milk.
- Vegetable pizza, fresh green beans, grapes, low-fat milk.
- Bean quesadilla, corn, watermelon, low-fat milk.
- Rotini with meat sauce, diced pears, baby carrots, low-fat milk

#### **Cold Meals**

- Turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread with sliced tomatoes and lettuce, fresh pear, low-fat milk.
- Chicken in a whole wheat wrap with baby carrots, apple slices and low-fat milk.
- Tuna salad in a pita pocket with sliced tomatoes and lettuce, orange slices, low-fat milk.
- Ham and cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread, snow peas, sliced melon, low-fat milk.

**To begin serving suppers at an afterschool program, contact the state child nutrition agency that oversees CACFP.** For a complete list of state agencies, visit [http://www.frac.org/afterschool/pdf/state\\_contacts.pdf](http://www.frac.org/afterschool/pdf/state_contacts.pdf).