

## Moving From Afterschool Snack to Meal It's easier than it looks

**M**ost afterschool programs already serve a snack in order to keep children focused and engaged throughout the afternoon. Yet, for many children a snack is not enough. 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 programs that provide a nutritious meal after school make it easier for parents to make ends meet.

**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 through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) 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 often referred to as a supper, afterschool 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 absolutely should consider serving 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 sites, 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.

**The meals can be served hot or cold.**

In fact, many successful programs serve nutritious and appealing cold meals to children. The main entrée can be a sandwich, wrap, or pita pocket.

<sup>1</sup> 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 \$3.16 (plus an additional \$0.23 in commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities) for each supper (or lunch). The reimbursement rate is adjusted annually on July 1 for inflation.

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## Meeting the Nutrition Guidelines is easy.

All meals served through the CACFP must meet USDA nutrition guidelines. Meals 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 CACFP agency can provide additional 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://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/lunch\\_or\\_meal\\_sample\\_menu.pdf](http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/lunch_or_meal_sample_menu.pdf).

## 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, so if the number of children who participate increases so does your funding for food.

## 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.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>. For more information, check out FRAC's new Afterschool Meals Guide, <http://frac.org/federalfoodnutrition-programs/afterschool-programs/fracsafterschool-meals-guide/>.

## *Examples of simple, appealing, and nutritious meals 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, lowfat 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.