



DATE: July 21, 2015

MEMO CODE: SP 41-2015

SUBJECT: Updated Offer versus Serve Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Effective Beginning School Year 2015-2016

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a provision in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meals programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.

Attached is the updated guidance manual for operators using OVS, which is optional at all grade levels for breakfast and required at the senior high school level only for lunch.

This guidance is intended to clarify the requirements of OVS, specifically related to what students must take in order to have a reimbursable meal.

An amendment to this guidance has been made under the milk option section to make it clear that while water must be available to students during meal service, operators may not offer water as an alternative to milk, as water is not considered part of the reimbursable meal. Other modifications are minor, primarily removing dates related to provision phase-in.

OVS at Lunch

At lunch, schools must offer students all five required food components in at least the minimum required amounts. The components at lunch are: meats/meat alternates; grains; fruit; vegetables; and fluid milk. Under OVS, a student must take at least three components in the required serving sizes. One selection must be at least ½ cup from either the fruit or vegetable component.

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OVS at Breakfast

At breakfast, schools must offer students all three required food components in at least the minimum required amounts. The components at breakfast are: grains (with optional meats/meat alternates allowed); juice/fruit/vegetable; and milk. Under OVS, a student must be offered at least four food items and must select at least three food items, one of which must be ½ cup of fruit or vegetables for OVS.

For specific questions related to the lunch or breakfast meal pattern requirements, please refer to Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) memorandum SP 10-2012v.8, Q&As on the Final Rule - Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP10-2012v8os.pdf> .

We appreciate all you do for the School Meal Programs and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the nutrition of America's children. State agencies are reminded to distribute this memo and attachment to program operators immediately. SFAs should contact their State agency for additional information. State agencies may direct any questions concerning this guidance to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office.

Original Signed

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Attachment