

Bag Lunches in Child Care Center

When planning your child's bag lunch, please keep in mind these guidelines which must be followed by the center, in order to comply with child care state licensing:

- Child care licensing requires that bag lunches brought to the center must provide one-third the child's daily nutritional needs as specified by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.
- If a child's meal does not contain all required components, the child care center must provide them, in order to remain in compliance with licensing.

Please refer to the following **Child Care Meal Pattern** established by the USDA when preparing your child's lunch.

***Each lunch must contain all of the four components.**

Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12
1 serving milk fluid milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
2 different servings of fruits/vegetables juice, ² fruit and/or vegetable	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
1 serving grains/bread³ bread or cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or cold dry cereal or hot cooked cereal or pasta or noodles or grains	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1 slice 1 serving 3/4 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup
1 serving meat/meat alternate meat or poultry or fish ⁴ or alternate protein product or cheese or egg or cooked dry beans or peas or peanut or other nut or seed butters or nuts and/or seeds ⁵ or yogurt ⁶	1 oz. 1 oz. 1 oz. 1/2 1/4 cup 2 Tbsp. 1/2 oz. 4 oz.	1½ oz. 1½ oz. 1½ oz. 3/4 3/8 cup 3 Tbsp. 3/4 oz. 6 oz.	2 oz. 2 oz. 2 oz. 1 1/2 cup 4 Tbsp. 1 oz. 8 oz.

² Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength.

³ Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

⁴ A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry or fish.

⁵ Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.

⁶ Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.