

SEAMLESS SUMMER OPTION TOOLKIT

for

COLORADO SSO SPONSORS

DURING COVID-19



New!

UPDATED FOR SY 21-22



COLORADO
Department of Education



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School Year 2021-22

Colorado Seamless Summer Option Toolkit

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Colorado Department of Education

Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger

Hunger Free Colorado

LiveWell Colorado

Dedicated to:

All of the nutrition professionals who are working on the front lines of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Disclaimer:

This resource was adapted for Seamless Summer Option program sponsors in Colorado operating during the 2021-22 school year. This does not substitute for guidance from your State agency or local public health agency. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of all information contained within this document. Please refer to the appropriate government agency for the most accurate and up to date information. If you are having a medical emergency, please dial 911.

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Policy

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a series of nationwide waivers that allow flexibility to school meal programs for the 2021-22 school year. The CDE School Nutrition Unit has opted into all waivers for the state of Colorado. The nationwide waivers apply to all states, however individual State agencies have specific guidance regarding the usage of each waiver. As always, contact your State agency for exact guidance in your area.

The waivers apply to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Waiver authority does not apply to the Special Milk Program.

In this Toolkit, we will review the waivers and applicable guidance for the SSO which is the program most sponsors are operating during the 2021-22 school year within the state of Colorado. These meal service waivers are available through June 30, 2022; however, sponsors should use these waivers only for the duration and extent needed.



Meal Times

Meals and snacks can be provided at times that best meet the needs of schools, even if the times are outside of federal guidelines. In conjunction with the non-congregate feeding waiver, this also allows sponsors to distribute up to 5 days' worth of meals at one time.



Non-Congregate Feeding

To ensure appropriate safety measures and support social distancing, meals and snacks may be taken and consumed off-site. This allows schools the opportunity to provide meal pick-up options for students learning virtually and facilitates grab-and-go meals for students in school.



Meal Pattern

Targeted meal pattern flexibilities are allowed for whole grain-rich requirements, vegetable subgroup requirements, milk variety and low-fat flavored milk requirements, and age/grade group requirements. USDA is also allowing flexibility in meeting the sodium requirements. Sponsors may apply for these flexibilities using the [meal pattern waiver request form](#).



Parent Meal Pick Up

Parents/Guardians are allowed to pick up meals for children. A program integrity plan should be in place.



SSO Monitoring & Audits

Sponsors may complete monitoring requirements through an off-site desk audit. Sponsors must review each meal site at least once during each site's operation and can use this [SSO review form](#).



Area Eligibility

Allows sponsors to operate the SSO at any school site, regardless of its location. This ensures all children in all areas across the state can receive free meals during the school year.



Reimbursement Rates

Allows sponsors to claim all meals served at the higher SFSP reimbursement rate established for rural or self-prep sites, regardless of location.

Additional Policy Guidance

USDA Nationwide Waivers and Q&As

The USDA has released additional guidance for the 2021-22 school year through additional waivers and Q&A memos. View the waivers and Q&A memos by clicking [here](#). Key takeaways include:

- Meals sent home for multiple days with food items served in bulk are allowable during the 2021-22 school year for students that continue remote learning. Foods do not have to be individually portioned, but specific instructions for easy preparation need to be provided. [Click here](#) to view sample menus and instructions for serving multiple day meals with bulk foods.
- All schools, regardless of their location can provide and claim all afterschool snacks at the free rate. The Afterschool Snack Program can operate at sites serving meals under the SSO.
- Offer versus Serve is not required for high school students.
- Weekend and holiday meals are not allowable under the SSO. Weekend or holiday meals may be provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program.

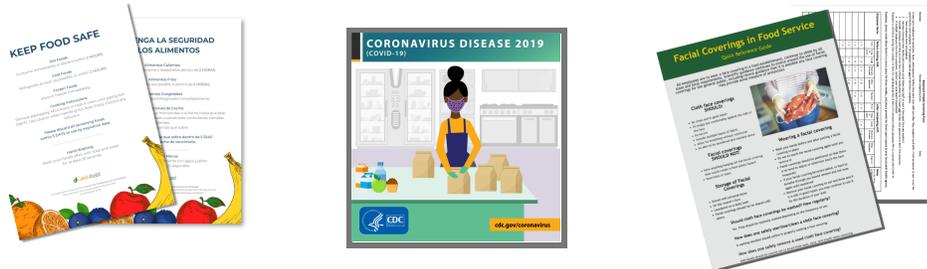
Learn More

Additional policy guidance, including copies of the USDA waivers and Q&As, can be found on the following websites:

- **Colorado Department of Education Back to School Guidance**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/node/52637>
- **USDA Waivers and Guidance (Colorado)**
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=2fbcc0b15a604b2fb461289e54d80f71>
- **School year 2021-22 FAQs**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/backtoschoolfaqs>

Be COVID Safe

Protect your team and others during meal service operations. Provide information for staff and volunteers regarding general food safety, how to protect themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19, and regulations surrounding health privacy. Employers must take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety, and privacy of their employees. The resources below are based on current CDC guidance. Check the [CDC website](#) for the latest information and, as always, please check with your human resources department and [local public health agency](#) before implementing any of these suggestions.



COVID-19 Employee Safety Information

The CDC webpage “[What School Nutrition Professionals Need to Know about COVID-19](#)” outlines best practices, safety precautions, and recommendations for child nutrition professionals to [serve meals safely](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak. To support staff health and safety, view the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment “[Facial Coverings in Food Service](#)” and “[Employee Health Screening Form](#).”

Social Distancing

Design meal service and distribution methods to support social distancing. Minimize contact with children and their families by practicing no contact handoffs and staying at least 6 feet apart from others when possible. Download a deck of seven social distancing cards to support staff training [here](#).

Food Safety Cards

In order to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, practice food safety guidelines according to existing Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) food safety plans. Always check with your local public health agency to ensure you are meeting their guidelines. Use printable [Food Safety Cards](#) to share information with families on how to safely handle meals taken off-site.

Privacy Protection

Employers need to take steps to keep employees’ health information confidential at all times. Even if a staff member has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, managers must be diligent in protecting the privacy of employees. Follow the guidelines of your human resources department as well as [your local public health agency](#).

Eligibility, Operations & Oversight

All children 18 years of age or younger are eligible to receive free meals during the 2021-22 school year at open sites, even if they do not attend school or reside in the area where meals are being served. The Nationwide Waiver to Allow the SSO through School Year 2021-22 ensures that all schools may provide meals to all children at no cost.

Under the SSO all meals are served at no cost to students. Sponsors may continue to collect and process free and reduced-price meal applications to maintain point of sale systems and also to establish eligibility for the Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program. Free and reduced-price meal applications are not required in order to provide free meals to all students under the SSO.

Use these [outreach materials](#) and talking points to share information with families on the benefits of completing free and reduced-price meal applications during the 2021-22 school year.

Talking Points

- Submitting household income information via the school meal application helps families and schools. Families may be eligible for P-EBT and can receive discounted school fees, bus passes, utilities, etc. Families are also helping their school and district receive additional school funding, qualify for grants and additional nutrition programs.
- Information provided during the application process is confidential and protected. All sponsors collecting and processing meal applications must follow strict guidelines for the release of student or meal eligibility information (including private student information and/or eligibility status).

Allowable Meals

Up to two meals, per child, per day, in any combination except lunch and supper, may be reimbursed through the SSO. Meals for multiple days may be offered. For example, programs may elect to distribute five days' worth of meals on Mondays, to minimize exposure between staff and families. In this case, each child may receive ten meals at one time (two meals for each day).

Parent/Guardian Meal Pick Up

Per the Nationwide USDA Waiver, children are not required to be present while their parents/guardians pick up the meals; however, program accountability must be maintained in order to prevent duplicate meals or meals being served to adults without eligible children. The "[USDA Best Practices for Parent Pick-Up of Meals and Snacks](#)" provides helpful information for understanding Parent Meal Pick Up.

Meal Counting

Meal counts and records must be maintained for meals served during the SSO. Meal counts must be recorded at the time of service however individual student information (names, PIN numbers, etc.) does not need to be recorded. Meal counts may be recorded by using the Colorado Department of Education Daily Meal Count forms, included below. Prior to submitting the claim, consolidate meal counts by using the Monthly Consolidation Worksheet, also below. Meal counts may also be recorded using electronic point of sale systems.

- [Daily Meal Count Form](#) (English)
- [Daily Meal Count Form](#) (Spanish)
- [Monthly Consolidation Worksheet](#)

Method of Service

Meals served may be unitized or served in bulk. Sponsors may offer meals in a variety of unique and innovative ways such as “drive-thru,” or “curbside” meal service for students participating in school remotely or “grab n’ go” for students in school buildings. Sponsors may also deliver directly to student homes. Serving meals outdoors is optimal to prevent the spread of COVID-19, weather permitting. To minimize exposure to COVID-19, multiple meals may be provided at one time, in lieu of daily meal services.

All meal service options must support the ability for children to consume meals off-site and the meal service flexibility waivers should be used only for the duration and extent that they are needed. Refer to the [Social Distancing Cards](#) for an at-a-glance on how to safely implement various meal service models in accordance with social distancing guidelines. As always, check with your State agency and [your local public health agency](#) prior to implementing this advice.

Home Delivery

Delivering meals to student homes is a way to increase participation in the meal program, reach students in rural areas, and provide additional services to students with special needs. Prior to delivering to student homes, sponsors must obtain written consent from the household to determine the number of students requiring meals. From that point forward, meals may be delivered to and dropped at the front door. Parents and students do not need to be present for meals to be delivered. Meals may be delivered daily or provided for multiple days at one time.

Outreach

Ensure families are informed about all meal service options. Consider communicating in multiple languages and formats. Suggested strategies include:

- Public announcements on radio or television
- Email campaigns
- Social media posts
- Automated phone calls and text messages
- Website announcements

- Newspaper notifications
- Community partner newsletters

Civil Rights

All civil rights requirements must be followed, including providing language assistance, program complaint procedures, and accommodating children with disabilities. “And Justice For All” posters must be visible in all serving locations with the exception of home delivery.

Program Monitoring

Site monitoring for SSO meal service continues to be required, however the [monitoring form](#) may be completed via an off-site desk review. Sponsors do not need to go to the site in person to complete monitoring requirements. Check with your State agency for more information.

Menu Planning & Production

Food Production

Evaluate your organization’s production kitchens, storage areas, and serving sites to determine where food will be prepared. Staff may be reallocated to a location that differs from their usual worksite. Food production may need to be set up in a multi-purpose room, gymnasium, or larger space to allow for social distancing between staff.

If storage space is limited, the delivery schedule may need to be adjusted to accommodate more frequent, smaller deliveries. Some sponsors may find it helpful to rent or borrow a refrigerated truck or a mobile freezer container for food storage, if needed.

Foods Served

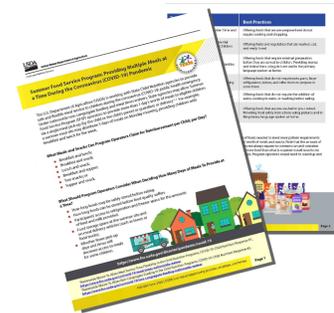
Several types of foods can be served during meal services. Hot, cold and/or shelf-stable items may be offered. Frozen items that require heating may be sent home to families to heat off-site and may be a great way to utilize any existing inventory. Bulk foods can replace single servings, especially when foods are sent home for multiple days. Regardless of the foods offered, consider providing food safety guidance to families as they take meals off-site, such as these printable [Food Safety Cards](#).

Sponsors may choose to offer primarily shelf-stable or cold items in order to support good food safety practices, mitigate waste, and minimize staffing needs during the pandemic. Individually wrapped (IW), pre-packaged items may further prevent the spread of germs or reduce the risk of foodborne illness when meals are taken to be consumed off-site.

When serving hot meals, ensure adequate precautions are taken to prevent the risk of foodborne illness. Staff must be trained to follow all applicable hot-holding, meal transport, and time and temperature control procedures. Frozen items or ingredients requiring further heating and minimal preparation may be sent home with families to be prepared in their home kitchens.

Multiple Meals at a Time

Multiple meals may be provided at one time in lieu of daily meal service for students who continue with remote learning. For example, a sponsor may decide to provide children (or their parent/guardian) with five breakfasts and five lunches at one time rather than offering a daily meal pick up. In order to mitigate waste, consider sending items in bulk, rather than individual portions. Include details on how the foods provided can be served to children as individual meals, how to prepare any simple recipe, and how to maintain proper food safety. Consider offering an alternative meal kit with shelf stable items for any families that do not have access to refrigeration, warming equipment, or the ability to prepare meals for children.



Refer to the USDA's "[Providing Multiple Meals at a Time](#)" tip sheet for best practices.

Providing Foods in Bulk

Bulk foods are those served in packages larger than what is required for one meal. Providing bulk food items can help reduce waste, eliminate unnecessary or excessive packaging, and may contribute to lower food costs. For example, serving half gallons of milk in lieu of several individual cartons can be more economical and better for the environment. Offering bulk produce, such as a bunch of carrots in lieu of individual portions of baby carrots may also support farm-to-school/institution programs, local procurement practices, and the local economy.

When serving bulk foods, keep the following in mind:

- Include required food components in the proper minimum amounts for each reimbursable meal claimed (unless a meal pattern waiver is approved);
- Provide menus with instructions for which items and portion sizes are to be used for each meal, while considering the literacy level and household language requirements;
- Consider whether households have access to necessary equipment such as refrigerators, stoves, and microwaves when providing food that requires storage and/or reheating; provide alternative options in cases where reheating or refrigeration is not possible;
- Consider whether households have the ability to prepare food that requires simple preparation and/or reheating; provide alternative options in cases where food preparation is not possible;
- Provide foods that require minimal preparation and no additional chopping, mixing, baking, etc.;
- Refer to the USDA's "[Providing Multiple Meals at a Time](#)" tip sheet for best practices.

Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs

Meals served during the school day must comply with relevant civil rights requirements, including making reasonable modifications to program meals to accommodate children with disabilities.

If possible, communicate with the parents/guardians of children in need of special dietary accommodations and make a plan for when and where they will pick up meals (or arrange for delivery, if possible). Consider keeping a backup supply of items that may be used for unexpected requests for special dietary needs at each feeding location. These items may be useful for accommodating children that have a disability and arrive for meal service without prior notice. You may also consider home delivery of meals for students with special needs.

Special Diet Items

Dietary Need	Lactose Intolerance	Gluten/Wheat	Dairy Allergy	Nut Allergy
Recommended Items	Lactose-free milk	Rice Cereal Corn Tortillas/Chips Brown Rice Rice Crackers	Compliant Soy Milk Hummus* <i>*in lieu of cheese</i>	Sunflower Butter Sunflower Seeds

Meal Pattern Requirements

Under the SSO, all sponsors must follow the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. All food components required must be served in the minimum required amounts unless flexibilities are allowed under the Meal Pattern Waiver and/or the Offer versus Serve Waiver.

Breakfast Meal Pattern

Offer all components in the required daily and weekly quantities as part of the reimbursable meal.

5-Day NSLP/SSO Breakfast Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruit (or vegetables)	1 cup daily (5 cups weekly)		
Grains ¹	1 oz eq daily (7 oz eq weekly)	1 oz eq daily (8 oz eq weekly)	1 oz eq daily (9 oz eq weekly)
Milk	1 cup daily (5 cups weekly)		

¹ 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of meat/meat alternate may be substituted for grains after the minimum daily 1 oz eq grain requirement is met.

Lunch/Supper Meal Pattern

Offer all components in the required daily and weekly quantities as part of the reimbursable meal.

5-Day NSLP/SSO Lunch Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruit	½ cup daily (2 ½ cups weekly)		1 cup daily (5 cups weekly)
Vegetable	¾ cup daily (3 ¾ cups weekly)		1 cup daily (5 cups weekly)
Dark Green	½ cup weekly		
Red/Orange	¾ cup weekly		1 ¼ cup weekly
Beans/Peas (Legumes)	½ cup weekly		
Starchy	½ cup weekly		
Other	½ cup weekly		¾ cup weekly
Additional to reach total	1 cup weekly		1 ½ cups weekly
Grain	1 oz eq daily (8 oz eq weekly)		2 oz eq daily (10 oz eq weekly)
Meat/Meat Alternate	1 oz eq daily (8 oz eq weekly)	1 oz eq daily (9 oz eq weekly)	2 oz eq daily (10 oz eq weekly)
Milk	1 cup daily (5 cups weekly)		

NSLP/SSO 5-Day Meal Pattern Daily Minimum Requirements

Lunch

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
M/MA	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Grain	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Veg	 3/4	 3/4	 1 c.
Fruit	 1/2	 1/2	 1 c.
Milk	 8 oz	 8 oz	 8 oz

breakfast

	All Grades
Grain	1 oz eq
Fruit /Veg	 1 c.
Milk	 8 oz



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For more detailed information on the NSLP and SBP meal pattern menu planning requirements, visit the [Menu Planning webpage](#).

Offer versus Serve

Under the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools in School Year 2021-22, sponsors may choose to implement Offer versus Serve (OVS) at their high school sites.

When implementing OVS at SSO meal sites, the following guidelines apply:

- **Food Component:** One of the food groups such as milk or grains.
- **Food Item:** Individual foods that are part of one or more food components such as an apple (fruit) or a hamburger (grain and meat/meat alternate).
- **Breakfast:** Offer four food items from the three food components (grain, fruit, milk). A child (or their parent/guardian) must select at least three food items, one of which is ½ cup fruit, vegetable, or combination.

- **Lunch/Supper:** Offer all five food components (grain, meat/meat alternate, fruit, vegetable, milk). A child (or their parent/guardian) must select at least three different food components, one of which is ½ cup fruit, vegetable, or combination.

Implementing OVS when serving non-congregate meals requires additional planning and creativity. Before deciding if you will use OVS, it is important to think through how it can be implemented appropriately and safely. Consider the following:

- How to communicate the OVS service style and requirements;
- How to implement OVS when allowing parent pick-up;
- How OVS will look like for drive-thru and home delivery meal services;
- If additional staff may be necessary;
- How social distancing and sanitation protocols will be practiced;
- If the meal service location has sufficient time to accommodate OVS.

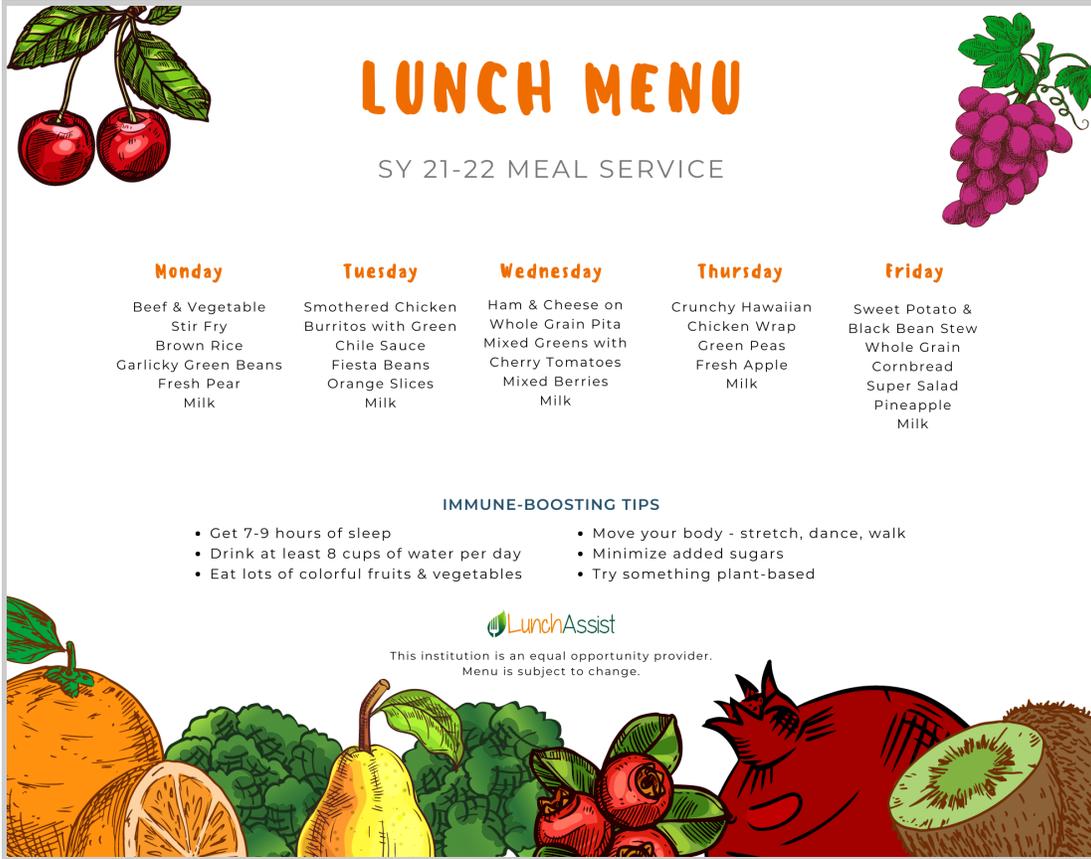
Menu Production Records

Menu production records are required. All food items served must be recorded for each meal served. The Colorado Department of Education [daily production record](#) can be filled out electronically or completed by hand.

Menu production records must be completed for each meal served, even when multiple meals are served at one time. Keep the production records on file, along with food and refrigeration temperature logs, daily meal count forms, and other relevant paperwork for a period of three years past the current school year.

Sample Menus and Menu Templates

The menus below are 5-day sample lunch and breakfast menus that comply with the Seamless Summer Option meal pattern.



LUNCH MENU

SY 21-22 MEAL SERVICE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Beef & Vegetable Stir Fry Brown Rice Garlicky Green Beans Fresh Pear Milk	Smothered Chicken Burritos with Green Chile Sauce Fiesta Beans Orange Slices Milk	Ham & Cheese on Whole Grain Pita Mixed Greens with Cherry Tomatoes Mixed Berries Milk	Crunchy Hawaiian Chicken Wrap Green Peas Fresh Apple Milk	Sweet Potato & Black Bean Stew Whole Grain Cornbread Super Salad Pineapple Milk

IMMUNE-BOOSTING TIPS

- Get 7-9 hours of sleep
- Drink at least 8 cups of water per day
- Eat lots of colorful fruits & vegetables
- Move your body - stretch, dance, walk
- Minimize added sugars
- Try something plant-based

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Menu is subject to change.



[Click HERE to Download a Blank Version of this Lunch Menu Template](#)
(available in English & Spanish)

To view **Sample USDA Menus for Multiple Day Meals and Bulk Foods**, click [here](#).



BREAKFAST MENU

SY 21-22 MEAL SERVICE



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Homemade Granola & Yogurt Parfait Mixed Berries Banana Milk	Savory Breakfast Bowl with Salsa Whole Wheat Toast Sliced Melon Milk	Blueberry Muffin Yogurt Grapes Baby Carrots Milk	Cinnamon French Toast Sticks Strawberries Peaches Milk	Breakfast Biscuit Sandwich Sliced Apples Orange Juice Milk

SLEEP RECOMMENDATIONS BY AGE

Infants 4-12 mo: 12-16 hours	Children 6-12: 6-12 hours
Children 1-2: 11-14 hours	Teenagers 13-18: 8-10 hours
Children 3-5: 10-13 hours	Source: American Academy of Pediatrics


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[Click HERE to Download a Blank copy of this Breakfast Menu Template](#)
(available in English & Spanish)

To view **Sample USDA Menus for Multiple Day Meals and Bulk Foods**, click [here](#).

References and More Resources

Please visit the websites below for policy references and memos, guidance, training materials, and more.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

What School Nutrition Professionals Need to Know about COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/school-nutrition-professionals.html?fbclid=IwAR2o6sM-mtOZrff7fx1YPsAWzYHqUnmPe5qqOk6rYumpROOR9EBh1Y1B1iY>

Colorado Department of Education School Nutrition Unit

- Back to School Guidance
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/node/52637>
- USDA Waivers and Guidance (Colorado)
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=2fbcc0b15a604b2fb461289e54d80f71>
- NSLP & SBP Meal Pattern Requirements
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutrimenuplanning>
- School Year 21-22 FAQs
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/backtoschoolfaqs>

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

- Find Your Local Public Health Agency
<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/find-your-local-public-health-agency>

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- COVID-19 Resources for School Nutrition Professionals
www.lunchassist.org/covid-19

United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services

- Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Child Nutrition Programs
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs>
- FNS Response to COVID-19
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>
- FNS COVID-19 Waivers and Flexibilities
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/cn-waivers-flexibilities>
- United States Department of Agriculture Homepage
<https://www.usda.gov/>

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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