

Infant Age Groups: What Are the Basics?

**CACFP iTrain
Simple Lesson Plan**

Infant Age Groups: What Are the Basics?

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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Intended Audience: CACFP personnel and other child care staff

Description: This lesson explains the different infant age groups in CACFP.

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Institute of Child Nutrition The University of Mississippi

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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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Lesson-at-a-Glance

Time	Topic	Activity	Materials
Introduction			
5 minutes	▶ Introduction and Overview		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint Presentation • Computer • Pens or Pencils
Objective: Explain what is required for each age group in the infant meal pattern for CACFP.			
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two Age Groups ▶ Required Components for Each Group 	▶ CACFP Infant Age Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Worksheet: CACFP Infant Meal Pattern (ICN) ▶ Worksheet: CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity ▶ Answer Key: CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity
Conclusion			
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lesson Summary ▶ Training Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Speed Action Planning ▶ Training Evaluation (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Worksheet: Speed Action Planning ▶ Optional: Training Evaluation & Training Certificate
Total Time: 30 minutes			

References

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2018). *Infant meal pattern requirements training*. www.theicn.org/cacfp

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2017). *What are the recommendations for breastfeeding?* www.nichd.nih.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2018). *Feeding infants and meal pattern requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; questions and answers*. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/CACFP-2018os.pdg>

Internet Resources

▶ Institute of Child Nutrition: www.theicn.org

▶ USDA’s Team Nutrition: www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Preparation Checklist

Instructions: Use the Preparation Checklist to prepare for the training session. Keep track of your progress by checking off tasks as they are completed.

Done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lesson Tasks
Gather Materials	
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Training Script
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Computer and Projector Screen
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Worksheets and Handouts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACFP Infant Meal Pattern (ICN) handout • CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity worksheet • CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity answer key
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Pens or pencils (one per participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Optional: Training Certificate/Evaluation/Feedback Form (one per participant)
Prepare for Lesson	
Before the training day:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Review the training script and research any relevant State or local requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content reflects the Federal regulations and/or national best practices or standards. However, it’s essential to include any additional State or local requirements when presenting this training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Make enough copies of the handouts for each participant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Test the PowerPoint on the computer and projector screen.
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Optional: Develop and print a session certificate/evaluation/feedback form (one per participant).
On the training day:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Place pens or pencils on tables (one per participant).
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Distribute materials to each participant.
On the instructor’s table:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Training Script
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Instructor’s copy of handouts and/or worksheets
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Optional: Session Evaluation/Feedback Forms

Training Script

Instructor’s Note: Each section below has an accompanying slide(s). Review and share the content for each PowerPoint slide.

Introduction
<p>Welcome!</p> <p>Complete the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Distribute handouts to the participants. ▶ Welcome the participants to the training. ▶ Introduce yourself and allow the participants to introduce themselves by sharing their name and one thing they would like to get from this training.
<p>Review Current Knowledge</p> <p>Ask posing question: Thinking about the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), how many age groups are in the infant meal pattern?</p> <p>Share core content: The CACFP infant meal pattern has two age-groups: 0–5 months and 6–11 months of age. The meal pattern for these age groups support breastfeeding and promote nutritious meals when the infant is developmentally ready for solid foods.</p>
<p>Overview</p> <p>Share core content: The purpose of this training is to ensure that the CACFP infant meal pattern age group guidelines, including requirements for each age group, are clearly defined and understood.</p> <p>Having only two age groups makes things simple for child care providers. The meal pattern for infants promotes breastfeeding for as long as possible, as well as nutritious meals for infants.</p>
Objective: Explain what is required for each age group in the infant meal pattern for CACFP.
<p>Two Age Groups</p> <p>Ask posing question: Can you share your experience with the infant age groups for CACFP?</p> <p>Share core content: As previously mentioned, the two age groups are 0–5 months and 6–11 months. This promotes solely breastfeeding in the first six months, although solid foods may be introduced earlier or later than six months of age if the infant is developmentally ready for solids.</p> <p>The serving sizes for all food components for meals and snacks now begin with “zero” for infants 6 through 11 months, with the exception of breast milk and infant formula. This serving size recognizes that not all infants are ready-to-eat solid foods right at 6 months of age and may need additional time before they are developmentally ready. It is important to note, by 7 or 8 months of age, most infants should consume solid foods from all food groups.</p> <p>The two age groups are consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics’ (AAP) recommendations of exclusively breastfeeding for the first six months of life, as well as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). These organizations recommend that infants continue to be breastfed until at least one year of age while gradually introducing solid foods at or around six months of age.</p>

Required Components for Each Group

Share core content: The only required component for the 0–5 month age-group is breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula. Breast milk and/or formula is required for the 6–11 month group; however, when a child is deemed developmentally appropriate, they must be served fruit and/or vegetable at snack. Juice is not allowed to be served to infants in either age group, and ready-to-eat cereal is allowed to be served only at snack.

The meal pattern requirements allow foods from all of the food components to be served to infants around 6 months, as it is developmentally appropriate. In particular, at breakfast, lunch, and supper meals, the following three food components must be offered to infants when infants are developmentally ready to accept them:

- ▶ Breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
- ▶ Infant cereal, meats/meat alternates, or a combination
- ▶ Vegetable, fruit, or a combination of both

During snacks, there are three food components:

- ▶ Breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
- ▶ Grains
- ▶ Vegetable, fruit, or a combination of both

Breast milk is the optimal source for infants, and it is generally the only source of nutrients infants need for healthy growth and development during the first six months of life. While breast milk provides the optimal nutrition for an infant, it is perfectly acceptable for an infant to be fed iron-fortified formula if that is what the parent or guardian chooses. The serving size for breast milk or iron-fortified formula in the first five months of life is 4–6 fluid ounces for all meals and snacks. When a child reaches six months of age through eleven months, the serving size of breast milk or iron-fortified formula is 6–8 fluid ounces.

Activity: CACFP Infant Age Groups
Time: 10 minutes

- ▶ **Purpose:** To ensure understanding of CACFP infant age groups.
- ▶ **Materials Needed:** CACFP Infant Meal Pattern Chart, Chart Paper, Markers, Pens/Pencils
- ▶ **Instructions:**
 - **Part 1:** Pass out an infant meal pattern chart to each person. Break into groups of 4–6 people. Take two minutes to review the meal pattern and think of how it helps to promote breastfeeding as well as nutritious foods for infants. Allow participants time to share with the entire group. Record answers on chart paper.
 - **Part 2:** Pass out the worksheet. Read each question to the group, and allow the participants to respond. Review the correct answers on the CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity Answer Key, and provide justification if needed.

Conclusion

Lesson Conclusion

Share core content: The CACFP infant age groups are 0–5 months and 6–11 months of age. There are two age groups to encourage nutritious meals when an infant is developmentally ready and to encourage breastfeeding for as long as possible.

Ask posing question: What questions do you have concerning the CACFP infant age groups?

Activity: Speed Action Planning
Time: 5 minutes

- ▶ **Purpose:** This purpose of this activity is to establish future steps for applying the information in their workplace.
- ▶ **Materials Needed:** Speed Action Planning worksheet, Planner or Cell Phone Calendar App, and Pencil/Pen
- ▶ **Instructions:** Distribute the Speed Action worksheet. Inform participants that it is important to develop a plan for using the training’s information. Ask them to take 1–2 minutes to answer the following three questions to establish an action plan.
 - What did you learn in this training?
 - How will you apply this information in your current or future role?
 - When will you apply this information?

Once the participants have finished, encourage them to save this goal to a planner, calendar app, or other sources to ensure they follow through with their plan. Following this activity, dismiss the participants from the training.

Thank You!

Complete the following tasks:

- ▶ Conclude the training.
- ▶ Refer participants to the Institute of Child Nutrition for additional information at helpdesk@theicn.org or 800-321-3054.
- ▶ Distribute any certificates or evaluations.



Child and Adult Care Food Program

INFANT MEAL PATTERN



breakfast

Birth through 5 months	6 through 11 months
4-6 fluid ounces breastmilk ¹ or formula ²	6-8 fluid ounces breastmilk ¹ or formula ² ; and
	0-4 tablespoons infant cereal ^{2,3} , meat, fish, poultry, whole egg, cooked dry beans, or cooked dry peas; or 0-2 ounces of cheese; or 0-4 ounces (volume) of cottage cheese; or 0-4 ounces or ½ cup of yogurt ⁴ ; or a combination of the above ⁵ ; and
	0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit or a combination of both ^{5,6}

¹ Breastmilk or formula, or portions of both, must be served; however, it is recommended that breastmilk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breastmilk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breastmilk may be offered, with additional breastmilk offered at a later time if the infant will consume more.

² Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.

³ Beginning October 1, 2021, ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.

⁴ Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.

⁵ A serving of this component is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

⁶ Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.

lunch and supper

Birth through 5 months	6 through 11 months
4-6 fluid ounces breastmilk ¹ or formula ²	6-8 fluid ounces breastmilk ¹ or formula ² ; and
	0-4 tablespoons infant cereal ^{2,3} , meat, fish, poultry, whole egg, cooked dry beans, or cooked dry peas; or 0-2 ounces of cheese; or 0-4 ounces (volume) of cottage cheese; or 0-4 ounces or ½ cup of yogurt ⁴ ; or a combination of the above ⁵ ; and
	0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit or a combination of both ^{5,6}

¹ Breastmilk or formula, or portions of both, must be served; however, it is recommended that breastmilk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breastmilk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breastmilk may be offered, with additional breastmilk offered at a later time if the infant will consume more.

² Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.

³ Beginning October 1, 2021, ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.

⁴ Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.

⁵ A serving of this component is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

⁶ Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.

snack

Birth through 5 months	6 through 11 months
4-6 fluid ounces breastmilk ¹ or formula ²	2-4 fluid ounces breastmilk ¹ or formula ² ; and
	0-½ slice bread ^{3,4} ; or 0-2 crackers ^{3,4} ; or 0-4 tablespoons infant cereal ^{2,3,4} or ready-to-eat breakfast cereal ^{3,4,5,6} ; and
	0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit or a combination of both ^{6,7}

¹ Breastmilk or formula, or portions of both, must be served; however, it is recommended that breastmilk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breastmilk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breastmilk may be offered, with additional breastmilk offered at a later time if the infant will consume more.
² Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.
³ Beginning October 1, 2021, ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.
⁴ A serving of grains must be whole grain-rich, enriched meal, or enriched flour.
⁵ Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal).
⁶ A serving of this component is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.
⁷ Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.

Infant Meal Pattern

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10/09/2019

CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity

Instructions: Read each statement and choose whether it is true or false.

- The only required food or beverage for infants between the ages of birth through the end of five months is breastmilk or infant formula.
True _____ **False** _____
- Infants can only be introduced to solid foods after they have turned six months old.
True _____ **False** _____
- The infant meal pattern encourages exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life.
True _____ **False** _____
- Yogurt is allowed to be served to a child under the age of six months.
True _____ **False** _____
- Once a child is determined to be developmentally ready, he or she must eat all of the foods served.
True _____ **False** _____
- It is creditable to serve cereal at breakfast to a child that is seven months of age.
True _____ **False** _____
- If serving an infant formula or breastmilk at snack as well as crackers, a child care provider must also serve a fruit or vegetable.
True _____ **False** _____
- When serving breakfast, lunch, or dinner to a six-month-old child who is determined to be developmentally ready for solid foods, breastmilk/formula and apples would be a creditable meal.
True _____ **False** _____

CACFP Infant Meal Pattern True/False Activity Answer Key

Instructions: Read each statement and choose whether it is true or false.

1. The only required food or beverage for infants between the ages of birth through the end of five months is breastmilk or infant formula.

Answer: True

2. Infants can only be introduced to solid foods after they have turned six months old.

Answer: False. Infants can be introduced to solid foods when they are developmentally ready which can be before, at, or around six months of age.

3. The infant meal pattern encourages exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life.

Answer: True. Breastfeeding is encouraged, but it also does not mean that a child will be exclusively breastfed for the first six months.

4. Yogurt is allowed to be served to a child under the age of six months.

Answer: True. A child may be determined to be developmentally ready before six months of age.

5. Once a child is determined to be developmentally ready, he or she must eat all of the foods served.

Answer: False. Children develop at different rates. The serving charts show just a recommended serving, but a child may eat more or less than what is first served.

6. It is creditable to serve cereal at breakfast to a child that is seven months of age.

Answer: False. Ready-to-eat cereals such as Cheerios are only creditable at snack.

7. If serving an infant formula or breastmilk at snack as well as crackers, a child care provider must also serve a fruit or vegetable.

Answer: True. A fruit or vegetable must be served at snack if the child is determined to be developmentally ready for solid foods.

8. When serving breakfast, lunch, or dinner to a six-month-old child who is determined to be developmentally ready for solid foods, breast milk/formula and apples would be a creditable meal.

Answer: False. When a child is determined to be developmentally ready, it is required to serve all of the required components of that meal, even if the child does not eat all of the components served.

Speed Action Planning

Instructions: Today's training featured key information on CACFP infant age groups. Answer the following three questions to establish an action plan for using the information.

1. What did you learn in this training?

2. How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?

3. When will you apply this information (e.g., one week, one month, six months, etc.)?



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