

# Manager's Corner

## Cycle Menus

### PROJECT COORDINATOR

Theresa Stretch, MS, RDN, CP-FS

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Aleshia Hall-Campbell, PhD, MPH



NUTRITION



OPERATIONS



ADMINISTRATION



COMMUNICATIONS/  
MARKETING

# Institute of Child Nutrition

## The University of Mississippi

The Institute of Child Nutrition was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at the University of Mississippi in Oxford and is operated in collaboration with The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

### **PURPOSE**

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

### **VISION**

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

### **MISSION**

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2019. Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold

Suggested Reference Citation:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2019). *Manager's corner: Cycle menus*. University, MS: Author.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.

For more information, please contact [helpdesk@theicn.org](mailto:helpdesk@theicn.org).

February 27, 2019

# Table of Contents

Professional Standards .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Lesson Overview—Questions .....	3
Cycle Menus Activity .....	4
References .....	5



## Professional Standards

### Menu Planning – 1100

**Employee will be able to effectively and efficiently plan and prepare standardized recipes, cycle menus, and meals, including the use of USDA foods, to meet all Federal school nutrition program requirements, including the proper meal components.**

1120 – Plan cycle menus that meet all rules. Consider cost, equipment, foods available, storage, staffing, student tastes, and promotional events.

## Introduction

*Manager's Corner: Cycle Menus* is designed for managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. *Manager's Corner: Cycle* provides a method for empowering managers to train their staff. This lesson plan contains the following:

- learning objective,
- statement explaining the importance of the topic,
- list of materials,
- instructions on how to present the information,
- questions to ask staff, and
- an activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the manager.



## Lesson Overview—Questions

**Objective:** Identify the benefits of a cycle menu.

**Why it is important:** It is good practice for districts to use a cycle menu for a designated period of time. Seasonal menus allow the opportunity to incorporate in-season options. Planning menus in advance saves time, helps avoid repetitive tasks, reduces labor, implements cost-effective inventory management, and may reduce waste.

**Materials included in this document:**

- **Food Bar Choices Activity**

**Instruction:**

Ask the staff to answer the questions included in this training. Facilitate the activity.

**Questions for the staff:**

- **What does a well-planned menu include?**

**Answer:** The menu must meet all Federal guidelines and be appealing to the customer. A well-planned menu includes whole grain-rich foods; fruits and vegetables; a variety of shapes, textures, colors, and temperatures; and a blend of flavors. Some other factors to consider in menu planning include equipment, food cost, cultural food preferences, labor costs, skill levels, environmental friendliness, and the availability of USDA Foods.

Remember, it is the role of the menu planner to plan reimbursable meals and communicate clear messages to the school nutrition staff. It is the role of staff who prepare and serve meals to follow the menu planner's directions to ensure students select a reimbursable meal.

- **What are the benefits of cycle menus?**

**Answer:** Seasonal menus allow the opportunity to incorporate in-season options. Planning menus in advance saves time, helps avoid repetitive tasks, reduces labor, and implements cost-effective inventory management and may reduce waste.

## Cycle Menu Activity

### Activity instructions:

- Assign the staff one of the following seasons:
  - Fall
  - Winter
  - Spring
  - Summer
  
- Allow staff 5-7 minutes to determine four menu items that will complement the season they were assigned. Encourage the staff to consider locally grown items that are in season as they determine their menu items. At the conclusion ask the staff to share their responses. Other food items may be included in their choices.
  - Example
    - fall: twice baked sweet potato, baked cinnamon apples, cider baked chicken, autumn harvest red potatoes
    - winter: vegetarian chili, chicken and dumplings, red beans and rice, hot turkey sandwich
    - spring: garden spinach salad, chef's salad, vegetable stir fry, penne with spring vegetables
    - summer: roasted zucchini, fruit and yogurt, chipotle chicken, shredded cabbage salad

## References

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2018). *School nutrition S.T.A.R. meal preparation and service instructor's manual*. University, MS: Author.

United States Department of Agriculture. (2015). *Professional standards for school nutrition professionals*. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>



The University of Mississippi  
School of Applied Sciences

800-321-3054  
[www.theicn.org](http://www.theicn.org)