



MEALTIME MEMO



How often do you hear, “This looks different than last time!” or “This doesn’t taste the same as it usually does!”? Using standardized recipes can help to ensure your recipe turns out the same way each time you make it. It is a good practice to use a standardized recipe when a menu item has two or more components. This Mealtime Memo will focus on creating a standardized recipe for simple menu items with just a few ingredients.

What Is a Standardized Recipe?

A standardized recipe is one that has been tried, adapted, and retried for use in a foodservice operation and is shown to produce the same high-quality product and yield every time. A standardized recipe in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) shows that the menu item meets the meal pattern requirements.

Standardized recipes are written documents with the following parts:

- Name of the recipe (which should match the way it is listed on the menu)
- List of all ingredients and the amount of each needed for the recipe
- Specific instructions on how to make the recipe
- Serving size and crediting information

Chic Penne

Meal Components: **Wheat** **Wholewheat** **Dark Green** **Vegetable** **Grains** **White** **Dishes** **D-SB**

Ingredient	20 Children		50 Children		Directions
	Weight	Measure	Weight	Measure	
Water		1 gal 2 qt		2 gal	1. Heat water for a rolling boil.
Wholewheat whole grain-flour	33g	1/4 cup 2 oz	6.5g	1/4 cup 2 oz	2. Sift and sifter. Stir constantly with water until again. Cook 20 MINUTE OVERHEAT. Drain well.
Greenleafed garlic		1/2 cup 1/2 oz		2 1/2 cup 2 1/2 oz	3. Heat olive oil over high heat. For 20 minutes, add 2 cups (measure containing garlic for step 1). For 20 minutes, add 1 1/2 cups (measure containing garlic for step 1). For step 1).
Fresh broccoli florets (chopped)*	176 1/4 oz	2 qt 2 1/2 cups	339 1/2 oz	1 gal 10 qt	4. Transfer garlic to a clean cloth and pat dry (20" x 20"). For 20 minutes, use 1 cup. For 20 minutes, use 1 cup.
Protein, cooked dried chicken, chicken, 1/2 lb	176 1/4 oz	2 qt 2 1/2 cups	339 1/2 oz	1 gal 10 qt	5. Cook broccoli for 10 minutes in boiling water. Drain broccoli and use with remaining garlic.
Low sodium chicken broth		1/2 cup		1 1/2 cup	6. Add broccoli and chicken to pasta. Mix well.
Salt		1 1/2 tsp		2 1/2 tsp	7. Season. Combine broth, salt, pepper, and milk. Bring to a boil, and simmer. For 20 minutes, use 1/2 cup (measure containing milk for step 1). For 20 minutes, use 1/2 cup (measure containing milk for step 1).
Ground black pepper		1/2 tsp		1 1/2 tsp	
Nonfat milk		1 qt 1 1/2 cups		2 qt 2 1/2 cups	
Ground or pastured flour		1/2 cup		1 1/2 cup	8. Combine remaining milk with flour and add to both mixture. Reduce heat to low. Stir constantly for 5 minutes until sauce thickens.
Reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded		2 cups		1 lb	9. Add cheese. Continue to stir until cheese melts.

* If you are preparing with the ingredients and the flour, the flour should be pre-sifted.

Creating Standardized Recipes for Simple Combination Items

Use the following steps to create standardized recipes for simple combined foods such as spaghetti and meatballs, sandwiches, or salad.

1. Write a recipe for one serving and make the recipe before scaling it up for more servings. The individual serving should contain the minimum quantity to credit as a meal component. Write the name of the recipe at the top, for example, "Whole Grain Pasta with Marinara Sauce and Meatballs" (as written on the menu).

2. List all ingredients used. For example:

- Whole grain-rich penne pasta
- Marinara sauce
- Purchased meatballs with a Child Nutrition (CN) label

3. Determine minimum amounts to serve. Consult the [CACFP Meal Pattern chart](#) for the amount needed for a serving of each component for the age group. For example, 3–5-year-olds need $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked penne pasta, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of marinara sauce, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz of meat/meat alternate. Look at the CN label on the package for how many meatballs are a serving of M/MA.



- Refer to the [February 2023 Mealtime Memo](#) for information on how to use CN labels.
- Use the [Food Buying Guide](#) to determine the amount of dry pasta and marinara sauce needed for the recipe.

4. Write the preparation instructions. Example:

- Combine pasta sauce and meatballs in a pot and cook until meatballs reach the internal temperature of 165 °F. Keep warm until ready to assemble.
- Prepare penne pasta according to package instructions and drain.
- Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked pasta onto the plate. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup marinara sauce and 3 meatballs.
- It is good practice to provide instructions and appropriate serving utensils so supervising adults know the minimum amounts each participant should receive.

5. Scale up the recipe. Once you have the recipe written for one serving and have made it according to the directions, you can scale it up to serve everyone eating at the table. For example, if you have four people, you would need 1 cup of pasta, 1 cup of sauce, and 12 meatballs. Remember: You can serve larger portions than the minimum requirement.

Recipe Templates

It is good practice to use a blank recipe template for standardized recipes. There is no required recipe template; however, here is an example.

Recipe Name: Whole Grain Pasta with Marinara Sauce and Meatballs			
Meal Component	Meat/Meat Alternate	Grain	Vegetable
Serving Size	3 meatballs	¼ cup cooked pasta	¼ cup sauce
CACFP Meal Pattern Contribution	1.5 oz M/MA	½ oz eq grains	¼ cup vegetable
Servings per Age Group			
1–2 Years	2 meatballs	¼ cup cooked pasta	¼ cup sauce
3–5 Years	3 meatballs	¼ cup cooked pasta	¼ cup sauce
Ingredients Servings: based on 3–5-year-old serving sizes			
Ingredients	1 serving	4 servings	12 servings
Cooked Pasta*	¼ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Prepared Marinara Sauce*	¼ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Meatballs (CN label)	3 meatballs	12 meatballs	36 meatballs
*Use the Food Buying Guide to calculate the amounts to prepare.			
Preparation Instructions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare pasta according to package instructions. Drain and set aside. • In a separate pot, cook marinara sauce and meatballs until meatballs reach the internal temperature of 165°F. • Serving options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <u>Single plate (for 3–5 year olds)</u>: place ¼ cup of cooked pasta onto each plate. Add ¼ cup marinara sauce and 3 meatballs. ◦ <u>Family style</u>: multiply the number of children and supervising adults at the table by the minimum serving amounts. Place the total amount of cooked pasta into one serving bowl and the total amount of meatballs and sauce into another serving bowl. 			

Complex Recipes

You may have more complex recipes with several ingredients that also need to be standardized. Below are some ideas on how to serve these items.

- Try to find a recipe that has already been standardized. There are some great resources available, and you can probably find one similar to what you currently use. Try the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#) or the [USDA CACFP Recipes for Child Care Homes and Adult Day Care](#). They both have standardized recipes for popular items.
- Find training on standardizing recipes and create your own.
 - [The Food Buying Guide Series on the iLearn Center](#): A three-module online learning opportunity that reviews the Food Buying Guide for CNPs, the Recipe Analysis



Workbook (RAW), and Product Formulation Statements

- [Team Nutrition Recipes](#): A variety of resources about recipes and standardization
- [The USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](#):

A “how-to” guide on recipe standardization for school nutrition recipe developers designed to be a complete source of information on recipe standardization from conception to implementation of a recipe

Ask your State agency or sponsoring organization for help specific to your state.

Mealtime Discussion Prompts

During mealtime, ask children about the types of menu items they enjoy, so you can make those a priority for standardization.

- What is your favorite lunch, breakfast, or snack in our program?
- What is your favorite meal to eat at home?
- Is there any food you would like to eat here that we don't serve?



Menu Ideas

The following menu ideas provide a variety of foods, colors, and textures that are appropriate for young children and have already been standardized. Some recipes contain multiple food components listed in parentheses after the recipe.

Breakfast

Lunch/Supper

Snack



Roasted Potato and Turkey
Hash
(Meat Alternate, Vegetable)

1% Milk



Spaghetti and Meat Sauce
(Meat, Grain, Vegetable)

Blueberries

1% Milk



Cornbread
(Grain)

Red Pepper Slices

Water



Recipes

- The [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#) has USDA standardized recipes for child care centers and family child care homes.
- The [Child Nutrition Recipe Box: New CACFP Lunch/Supper Recipes](#) has standardized recipes per age group (3–5 and 6–18 year-olds) and for servings of 6, 25, and 50.

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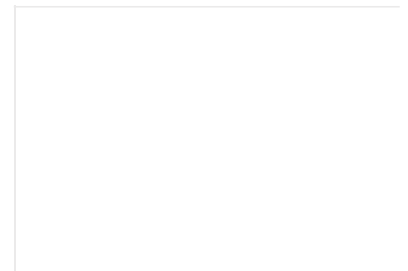
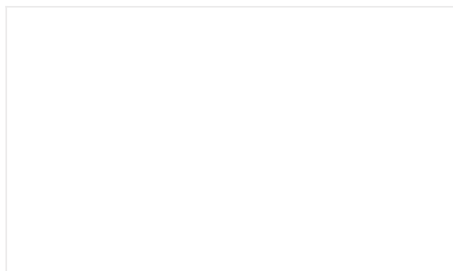
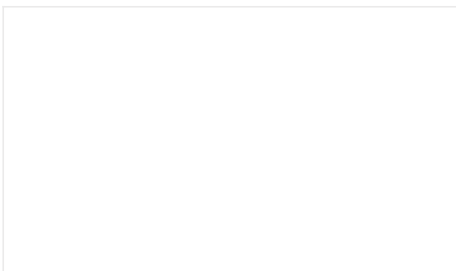
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