



Infant Meal Pattern Requirements

Iowa Child and Adult Care Food Program

The first year of life is divided into 3; four-month age groupings with appropriate meal guidelines for each group. Although the meal pattern specifies breakfast, lunch, supper and snack, this may not match each baby's feeding pattern. Babies seldom accept rigid feeding schedules and may need to eat every 2 to 4 hours. Babies should be fed when hungry, "on demand" or "on cue."

A range of food amounts is listed to allow flexibility, based on each baby's appetite. Babies vary from day-to-day in the amounts they actually eat. The amounts listed are the **minimum** you must serve to meet requirements except for breast milk. Some babies may want less and should never be forced to finish what is in the bottle or what is spoon-fed. Let babies determine how much they will eat and learn the individual cues each baby uses to show hunger or fullness. You may serve larger portions to babies who want more than these amounts.

Infants must be held when they are fed and should never be left with a propped-up bottle. Juice should not be offered to infants until they are ready to drink from a cup. Bottle feeding of juice or bedtime bottles may cause baby bottle tooth decay.

Solid foods are optional for infants four through seven months of age, and should be introduced only if the infant is developmentally ready and the parent states the baby is ready. Solid foods should be introduced one at a time to help detect allergies.

Breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula must be served for the entire first year. All infants must be enrolled and the center or home must offer to provide at least one allowable iron-fortified infant formula.

The chart "Is This Infant Meal Reimbursable?" describes which meals can be claimed for CACFP reimbursement.

| Age of Baby | Breakfast | Lunch and Supper | Snack |
|---|--|--|--|
| Birth through 3 months  | 4-6 fluid ounces (fl oz) breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ | 4-6 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ | 4-6 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ |
| 4 months through 7 months  | 4-8 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ 0-3 Tbsp. Infant cereal ^{3,4} (optional) | 4-8 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ 0-3 Tbsp. Infant cereal ^{3,4} (optional) 0-3 Tbsp. fruit and/or vegetable (optional) ⁴ | 4-6 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ |
| 8 months through 11 months (until 1 st birthday)  | 6-8 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ 2-4 Tbsp. Infant cereal ³ 1-4 Tbsp. fruit and/or vegetable | 6-8 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ and 2-4 Tbsp Infant cereal ³ and/or 1-4 Tbsp. meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, cooked dry beans or split peas; or ½-2 oz. cheese; or 2-8 Tbsp. cottage cheese; or 1-4 oz cheese food, or cheese spread; and 1-4 Tbsp. fruit and/or vegetable | 2-4 fl oz breast milk ^{1,2} or formula ³ or fruit juice ⁵ 0-½ slice of bread ^{4,6} or 0-2 crackers ^{4,6} (optional) |

¹ Breast milk or formula, or portions of both may be served (ask parent's wishes); however, it is recommended that breast milk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months.

² For some breast-fed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered, with additional breast milk offered if the infant is still hungry.

³ Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron fortified.

⁴ A serving of this component is required only when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

⁵ Fruit juice must be full-strength.

⁶ Bread and crackers must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour, without nuts, seeds or honey.