2023-2024 Cycle Menu Toolkit

Introduction

The Cycle Menu Toolkit was developed to assist Contracting Entities (CE) participating in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program using the Meal Patterns and Nutrition Standards prescribed in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in providing Texas school children with nutritionally-balanced school meals. These school breakfast and lunch meals were designed using a variety of menu items intended to be tasty, student-friendly, and colorful with consideration given to ease of preparation and production.

When implementing these menus at the CE level, it is important to consider the following points:

- The menus were analyzed using current USDA nutritional standards for students in grades PreK-12 for Breakfast, and PreK, K-8, and 9-12 for Lunch. Each week of the cycle was analyzed independently. Thus, daily menus can be interchanged within the week without affecting the meal patterns and nutritional status. It is important to note that weekly menus must be kept intact to ensure compliance with minimum and maximum meal pattern requirements.

- Recipes for menu items were developed or modified specifically for these cycle menus and nutrition quality is enhanced by the use of these recipes. The recipes are included in the cycle menu toolkit and located at the back of the Breakfast section and Lunch section of this document.

- Since regional CEs use a variety of sources for food purchasing and commodity processing, CEs should recognize that food products selected for analysis were chosen based on a variety of factors including nutrient content, meal pattern contribution, and cost.

- This cycle menu toolkit includes the following helpful tools: Menus, Food Production Records, and Recipes for both Breakfast and Lunch.

- These cycle menus were produced in an effort to provide technical assistance to CEs. However, it is the CE's responsibility to know and understand the Meal Patterns and Nutrition Standards as well as stay abreast of all handbooks, manuals, alerts, notices and guidance provided through the ESC, TDA, and/or USDA or any other forms of communication providing further guidance, clarification, or instruction on operating the Child Nutrition Programs.

It is important to understand that the cycle menus are planned for CEs participating in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program. Food service personnel must recognize that each CE's level of participation and implementation of Offer vs. Serve affects the nutrient analysis of each CE's menus. Thus, the implementation of these cycle menus does not guarantee any specific results toward the Administrative Review.

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