

## Meal Count Procedure

### PROCEDURE

Center staff is responsible for recording accurate child and adult meal counts in accordance with CACFP Policies and Regulations in order to document a verifiable claim.

ODE CACFP Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter 5 Attendance and Meal Counts; Chapter 10 Meal Service and Menu Records

### Procedure for Meal Counts:

1. Responsibility for Meal Counts:
  - Primary responsibility for meal counts lies with the Center Cook or Cook Assistant.
  - Teachers, Teacher Assistants (TAs), Center Assistants (CAs), Area Assistants, Family Advocates, and Site Managers will assist as needed with recording meal counts when Cooks and Cook Assists are not available to do so.
  - Site Managers will ensure that all center staff are trained on the SOCFC Meal Count Procedure following CACFP meal count requirements to ensure consistency and compliance.
2. Point-of-Service Meal Count (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 10, Section A):
  - Meal counts must be taken at the point-of-service, which is when the classroom receives a complete, reimbursable meal and the child is seated at the table.
  - Meal counts must be recorded before the child leaves the table. The Center Cook or Cook Assistant will deliver the complete meal to the classroom. After all meal components have been delivered to the classroom, they will count the participants seated at the table who are actively engaged in the family-style meal.
  - Teachers, TAs, CAs or other assigned classroom staff assist in confirming the count once children are seated. If a child refuses a meal, the meal should still be recorded, as long as the child was offered the meal and is seated at the table at the time of the count.

3. Acceptable Meal Count Method (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 10, Section A):

- The daily meal count sheet must be used to document the number of participants (children and adults) receiving a reimbursable meal.
- Meal counts must be documented immediately after children are seated with a complete meal, and the sheet should be filled out by the Cook or Cook Assistant and confirmed by the classroom staff.
- Adult meals (staff, volunteers, siblings etc.) should be counted and recorded separately on the daily meal count sheet.

4. Late Arrivals or Early Departures (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 10, Section A):

- If a child arrives late or leaves early, note the time on the Weekly Attendance Sheet. Meal counts should still reflect those who were offered meals during service.

5. Non-Reimbursable Meals (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 10, Section A):

- Only meals that meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements and are prepared by SOCFC Nutrition staff are eligible for reimbursement.
- Meals served off-site or unsupervised (e.g., packed meals or meals from restaurants) are not reimbursable.

6. Meal Count Methods Not Acceptable (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 10, Section A):

The following methods are not acceptable for meal counts:

- Counting the number of participants in attendance.
- Counting the number of meals prepared or sent by the kitchen.
- Counting meals after the meal is completed or based on teachers' memory.
- Counting the number of trays or plates without verifying that the meal was actually received by the participant.

7. Documentation and Record Keeping (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 10, Section B):

- Meal count forms should be kept in an easily accessible location near the meal service area.
- Completed forms are sent from the centers to the Nutrition Department and must be securely stored with other CACFP claim records. Meal count records must be retained for at least three years plus the current fiscal year for audit purposes.



8. Training and Compliance (ODE CNP Manual - Chapter 5, Section 4):

- All staff must be trained on the CACFP meal count procedures and understand how to properly document meal counts at the point-of-service.
- Staff must also be familiar with the required meal patterns and the documentation procedures to ensure compliance with Oregon ODE CNP regulations.