DOCUMENTATION: Meal Counts

POLICY/APPROACH:

To ensure proper reimbursement as outlined in CACFP program policies Food Service staff will accurately document meal counts.

PROCEDURE:

1. Meal Counts are documented each day on the Weekly Attendance Sheet using the Head Count Method. The meal count is documented on the last page of the attendance sheet. Record the total number of children at each meal on the corresponding line.

   B______  L______  S______

2. At the time of meal service, the Weekly Attendance Sheet is available for the Food Service staff to record the meal counts. If a child arrives late or leaves early, the classroom staff may add +1 or -1 to the meal count.

3. Meal counts are taken at the time each meal is served. Meal counts are not to be taken or recorded before or after meal service, but at the time the meal is served.

4. The number of adults (staff, volunteers, foster grandparents, parents, visitors, etc.) is recorded for each meal at the top of the column for each day.

5. The same staff person cannot record both the attendance and meal count; one person must do the attendance and another person must do the meal count.
6. At Head Start centers, the Area Assistant is responsible for entering the attendance and the Adult meal counts into the database. At EHS centers, the Center Assistant is responsible for data entry.

7. Special situations:

A) **Picnic or sack lunches/field trips**: Picnic lunches meeting all CACFP components provided by the center and supervised by center staff are reimbursable meals if CACFP has approved the field trip. Record the number of children eating on the Weekly Attendance Sheet.

B) **Child is present but does not eat**: If a child is at the table but refuses to eat, you may count the child and record on the attendance under the appropriate total meal.

C) **Child has a lunch prepared and packed at Head Start but eats it at another location** (such as a child who leaves the center for speech therapy off site); this meal is not reimbursable. Do not count the child on the head count.

B) **Field trips where non-Head Start food is served**: Field trips that involve food not purchased or prepared according to SOCFC Policy (such as field trips to produce farms, restaurants, etc.) do not qualify for reimbursement. Do not record the meal count on the Weekly Attendance Sheet.