This Q & A responds to the infant feeding questions we received from Center and Family Day Care Home sponsors during the June 2003 Infant Feeding trainings.

For the purpose of this Q & A, the term sponsor refers to Center sponsors and the term provider refers to Family Day Care Home providers.

1. How does USDA define “infant” for purposes of Child Nutrition Programs?

USDA Regulations governing feeding of infants in the CACFP apply to infants from birth through 11 months of age. Infant feeding requirements apply to infants through the end of the infant’s 11th month.

2. Is a sponsor/provider required to offer more than one approved infant formula?

No. Sponsors/providers must offer at least one approved iron fortified infant formula. Sponsors/providers may offer more than one approved formula. Offering a cow’s milk-based formula and a soy-based formula may reduce the number of parent requests for food substitutions requiring a completed Medical Statement for Food Substitutions. The Infant Feeding Parent Letter and Infant Feeding Forms (581-1163a-E Rev. 8-03 and 581-1163b-E Rev 8-03) are designed to allow sponsors/providers to offer both a cow’s milk and soy based formula.

3. Is the meal reimbursable if the parent or guardian provides the majority of the meal components for infants older than three months?

Yes. Parents may choose to provide one or several of the meal components under the CACFP infant meal pattern for infants older than three months, as long as this is in compliance with local health codes. Because we recognize that parents or guardians are often most in touch with their child’s individual dietary preferences, we believe the CACFP infant meal pattern can accommodate these preferences. In such a case, the center sponsor or provider would still be required to provide at least one of the components in at least the minimum quantities specified in the meal pattern in order for the meal to be reimbursable. Centers and Family Day Care Home Sponsors also need to ensure that the parent or guardian is truly choosing to provide the preferred component(s), and that the sponsor or provider has not solicited (requested or required) the parent or guardian to provide the components in order to complete the meal and reduce cost to the center sponsor or provider.

4. Can a Child Care Center have a policy that doesn’t allow parents to bring any food or formula?

Yes. The Infant Feeding Form (581-1163a-E Rev. 8-03) includes the following statement “If this child care facility does not allow parents to provide food or formula for their infant, these options do not apply”. Centers that do not allow parents to provide food or formula and do not wish to distribute the Infant Feeding Form may submit a waiver request and a copy of their infant feeding policy. Contact an ODE Nutrition Specialist for details.
5. Is the meal reimbursable for an infant who receives breast milk instead of cow’s milk after 13 months of age?

Yes. Children who are breastfeeding may be served breast milk in place of fluid milk in the meal pattern. Breast milk may be served at meals or snacks. Breast milk should be properly identified and labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was collected. Breast milk identified for a particular child should only be served to that child. Breast milk should be stored and handled according to applicable state and local laws and regulations governing health and safety standards.

6. What about updating the Infant Feeding Form at 4 through 7 months, and 8 through 11 months?

Sponsors/providers are required to distribute and collect new Infant Feeding Forms whenever they change the formula(s) they offer. The best practice is for sponsors/providers to update the Infant Feeding Form when the infant’s parents notify them that their infant’s developmental readiness requires a change in their meal pattern, however this additional paperwork is not required by CACFP regulations.

7. Sponsors/providers are not allowed to claim meals for children when the child’s parents are present. Can the sponsor/provider claim a breastfed meal for an infant in care, but not claim a meal for an older sibling when mom is present breastfeeding baby?

Effective October 1, 2003, sponsors/providers can no longer claim reimbursement for infant meals when breastfed breast milk is the only meal component offered.

However, the meal would be reimbursable for infants over 3 months of age who are developmentally ready for solid foods, if at least one other meal pattern component is furnished by the sponsor/provider. For example, if a mother comes to the center/day care home for the lunch meal service to breastfeed her 5 month old infant and the provider supplies a serving of vegetables (listed as options in the infant meal pattern for lunch for infants aged 4-7 months), the infant meal is reimbursable, but the meal for the older child is not reimbursable.

8. Is the sponsor or provider required to provide bottles and nipples?

Refer to Child Care Division regulations.

9. Are sponsors or providers required to use boiled or bottled water for formula preparation?

Refer to Child Care Division regulations.

10. Is it ok to dilute juice when feeding infants, for example, 2 ounces juice mixed with 2 ounces water?

Yes, for a meal pattern requiring 2 ounces juice, if at least 2 ounces of pasteurized 100% juice is mixed with water and the total amount of diluted juice does not exceed 4 ounces.
11. Situation: Parents decline the formula offered by the sponsor/provider and provide their own formula from the USDA-approved formula list. Parents ask the sponsor/provider to provide solid foods when baby is developmentally ready. No documentation is required to substantiate when the infant is ready for solid food. The sponsor/provider offers one of the solid food options on the meal pattern (cereal/fruit/vegetable) before the infant is developmentally ready for solid foods in order to claim the meal for reimbursement. Is this meal reimbursable?

Yes. However, sponsors/providers should work with the infant’s parents and/or health care provider to determine when an infant is developmentally ready for solid foods.

12. Situation: Parents decline the formula offered and provide cow’s milk or a formula not on the USDA-approved formula list (non-creditable meal components). The sponsor/provider offers all other creditable required meal components to the infant. Is this meal reimbursable?

No. Refer to attached handout “Is this infant meal reimbursable?”

13. Parents accept the formula offered, but decline the other meal pattern food components. Parents do not provide other food items to make a reimbursable meal (do not provide all other required meal pattern components, or provide non-creditable foods). Is this meal reimbursable?

No. Refer to attached handout “Is this infant meal reimbursable?”

14. Is fresh-squeezed juice creditable?

No. Juice served as part of a reimbursable meal in the CACFP must be pasteurized.

15. If less than the minimum portion of breast milk is offered, is the meal reimbursable?

Yes. Sponsors/providers may serve less than the required minimum portion of breast milk to infants who regularly do not consume the minimum meal pattern quantity of breast milk. In this case, when the full portion is not initially offered, the sponsor/provider must offer additional breast milk if the infant is still hungry. USDA adopted this provision in recognition of the reduced feeding needs of some infants and the desire to avoid wasting limited quantities of breast milk. This provision does not apply to formula.

16. Can sponsors count the amount of breast milk or formula they mix into cereal?

No. Only fluid breast milk and formula can be credited towards meeting the meal pattern requirements for this component.

17. Is there an allowable medical exception for offering less than the minimum required quantity of formula/breast milk due to infant reflux?

Yes, if a recognized medical authority completes a Medical Statement for Food Substitutions prescribing a meal pattern with more frequent servings of less than the required amount of formula. Sponsors/providers may offer less than the required minimum portion of breast milk without a Medical Statement for Food Substitutions to infants who regularly do not consume the minimum meal pattern quantity of breast milk.
18. Can the sponsor/provider serve table foods, instead of jarred baby foods, to an infant who is developmentally ready?

Yes. Sponsors/providers should work with the infant’s parents and/or health care provider to determine when an infant is developmentally ready for table foods. To receive reimbursement, the sponsor/provider must offer the infant a developmentally appropriate meal containing all required food components in at least the minimum quantities. There is no requirement for foods to be “jarred” or pureéd baby foods.

19. Is cereal mixed with formula or breast milk and served in a bottle reimbursable?

No, unless there is medical or dietary reason and the parent/guardian has provided a completed Medical Statement for Food Substitutions signed by a recognized medical authority.

20. Is the meal reimbursable if the parent requests only breast milk be served to their infant at 8 months?

No, unless there is medical or dietary reason and the parent/guardian has provided a completed Medical Statement for Food Substitutions signed by a recognized medical authority.

21. Why is cheese food creditable for infants and not for children?

Effective immediately, cheese food is creditable as a meat/meat alternate component for infants and children in the CACFP. A two ounce serving of cheese food equals one ounce meat/meat alternate. An example of cheese food is Velveeta®.

22. If a parent provides jarred baby food with DHA additive as one of the required meal pattern components, is the meal reimbursable?

No. Commercially prepared fruits and vegetables containing DHA are not creditable towards meeting the meal pattern requirements.

23. Can sponsors/providers serve the required meal pattern components at different times? For example, infant cereal is served at 7:00 AM and formula at 8:00 AM.

Yes. CACFP infant feeding requirements take into consideration an infant’s individual development. Infants who regularly do not consume all required components at one sitting may be offered the required components at subsequent sittings. The complete meal pattern must be offered prior to the service of any portion of the next claimed meal or snack.

24. Are graham crackers made with honey creditable in the infant meal pattern?

No. Honey in any form (raw or cooked) could contain clostridium botulinum spores, which can cause a type of foodborne illness in infants. Graham crackers made with honey are not creditable in the infant meal pattern. Graham crackers made without honey are creditable in the infant meal pattern.