

Menu Planning Records

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Good Records Are Helpful

Good recordkeeping is part of any successful food service operation. A tool like the production record helps you plan from day to day. How much food needs to be prepared for a particular meal or snack? The production record tells you at a glance.

Helpful in many ways...

Good records also provide a valuable written history for future planning.

They help you:

- see trends
- evaluate what works best with your children
- decide what changes need to be made

In addition, during State reviews your records demonstrate that your meals comply with CACFP requirements.

Production Records

Production records vary in format, but any good record accomplishes two things.

- First, it gives you information—such as what foods and recipes to use, and what portion sizes to serve.
- Second, it enables you to record information, such as actual quantities prepared and number of meals and snacks served.

For best results, plan ahead...

A production record is a working tool which outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. To be a successful planning tool, production records should be started well in advance of the meal service.

What is Needed on a Production Record?

For starters, the production record should show the:

- child care site
- meal date
- menu type (breakfast, snack, lunch, or supper)

In addition, it should indicate the following:

- Food components (meat and meat alternate, etc.) and other items, including condiments.
- Recipe or food product used.
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for each age group.
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for adults.
- Total amount of food prepared (for example, number of servings, pounds, cans).
- Actual number of reimbursable meals served.
- Actual number of nonreimbursable meals served (such as to adults).
- Leftovers and substitutions.

Completing a Production Record

When is a production record filled in?

- The menu planner completes the first part of the production record in advance.
- After the meal is served, the remaining sections are completed. These include such information as actual amounts of food used, the number of meals served, and leftovers.

What specific information is needed?

- **Menu item (or food item) used and form:** All food items must be listed.
- **Recipe or product:** It is critical to specify *exact* recipes and products that are to be used. (If on the day of service, the preparer or server uses a different recipe or product than the one specified here by the menu planner, the food provided to children may not meet the meal requirements as planned.) List the recipe number if it is a USDA quantity recipe and the name of the food and its form (such as shredded lettuce). For processed foods, list brand name and code number.
- **Age or grade group(s):** You need to identify the age group being served. If a menu serves more than one age group at a site, you may use one production record to show this, but notations for each age group should be clear. Adjusted portion sizes for age groups specified need to be shown for menu items, recipes, and products.
- **Portion or serving size:** Indicate portion size or serving size. This information is important to ensure that the correct portion size is *served* as well as planned and prepared.
- **Total projected servings:** Forecast, or predict, the approximate number of servings needed of each menu item. Projecting the number of servings is the first step in determining how much food to buy or order, how much time to allot for preparation, and which equipment to use.
- **Amount of food (or purchase units) used:** Indicate how much food was used. These records should be kept to verify that the planned menu was actually prepared and served.
- **Actual number of meals served:** At the end of the meal service, record the number of reimbursable meals that were actually served to children. Also record the number of nonreimbursable meals that were served (such as to adults).
- **Leftovers:** Record any leftovers.

See Appendix K for a sample production record.

Standardized Recipes

A standardized recipe is one that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times—and has been found to *produce the same good results and yield every time...*

...as long as:

- *the exact procedures are followed*
- *the same type of equipment is used*
- *the ingredients are of the same quality and in the same quantities*



See *Child Care Recipes
Food for Health and Fun,
Muffin Square (A-11)*

What are the advantages of using standardized recipes?

- **Standardized recipes help ensure product quality.**

- They provide food items of consistent quality.

- The same amount of product is produced each time.

- The same portion size is provided each time.

- **Menu planning will be more consistent because:**

- You can accurately predict the number of portions from each recipe.

- Predictable yield will help eliminate unexpected leftovers and substitutions.

- **Costs are easier to control.**

- Inventory is easier because recipes specify exact amounts of ingredients.

- You can better manage purchasing and storage.

- **The same good results can be produced time after time.**

- As a result, children will be happier because food quality will be consistent.

A good source of quantity recipes...

***Child Care Recipes: Food for Health and Fun* from USDA (FNS-304) contains standardized recipes and kitchen tips that will make your menu planning and food preparation easier.**

The recipes can help you add variety to your menus, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and grain products.

Developed in quantities of 25 and 50 servings, the recipes have been tested, and retested, for product quality, consistency, and yield in child care centers nationwide.

What kind of information should be included on a standardized recipe form?

If you are standardizing your own recipe, or modifying an already standardized recipe, you will want to keep careful records. These records should include the following information:

- **Yield:** Indicate serving size and number of servings.
- **All ingredients:** Identify *form* (such as fresh, frozen, or canned); *packing medium* (such as canned in juice or light syrup, frozen with added sugar or plain); and *fat content* (such as “20% fat ground beef” or “ground pork, no more than 30% fat”).
- **Correct measures, weights, and/or pack size.**
- **Preparation procedures.**

See Appendix L for information on equivalent measures, scoops, ladles, and weights and measures.

For which menu items will you need to keep recipes?

Recipes are needed for any menu item that contains more than one ingredient, such as Beef Stir-Fry, seasoned vegetables, and sandwiches.

Processed Foods

You will need to keep records of processed foods used in meals. See below for what kind of information you want to have on hand.

What kind of records will you need to keep?

You will need either...

...**a Child Nutrition Label** (see Appendix M for more information on Child Nutrition Labels)

...**or a statement from the manufacturer** which documents the product and the food components and amounts that are credited to that product. Manufacturers must use the current USDA *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* to determine yields of food components.

Check with your State agency regarding the specific information that needs to be provided by the manufacturer.