

# Comparison of Texas Child Care Nutrition Standards

SB 818 / HB 2664 would ensure minimum standards for nutrition and meals are consistent with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture. CACFP guidelines are clearer and more intuitive, provide guidance for children of all ages, and offer more choices for protein options.

Texas DFPS Minimum Standards	Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
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## Current Standards are Very Confusing

- DFPS standards include “daily food needs” charts that are very confusing. Charts are broken up by the **number of hours a child is in child care, a child’s age, and how much total food from each food group** a child should get -- not the typical breakfast/lunch/snack categories that most people think of.
- For example, if a child is in care for 4 to 7 hours, the child must receive 1/3 of his or her daily food needs. If a child is in care for more than 7 hours, a child must get 1/2 of her daily food needs.

Confusing math calculations are needed to figure out daily food requirements.

Example: If a child is in care between 4 and 7 hours, he or she must receive 1/3 of her daily food needs. For a 3-to-5 years old, that means 1/12 cup of milk (1/3 of a serving where one serving is a 1/4 cup of milk). And it means 1/3 of a serving of fruit, where one serving is 1/2 cup juice or 1/2 cup canned fruit.

## CACFP Meals/Snacks Are a Lot Clearer

- CACFP “meal patterns” are broken up by **breakfast/lunch/snack categories and age group**, making expectations and portion sizes easier to understand.
- Many resources are available to help providers plan recipes, offer a variety of foods to kids, and fulfill meal patterns.
- For example, CACFP clearly spells out that for lunch a child age 3-5 should get: 6 ounces milk; 1.5 ounces meat or protein option; 1/4 cup vegetables; 1/4 cup fruit; and 1/4 cup of whole grains.
- CACFP offers clearer guidelines for decreasing sugar intake. For example, yogurt must have less than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 oz. These yogurts are similar price if not cheaper than high-sugar yogurt products and easy to find in grocery stores.



## Existing Standards Provide No Guidance for Feeding Infants Under Age 1

- Texas’ daily food need charts begin for children age 1 and up. Yet, many infants and young toddlers are in child care. Child care programs need clearer guidance on breastmilk or infant formula feeding and what types of solid foods to introduce when.

## CACFP Includes Clear, Easy-to-Understand Guidance for Feeding Infants from Birth to 11 Months

- This includes guidance on infant formula and breastmilk feeding and what types of solid foods to serve infants 6 through 11 months.

## Existing Standards Tie Child Care Providers’ Hands With Limited Protein Options (Meat/Meat Alternatives)

- Existing standards are stricter in terms of meat and meat alternatives. Let’s give child care more options to choose from and offer a range of proteins to kids.
- For instance, for a child age 3-5, providers choose from these options: cooked lean meat, egg, or cooked beans.

## CACFP Offers Flexibility to Child Care Providers and Greater Variety of Protein Options

- Meal pattern standards offer more flexible options for meat alternatives and other protein options, including cheese and yogurt.
- For example, for a child age 3-5, providers can choose from these meat/meat alternates:



Lean meat, fish, tofu/soy products, cheese, eggs, beans, peanut butter, yogurt, or nuts.

Sources:

1. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Minimum Standards, Subchapter Q, Chapter 746, section 746.3305 (licensed child care centers) and Chapter 747, section 747.3105 (licensed and registered child care homes).
2. Child and Adult Care Food Program, Child Meal Pattern, Available at [https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_childmealpattern.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childmealpattern.pdf). Infant Meal Pattern, Available at [https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_infantmealpattern.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_infantmealpattern.pdf).