



**Southwest Human Development Services**

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**Dear Food Program Participant,**

Enclosed is the free nutrition packet, **Cycle Menu Writing**, which you requested. This material is designed to provide you with detailed information on food and nutrition that will help you provide nutritious meals to children in your care.

Please read through the enclosed material. The booklet is yours to keep. This information is designed for licensing hours only. However, if you wish to complete the quiz that follows, you may do so.

**DO NOT RETURN THE QUIZ TO SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE HOURS TO FULFILL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, KEEP THE QUIZ AND CERTIFICATE IN YOUR FILES TO SHOW YOUR LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE.**

We hope you will find this material helpful and informative (as well as interesting!) Thank you once again for your participation on the USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call me at 1-800-369-9082 or 467-7916 in the Austin area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Stanford".

Blake Stanford  
President

Southwest Human Development Services, Inc.



Faint, illegible text on the right side of the page.



## WRITING CYCLE MENUS - A GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS

**Goal:** To prepare providers to write cycle menus which meet CACFP guidelines and are appealing to children.

### **Objectives:**

1. Providers will learn the benefits of cycle menu writing.
2. Providers will learn the steps to cycle menu planning.
3. Providers will evaluate menus for nutrition, variety, and creditability in the CACFP.

### **Activities:**

1. Read through the entire packet.
2. Do the various activities in the packet. Record answers from menu evaluation activity on the answer sheet to submit to SWHDS.
3. Plan one week of meals using the guidelines in the packet.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO GET STARTED?

First of all, set aside a few hours of quiet time in which you can work on your menus without interruptions. Below is a list of possible items to collect to help write menus.

- \* Pen/Pencil
- \* Favorite recipes
- \* Cookbooks
- \* Old menus from CCFP
- \* Lists of food sources of Vitamin A, C, and Fiber (included in this packet)
- \* Provider's handbook or Chart with CCFP guidelines
- \* List of seasonal foods (included in this packet)
- \* Blank menus
- \* This lesson and evaluation checklist

## NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING CYCLE MENUS

Before you begin, take time to read the following list of nutritional guidelines which should be followed in order to write good, nutritious menus.

1. LIMIT HIGH SODIUM FOODS TO TWO TIMES PER WEEK AT LUNCH OR SUPPER AND TWO TIMES PER WEEK AT SNACK.

Examples of high sodium foods:

Canned soup	Sausages/hot dogs	Cheeses
Luncheon meats	Processed meats	Processed/convenience foods

2. LIMIT HIGH FAT FOODS TO TWO TIMES PER WEEK.

Examples of high fat foods:

Deep fried/breaded foods  
Processed meats (hot dogs, sausages)

3. INCLUDE A GOOD SOURCE OF VITAMIN C EVERY DAY.

Excellent sources of Vitamin C:

Broccoli	Guavas
Brussels sprouts	Oranges/Juice
Chili peppers, red and green	Papayas
Parsley	
Sweet, red, and green peppers	

For a more complete list, see Appendix A.

4. INCLUDE A SOURCE OF VITAMIN A THREE TIMES PER WEEK.

Excellent sources of Vitamin A:

Beet greens	Sweet red peppers
Carrots	Pumpkin
Red chili peppers	Spinach
Swiss chard	Winter squash
Collards	Sweet potatoes
Dandelion greens	Turnip greens
Kale	Apricots
Mustard greens	Dried mangoes

For a more complete list, see Appendix B.

5. INCLUDE HIGH FIBER FOODS DAILY.

Examples of foods high in fiber:

- Whole grains
- Whole wheat breads
- Raw vegetables
- Fresh or Dried fruit
- Beans/Legumes

Take a minute to write down the five nutritional guidelines for menu planning:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

## WRITING CYCLE MENUS - A GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS

### WHY WRITE CYCLE MENUS?

- \* A properly planned cycle menu will ensure that the children in your care are consuming a VARIETY of foods.
- \* Cycle menus make grocery shopping MUCH EASIER. Because you will know in advance what will be served, making grocery lists is much simpler. Advanced planning also enables you to take advantage of grocery store specials. All this adds up to SAVINGS of your TIME and MONEY.
- \* Planning ahead also saves time in the KITCHEN. Cycle menus can be used to form a file of standardized recipes which will make meal preparation much more CONVENIENT.

### WHAT IS A CYCLE MENU?

A cycle menu is a set of menus for a specific period of time (SIX WEEKS is suggested), which is used and reused. Hospitals, schools, and cafeterias use cycle menus.

Often, an institution will have a different cycle menu for the different SEASONS. This allows a little more variety, and allows the use of foods that are in season.

## GUIDELINES FOR VARIETY

1. Do not repeat a main dish or entree within the same week.

Example: if spaghetti is served on Monday, do not serve it again until the following Monday or later, if possible.

2. Do not repeat a specific type or form of food more than twice per week.

Examples:

Peanuts - whole for snack, peanut butter for lunch

Chicken - once in casserole, once as nuggets

## OTHER GUIDELINES FOR CYCLE MENU WRITING

1. BE SURE YOUR MENUS MEET CCFP GUIDELINES! SEE APPENDIX D FOR CCFP GUIDELINES.
2. Plan children's favorite foods several times per week (1-2 times). Try to spread favorites throughout the cycle period.
3. Try new or different foods occasionally.
4. Be aware of preparation times for each menu. Try to plan both easy to prepare items and foods that take longer to prepare at each meal.
5. Purchase foods in season and take advantage of store specials (See Appendix C for a list of seasonal produce).

6. Serve a variety of foods.

7. Vary color, flavor, texture, shapes, temperatures, and cost at each meal. Read the following examples of GOOD and BAD menus for each category.

COLOR - A colorful plate is more appetizing to children.

COLORFUL

Milk  
Macaroni and Cheese  
Carrots/Celery sticks  
Purple grapes

NOT COLORFUL

Milk  
Grilled chicken  
Boiled potatoes  
Banana  
White roll

The second menu is not colorful - the items are all white or light colored.

FLAVOR - Combine a variety of flavors at one meal. Don't serve foods that are all bland, spicy, sweet, sour, etc.

VARIETY OF FLAVORS

Milk  
Beef taco  
Brown rice  
Refried beans  
Baked apple

LESS VARIETY

Milk  
Macaroni and cheese  
Creamed corn  
Apple wedges

The second menu contains all bland foods: the first menu combines spicy with bland and sweet foods.

TEXTURE - Vary food textures in each meal: crunchy, soft, chewy, crisp, etc.

VARIETY OF TEXTURES

Milk  
HM Vegetable Beef soup  
Crackers  
Vegetable sticks/dip  
Peaches

NO VARIETY

Milk  
Clam chowder  
Mashed potatoes  
Creamed corn  
Applesauce

The second menu contains all mushy or liquid foods. The first menu combines liquid, crisp crackers, crunchy veggie sticks, soft dip, and firm peaches.

SHAPES - vary the shape of food items on the plate.

VARIETY OF SHAPES

Milk  
Chicken nuggets  
French fries  
Green beans  
Roll  
Orange wedges

NO VARIETY

Milk  
Chicken nuggets  
Sliced zucchini  
Peas  
Roll  
Banana slices

The second menu contains foods that are all round, whereas the first menu contains various shaped foods.

TEMPERATURES - serve a mixture of hot and cold foods at each meal.

VARIED

Milk  
Pizza with hamburger  
Green salad and dressing  
Fruit salad  
Wheat roll

SAME TEMPERATURE

Milk  
Pizza with hamburger  
Green beans  
Cooked carrots  
Hot roll

The second menu contains all hot or warm foods, but the first menu combines hot, warm and cool temperatures.

**COST** - meat/meat entrees are usually the most expensive part of a meal. Try to vary within the cycle higher cost meats with lower cost meat alternatives, such as beans and cheese. This will save money, and create more variety in your menus.

List below the six categories that must be varied for good meal planning:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY - Beside each menu, write the problem with the menu (i.e., all the same color, same textures, etc.) Then, fill in the blanks of the menu to the right to correct the menu and make the meal more appealing.

**WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS ACTIVITY, TRANSFER YOUR ANSWERS TO THE ANSWER SHEET AND SUBMIT TO S.H.D.S.**

**MENU #1**

2% milk  
Spaghetti and meatballs  
Tomato slices  
Cherries

2% milk  
Spaghetti and meatballs

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Problem with menu #1:

\_\_\_\_\_

**MENU #2**

2% milk  
Chicken salad sandwich  
Pinto beans  
Rice  
Banana

2% milk  
Chicken salad sandwich

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Problem with menu #2:

\_\_\_\_\_

**MENU #3**

2% milk  
Homemade macaroni and cheese  
Mashed potatoes  
Creamed corn  
Applesauce

2% milk  
Homemade macaroni and cheese

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Problem with menu #3:

\_\_\_\_\_



## STEPS TO WRITING A CYCLE MENU

Now that you know all the guidelines that must be followed, writing your cycle menu is as easy as following the steps given in this section. Read through the list before beginning, then you're ready to start!

1. START WITH SIX WEEKS OF BLANK MENUS.
2. MENUS SHOULD BE PLANNED IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER: LUNCHES, SUPPERS, BREAKFASTS, AND SNACKS.

Within each meal, the components should be planned in the following order:

1. Main entree
2. Fruit/Vegetable
3. Bread/Bread alternate
4. Milk
5. "Extras" - items that are not creditable, but complement the meal. These include condiments, other side dishes, and desserts.

There are several ways to do this:

1. Plan all lunches for entire 6 week cycle, then all suppers, breakfasts, and snacks.
  2. Plan one week at a time - lunches for one week, then suppers, breakfasts and snacks.
- \* Choose whichever method works best for you!

### 3. EVALUATE MENUS FOR CREDITABILITY IN THE CCFP

Check each meal to be sure the requirements for the CCFP are met. Otherwise, the

meal may not be reimbursable. If in doubt, check your Provider's Handbook for guidelines. If any component doesn't meet CCFP guidelines, change it now.

#### 4. EVALUATE MENUS USING NUTRITION GUIDELINES

1. No more than two high sodium foods per week.
2. No more than two high fat foods per week.
3. One Vitamin C source daily? (it may be helpful to mark Vit. C sources)
4. Three Vitamin A sources weekly? (it may be helpful to mark Vit. A sources)
5. High fiber foods?

If any menus do not meet the above guidelines, now is the time to make changes.

#### 5. EVALUATE MENUS FOR VARIETY

Evaluate menus one week at a time for variety.

1. Entree not repeated in the same week.
2. Same type or form of food no more than two times per week.

#### 6. EVALUATE MENUS FOR COLOR, TEXTURE, FLAVOR, SHAPES, TEMPERATURE, AND COST.

## SUMMING IT ALL UP

You have now learned all the steps needed to write your own cycle menus. Yes, it takes time to write them, but the time, energy, and money saved in the future makes cycle menu writing well worth the effort!

### TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS LESSON:

1. Fill out the answer sheet with the answers to the activity in the packet that asks you to evaluate menus.
2. Attached is a blank menu for one week. To practice writing cycle menus, you will write one week's worth of cycle menus to be graded. Follow the steps in this packet. In addition, on the menu, you must:
  1. Mark Vitamin C sources with a (C) next to the item.
  2. Mark Vitamin A sources with an (A) next to the item.
  3. Mark high fiber sources with an (F) next to the item.
  4. **CIRCLE** high fat items.
  5. **UNDERLINE** high sodium foods.
3. After you have completed the menu, check it with the evaluation sheet in Appendix E. Submit to SWHDS the answer sheet and completed menu. If you would like feedback on your menu, write "PLEASE GIVE FEEDBACK" on the bottom of the menu. You will receive feedback shortly after the lesson is received. This feedback will be helpful if you decide to utilize cycle menus in your day care.

## A FINAL NOTE TO DAY CARE PROVIDERS:

We hope you have learned the value of cycle menus. If you are considering using cycle menus, we would like to know about it. After you have written six weeks worth of menus, we will be happy to evaluate them for you so you can be sure the menus are creditable. To do this, please mail your cycle menu during the SECOND HALF OF THE MONTH - NOT WITH YOUR REGULAR MENUS. Your menu then will be closely examined by someone at SWHDS to ensure that all meals are creditable. Allow plenty of time for this to occur. Once the menu has been APPROVED, it will be returned to you and you may begin using it on the first of the following month. For example, if your cycle menu is received April 16th. and returned and approved on May 3rd, you may begin using it on June 1st. If your menu is evaluated and errors are found, it will be returned to you with suggestions for changes. You may then resubmit your menu until it is approved. During the time in which your menus are being evaluated, simply continue submitting menus as you normally would. Once the menu has been approved, you may continue to use it in a SIX WEEK cycle, which means the menu will have to be re-written every month for SHDS, but the planning will already be done!

GOOD LUCK!

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - SOURCES OF VITAMIN C

APPENDIX B - SOURCES OF VITAMIN A

APPENDIX C - PEAK HARVEST MONTHS FOR TEXAS PRODUCE

APPENDIX D - CACFP GUIDELINES

APPENDIX E - EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR CYCLE MENUS

## APPENDIX B

### SOURCES OF VITAMIN A

#### EXCELLENT SOURCES (MORE THAN 1500 I.U.'S PER 1/4 CUP SERVING)

Beet greens	Pumpkin
Carrots	Squash, winter
Swiss chard	Sweet potatoes
Chili peppers, red	Turnip greens
Collards	Apricots
Cress, garden	Dried mangoes
Dandelion greens	
Kale	
Mixed vegetables (frozen)	
Mustard greens	
Peppers, sweet red	

#### GOOD SOURCES (750-1500 I.U.'S PER 1/4 CUP SERVING)

Broccoli	Cantaloupe
Chicory greens	Purple plums
Parsley	

#### FAIR SOURCES (375-750 I.U.'S PER 1/4 CUP SERVING)

Asparagus	Cherries, red
Chili peppers, green	Nectarines
Endive, curly	Peaches, fresh
Escarole	Prunes
Tomatoes	
Tomato juice, paste or puree	

#### OTHER SOURCES OF VITAMIN A (FAIR)

Egg yolk, whole milk dairy products, and fortified skim milk products.

APPENDIX A

SOURCES OF VITAMIN C

EXCELLENT SOURCES (AT LEAST 25 MG PER 1/4 CUP SERVING):

Broccoli	Guavas
Brussels sprouts	Oranges/Juice
Chili peppers, red and green	Papayas
Parsley	
Peppers, sweet, red and green	

GOOD SOURCES (15-25 MG PER 1/4 CUP SERVING)

Cauliflower	Cantaloupe
Collards	Grapefruit/Juice
Cress, garden	Kumquats
Kale	Mangoes
Kohlrabi	Pineapple juice
Mustard greens	Strawberries
	Tangerines/Juice

FAIR SOURCES (8-15 MG PER 1/4 CUP SERVING)

Asparagus	Spinach
Cabbage	Sweet potatoes
Dandelion greens	Summer squash
Okra	Tomatoes/Juice
Peas, fresh	Turnip
Potatoes	Turnip greens
Rutabagas	
Sauerkraut	

## APPENDIX C

### PEAK HARVEST MONTHS FOR TEXAS PRODUCE

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JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apples</li> <li>Oranges</li> <li>Broccoli</li> <li>Cabbage</li> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Tangerines</li> <li>Cauliflower</li> <li>Spinach</li> <li>Lettuce</li> <li>Grapefruit</li> </ul>	JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cantaloupes</li> <li>Cucumbers</li> <li>Watermelons</li> <li>Onions</li> <li>Peaches</li> <li>Peanuts</li> </ul>
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broccoli</li> <li>Cabbage</li> <li>Apples</li> <li>Oranges</li> <li>Tangerines</li> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Spinach</li> </ul>	AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cantaloupes</li> <li>Watermelons</li> <li>Onions</li> <li>Peanuts</li> </ul>
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broccoli</li> <li>Cabbage</li> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Spinach</li> <li>Oranges</li> <li>Grapefruit</li> </ul>	SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Sweet Potatoes</li> <li>Lettuce</li> <li>Avocados</li> <li>Pecans</li> <li>Peanuts</li> </ul>
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Strawberries</li> <li>Oranges</li> <li>Onions</li> </ul>	OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Cucumbers</li> <li>Green Peppers</li> <li>Tomatoes</li> <li>Pecans</li> <li>Avocados</li> <li>Peanuts</li> </ul>
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cantaloupes</li> <li>Sweet Corn</li> <li>Cucumbers</li> <li>Honey dew melons</li> <li>Tomatoes</li> <li>Onions</li> <li>Green Peppers</li> <li>Watermelons</li> <li>Peaches</li> </ul>	DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spinach</li> <li>Cabbage</li> <li>Cauliflower</li> <li>Cucumbers</li> <li>Green Peppers</li> <li>Tomatoes</li> <li>Peanuts</li> <li>Oranges</li> <li>Lettuce</li> <li>Grapefruit</li> <li>Pecans</li> <li>Apples</li> <li>Tangerines</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX D

### MEAL PATTERNS for CHILDREN

AGES 1 to 12	AGES 1-3	AGES 3-6	AGES 6-12
<b>BREAKFAST</b>			
Milk*	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Juice or Fruit/Vegetable	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Bread or Bread Alternate	1/2 slice**	1/2 slice**	1 slice**
including cereal cold and dry or cereal hot and cooked.	1/4 cup or 1/3 ounce	1/3 cup or 1/2 ounce	3/4 cup or 1 ounce
	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
<b>SNACK (Supplement)</b> Select 2 of the 4 food groups			
Milk*	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Juice or Fruit/Vegetable	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Meat or Meat Alternate	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce
Bread or Bread Alternate	1/2 slice**	1/2 slice**	1 slice**
including cereal cold and dry or cereal hot and cooked.	1/4 cup or 1/3 ounce	1/3 cup or 1/2 ounce	3/4 cup or 1 ounce
	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
<b>LUNCH or SUPPER</b>			
Milk*	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Meat or Poultry or Fish or Egg or Cheese	1 ounce	1 1/4 ounces	2 ounces
or Cooked Dry Beans or Peas	1 ounce	1 1/4 ounces	2 ounces
or Peanut Butter	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 ounces
Vegetables and/or Fruits (2 or more in total)	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Bread or Bread Alternate	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
	1/2 slice**	1/2 slice**	1 slice**

## APPENDIX E

### EVALUATION SHEET FOR CYCLE MENUS

#### I. MEETS CCFP GUIDELINES

- 1. Breakfast (Milk, Meat/Meat alternate, Bread/Bread alternate, Fruit/Veg)
- 2. Lunches/Suppers (Milk, Meat/alternate, Bread/alternate, Fruit/Veg)
- 3. Snacks (Two of above components)

#### II. NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

- 1. High sodium foods limited to two times per week.
- 2. High fat foods limited to two times per week.
- 3. One good source of Vitamin C daily.
- 4. Three good sources of Vitamin A weekly.
- 5. Several high fiber foods daily.

**Weekly Menu**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



III. VARIETY GUIDELINES

- 1. Main dish or entree not repeated in the same week.
- 2. Specific type or form of food not served more than twice in one week.

IV. OTHER GUIDELINES

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Color   | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Shapes      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Flavor  | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Temperature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Texture | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Cost        |

V. COMMENTS/NOTES

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Please type or print the following information:

Provider ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Please transfer your answers from each section quiz to the corresponding spaces provided below. So that your answers are legible, please print or type  
.....

### ANSWER SHEET FOR WRITING CYCLE MENUS

#### ANSWERS FROM MENU ACTIVITY -

Menu #1

Problem \_\_\_\_\_

New menu \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Menu #2

Problem \_\_\_\_\_

New menu \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Menu #3

Problem \_\_\_\_\_

New menu \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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## **SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

sponsor of the

## **USDA CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**

Is pleased to award

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THIS CERTIFICATE

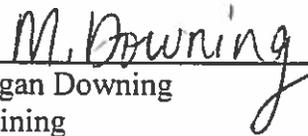
for completion of 2.0 hours of training in

### **Cycle Menu Writing**

A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

This Family Day Care Provider supports the commitment to Quality Child Care as demonstrated by completion of this course

Given this date \_\_\_\_\_

  
Megan Downing  
Training

SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
A Private, Non-Profit Texas Corporation

