

# CACFP Reimbursements for Breast Milk in Childcare

## Why encourage breastfeeding at your site?

Breast milk is an optimal source of nutrition for infants and children. **Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months of life**, with continued breastfeeding as long as the family desires. Breastfeeding promotes healthy growth and development for children and benefits the health of the breastfeeding parent. **The longer one breastfeeds, the more benefits there are.**

## Reimbursement Eligibility:

Breast milk is creditable as the fluid milk component of a meal or snack for children at **any age**. Reimbursement rates for infants are the **same** as the rates for children, and breast milk is creditable for the same amount of reimbursement as any other fluid milk component.

Meals and snacks are reimbursable as long as the required food components of the infant meal pattern are **offered** to the infant. The CACFP can reimburse up to 2 meals + 1 snack OR 2 snacks + 1 meal per child per day for childcare providers. The chart below displays the infant meal pattern guidelines:

	0-5 Months	6-11 Months*
Breakfast, Lunch, or Supper	4-6 fl oz of breastmilk/formula	6-8 fl oz of breastmilk/formula + solid foods
Snack	4-6 fl oz of breastmilk/formula	2-4 fl oz breastmilk/formula + solid foods

^adapted from Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

\*Note, the time of solid food introduction will vary for each child depending on developmental readiness.

## Are meals reimburseable when infants consume less breast milk than the infant meal pattern requirement?

Infants **may consume less breast milk** at feedings compared to the guidelines above. Infants do not have to finish the bottle and should never be forced to finish an offering. If an infant eats less than the serving size, breast milk and other food components can be offered later when the infant is hungry again and still be reimbursed.

To satisfy the fluid milk component, parents can bring in breast milk or breastfeed onsite. For infants who are not exclusively breastfed, parents can supplement with an approved iron-fortified formula they bring or use the one provided by your site.

**These will all be eligible for reimbursement.**



Talk with the infant's parents to learn more about how much they eat at home. This can guide how much you offer onsite.



## How to support breastfeeding parents on site:

It is important to talk to families about their breastfeeding plans and show your support. To promote a breastfeeding friendly site:

- Provide a **private nursing space onsite** with comfortable seating, an electrical outlet for pumps, and a sink and wipes for cleaning.
- **Coordinate feeding times** with parent schedules, such as waiting to feed the baby until an agreed pick-up time to allow the parent to breastfeed onsite.
- Share **culturally relevant resources** that provide education and guidance about breastfeeding, with information about local organizations that can further support parents.

## Feeding expressed breast milk to infants:

Breastmilk is **not considered a bodily fluid**, so universal precautions are not necessary when handling it. Refer to the [CDC guidelines](#) for more information about safety procedures and how to properly store and handle breast milk.

### *Best Practices for Infant Feeding*

Practice **responsive feeding** based on hunger and fullness cues from the infant. Some **hunger cues** include rooting, making sucking sounds, or opening and closing the mouth. Some **fullness cues** include slow or stopped sucking, pushing food away, falling asleep, or sealing lips together.

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Infant should be fed **on demand** rather than on a strict schedule like older children. If an infant is not ready to eat during a scheduled time, try again when they show signs of hunger again.

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**Paced feeding** is a method that can help prevent eating too much by mimicking breastfeeding. Use slow flow nipples, switch which arm is used to hold the infant, and take natural breaks.

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## For more information about breastfeeding and the CACFP, refer to:

- The USDA's [Thirty on Thursdays](#) Training series
- The USDA's [Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) handbook
- This [Breastfeeding Friendly Childcare Centers](#) resource kit for ideas about how to support breastfeeding at your site
- This [paced feeding video](#)
- The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Call 360-725-6200 or email [communitynutrition@k12.wa.us](mailto:communitynutrition@k12.wa.us) to receive more CACFP guidance.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [civil.rights@doh.wa.gov](mailto:civil.rights@doh.wa.gov). DOH 340-376 March 2021

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