Meal Count

Policy

All children must be served family-style breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Buffet meal service is acceptable as long as meal counts are accurate – see Meal Count Procedure for further guidance. Children will make their own food choices based on individual appetites and preferences.

Meal Count

Procedure

**Guidance:** Accurate meal counts are critical as it determines the amount of reimbursement Head Start/Early Head Start receives for meal service from the State of California.

**Procedure:**
- Meal counts for breakfast, lunch, and snack must be recorded **at the point of food service** (while children are eating) - not before, not after.
- Meal counts recorded later are not acceptable and cannot be counted.
- Meal count numbers must reflect the actual number of children who are seated at the table and are being offered food.
- Meal counts of the number of meals sent by the kitchen are **not** acceptable.
- Daily counts of meals served to staff or non-enrolled individuals must also be recorded, however, they cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- All centers will be monitored by designated staff according to the CACFP guidelines on a quarterly, unannounced basis.