

Menu Planning Checklist

"PLANNING HEALTHY MENUS FOR OUR HEAD START CHILDREN"

Use this checklist to ensure that our Head Start menus have met program requirements:

1. Does the menu include all the meal components (meat or meat alternates, vegetables and/or fruits, whole grain or enriched bread or bread alternate, fresh fluid milk) in the required quantities?
2. Does the menu contain an adequate source of vitamin C at least once every day?
3. Does the menu contain an adequate source of vitamin A at least once every other day?
4. Does the menu use low-fat and lean sources of protein, especially meat and dairy products?
5. Are lower fat foods offered to ensure that the total fat content of the menu does not exceed 30-35 percent of the total calories?
6. Are foods high in sodium avoided to ensure that the menu contain no more than 3,300 mg of sodium? This means that processed foods, salty snacks, high-sodium seasonings, and salt at the table is avoided.
7. Does the menu avoid high sugar foods, using fruit juice-sweetened fruits and baked goods rather than foods sweetened with sugar?
8. Does the menu include foods high in iron each day?
9. Does the menu include a good balance of:
 - Color
 - Texture
 - Shape
 - Flavor
 - Temperature
 - Variety in types of foods offered.
10. Does the menu include whole grain bread/cereal products to ensure that the children receive an adequate intake of fiber, B-vitamins, and minerals?
11. Does the menu contain fresh fruits and vegetables?
12. Does the menu consider participant's cultural, ethnic, and religious food preferences?

Additional concerns:

1. Oven space for recipes on the menu
2. Ability to order and obtain foods.
3. Freeze and refrigerator space for food items that must be kept cold.
4. Stove top and oven space to keep hot food hot.
5. Other concerns: _____