

standard menu planning, as provided for in paragraphs (i) and (j), respectively, of this section, schools

shall, at a minimum, provide calorie and nutrient levels for school lunches (offered over a school week) for the

required grade groups specified in the chart following:

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR NUTRIENT LEVELS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES/NUTRIENT ANALYSIS (SCHOOL WEEK AVERAGES)

Nutrients and energy allowances	Minimum requirements			Optional
	Preschool	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Grades K-3
Energy allowance/calories	517	664	825	633
Total fat (as a percent of actual total food energy)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
Saturated fat (as a percent of actual total food energy)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)
RDA for protein	7	10	16	9
RDA for calcium (mg)	267	286	400	267
RDA for iron (mg)	3.3	3.5	4.5	3.3
RDA for vitamin A (RE)	150	224	300	200
RDA for vitamin C (mg)	14	15	18	15

¹ Not to exceed 30 percent over a school week.

² Less than 10 percent over a school week.

(2) At their option, schools may provide for the calorie and nutrient levels for school lunches (offered over a school week) for the age groups specified in the following chart or may develop their own age groups and their corresponding levels in accordance with paragraph (i)(1) of this section.

OPTIONAL MINIMUM NUTRIENT LEVELS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES/NUTRIENT ANALYSIS (SCHOOL WEEK AVERAGES)

Nutrients and energy allowances	Ages 3-6	Ages 7-10	Ages 11-13	Ages 14 and above
Energy allowance/calories	558	667	783	846
Total fat (as a percent of actual total food energy)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
Saturated fat (as a percent of actual total food energy)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)
RDA for protein (g)	7.3	9.3	15.0	16.7
RDA for calcium (mg)	267	267	400	400
RDA for iron (mg)	3.3	3.3	4.5	4.5
RDA for vitamin A (RE)	158	233	300	300
RDA for vitamin C (mg)	14.6	15.0	16.7	19.2

¹ Not to exceed 30 percent over a school week.

² Less than 10 percent over a school week.

(d) *Minimum nutrient levels for school lunches/food-based menu planning.* For the purposes of food-based menu planning, as provided for in paragraph (k) of this section, the following chart provides the minimum levels, by grade group, for calorie and nutrient levels for school lunches offered over a school week:

MINIMUM NUTRIENT LEVELS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES/FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING (SCHOOL WEEK AVERAGES)

	Preschool	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Grades K-3 option
Energy allowances (Calories)	517	664	825	633
Total fat (as a percentage of actual total food energy)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
Total saturated fat (as a percentage of actual total food energy)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)
Protein (g)	7	10	16	9
Calcium (mg)	267	286	400	267
Iron (mg)	3.3	3.5	4.5	3.3
Vitamin A (RE)	150	224	300	200
Vitamin C (mg)	14	15	18	15

¹ Not to exceed 30 percent over a school week.

² Less than 10 percent over a school week.

(e) *Choice.* To provide variety and to encourage consumption and participation, schools should, whenever possible, offer a selection of menu items and foods from which children may make choices. When a school offers a selection of more than one type of lunch or when it offers a variety of menu items, foods or milk for choice within a reimbursable lunch, the school shall

offer all children the same selection regardless of whether the children are eligible for free or reduced price lunches or pay the school food authority's designated full price. The school may establish different unit prices for each type of lunch offered provided that the benefits made available to children eligible for free or reduced price lunches are not affected.

(f) *Lunch period.* At or about mid-day schools shall offer lunches which meet the requirements of this section during a period designated as the lunch period by the school food authority. Such lunch periods shall occur between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., unless otherwise exempted by FCS. With State agency approval, schools that serve children 1-5 years old are encouraged to divide the