

**OFFER vs SERVE**

Public Law 97-35 mandates that students in senior high schools and, when approved by the local School Food Authority, students in junior high, middle or elementary schools (as defined by the local educational agencies), shall be offered the complete school lunch.

The mandate allows these students to refuse menu items which they do not intend to eat, thus reducing plate waste. However, in order for the meal to be reimbursed, such students must choose at least three of the five menu items contained within the four food components of the school lunch. The choice of fewer than all five items shall not relieve non-needy students from paying the full price of the lunch.

The offer v. serve provision applies only to the lunch program. It is not allowed in the breakfast program.

SOURCE: Public Law 97-35

Approved: May 25, 2004