**Seven-day Lunch Menu Planning Form for Ages 3-4 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**

**School:**       **Week of:**

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| **Food Components 1, 2** | **Sunday** | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **Milk** (¾ cup) 3Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) (1½ ounces) 4Lean meat, poultry, or fish, cheese, alternate protein product (APP) 5 or tempeh 6 (1½ ounces); surimi 7 (4.4 ounces); tofu 8 (3.3 ounces or ⅜ cup); cottage cheese (⅜ cup); egg (½ large); cooked dry beans and peas 9 (⅜ cup); peanut butter (3 tablespoons); nuts and seeds 10 (¾ ounce = 50%); yogurt or soy yogurt 11 (¾ cup); or combination of any two foods |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **Vegetables** (¼ cup) 12, 13 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **Fruits** (¼ cup) 13, 14, 15 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **Grains**,whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched (½ ounce equivalent (oz eq)) 16, 17, 18, 19*Indicate “WGR” next to whole grain-rich (WGR) items* WGR or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin (½ oz eq 19), WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal 20 (¼ cup), cereal grains 21 (¼ cup), or pasta (¼ cup), WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal 20 (½ cup flaked or round, ¾ cup puffed, or ⅛ cup granola); or any combination |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Other foods 22*Do not credit toward the meal pattern* |       |       |       |       |       |       |

**Menu planning notes**

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| 1 Lunches must include the minimum serving of all five components. 2 Use the USDA’s [*Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs)(FBG)to determine how foods credit and the amount that provides the required meal pattern serving. Commercial processed foods not listed in the FBG require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to document crediting information. For information on crediting documentation, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) resources, [*Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CN_Labeling_Program.pdf), [*Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf), [*Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Accepting_Processed_Product_Documentation_SNP.pdf), and [*Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Commercial_MMA_SNP.pdf), and visit the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#CommercialProducts)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage. Foods made from scratch must have a standardized recipe that documents crediting information. For more information, visit the “[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#ScratchFoods)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.3 Flavored milk cannot be served. For more information, visit the “[Milk Component for Preschoolers](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Milk)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.4 TheMMA component must be served in a main dish or a main dish and one other food item. The serving size refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Commercial processed products that contain added ingredients (such as combination foods, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information (refer to the CSDE’s [*Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Commercial_MMA_SNP.pdf) and [*Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Deli_SNP.pdf)). The USDA’s [CACFP Best Practices](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf) recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese. For more information, visit the “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Preschoolers](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#MMA)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.5 APPs must meet the requirements in [appendix A](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210#p-Appendix-A-to-Part-210(II.)(A.)(1.)) of the NSLP regulations 7 CFR 210 (refer to the CSDE’s [*Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/APP_Requirements_SNP.pdf)*)*. 6 For a 1-ounce serving of tempeh to credit as 1 ounce of MMA, the product’s ingredients must include only soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. Tempeh products that contain other ingredients require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information.7 Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A CN label or PFS is required for commercial products that indicate a different crediting amount.8 Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (¼ cup) to credit as 1 ounce of MMA (refer to the CSDE’s [*Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Tofu_SNP.pdf)*).* 9 Cooked dry beans and peas (legumes) credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal (refer to the CSDE’s [*Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Legumes_SNP.pdf)*).*10 Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the MMA component at lunch; they must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the total requirement. **Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [*Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Nuts_Seeds_SNP.pdf)*.*11 Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce (refer to the CSDE’s resource, [*Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Yogurt_SNP_preschool.pdf)*)*. |

**Menu planning notes**, *continued*

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| 12 Thevegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength vegetable juice. Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. A serving of canned vegetables must be drained. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on their rehydrated volume and require a PFS. The USDA’s [*CACFP Best Practices*](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf)recommends that preschool menus include at least one serving per week of each vegetable subgroup (dark green, red/orange, beans and peas (legumes), starchy, and other). For more information on the vegetables component, refer to the CSDE’s [*Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Vegetable_Subgroups_CACFP.pdf) and visit the “[Vegetables Component for Preschoolers](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Vegetables)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.13 Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies. The juice from canned fruit counts toward the juice limit if the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component or the vegetables component. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [*Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Juice_SNP_preschool.pdf)and [*Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Smoothies_SNP_preschool.pdf). The USDA’s [*CACFP Best Practices*](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf) recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.14 Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch. If the lunch menu includes two servings of vegetables, they must be different kinds. 15 The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice. Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits such as raisins credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. For more information, visit the “[Fruits Component for Preschoolers](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Fruits)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.16 Grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains, i.e., whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. For information on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE’s [H*ow to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/IdentifyCreditable_Grains_SNP_preschool.pdf)*,* [*Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Whole_Grains_SNP.pdf)*,* and [*Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Enriched_Grains_SNP.pdf), and visit the “[Grains Component for Preschoolers](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Grains)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.17 At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR. The USDA’s [*CACFP Best Practices*](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf) recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For the preschool meal patterns, WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients are enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s *[Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_CACFP.pdf)* and visit the “[Whole Grain-rich Requirement](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#WGR)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.18 Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. Sweet crackers such as graham crackers and animal crackers are not grain-based desserts. However, the CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, visit the USDA’s webpage, [Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp).19 Grain products and recipes must provide the required serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA’s Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE’s [*Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Oz_Eq_SNP_preschool.pdf)and [*How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/How_to_Use_Grain_Ounce_Equivalents_Chart_NSLP_SBP.pdf)*)* or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE’s [*Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Calculation_SNP_preschool.pdf)and[*When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/When_Commercial_Grain_Products_Require_PFS_SNP.pdf)*)*. For more information,visit the “[Ounce Equivalents](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#OunceEquivalents)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.20 Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce, i.e., no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal (refer to the CSDE’s [*Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Cereals_SNP_preschool.pdf)*)*.21 Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.22 Other foods do not contribute to the preschool meal patterns. Examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, and condiments such as syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter (refer to the CSDE’s [*Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Noncreditable_Foods_SNP_preschool.pdf)*)*. |

For a list of resources with guidance on meeting the preschool meal pattern and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE’s [*Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources_Preschool_Meal_Patterns.pdf). For more information on the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE’s [*Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf) and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents) webpage or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Contact-Information-for-School-Nutrition-Programs) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This form is available at <http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/Menu_Form_Lunch_7day_Ages_3-4.docx>.



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