

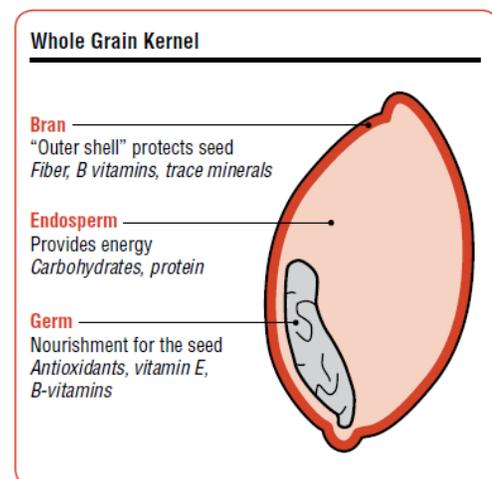
Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For information on the CACFP meal patterns and grains component for children, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and the “[Grains Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and grains component, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and the “[Grains Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage.



Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel, after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. The kernel includes the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. Usually the grain kernel is cracked, crushed, flaked, or ground during the milling process. A finished grain product is considered whole grain if it contains the same relative amounts of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain.

Whole grains contain a wide variety of nutrients that help reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The CSDE encourages CACFP sponsors to serve 100 percent whole-grain products most often. This provides the best nutrition for children.



Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

The CACFP meal patterns for children and adults require at least one serving of whole grain-rich (WGR) grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to participants. The USDA’s [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. “Whole grain-rich” means a food that contains at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients are enriched, bran, or germ. For information on the CACFP WGR criteria, review the CSDE’s resource, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP](#). The WGR requirement does not apply to the CACFP infant meal pattern for birth through 11 months.

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100 Percent Whole Grain Products

The ingredients statement on commercial products lists ingredients by weight, from most to least. The closer an ingredient is to the beginning of the ingredients statement, the more of it the food contains.

A commercial product is 100 percent whole grain if 1) the ingredients statement lists a whole grain as the first ingredient (or lists water as the first ingredient and a whole grain as the second ingredient); and 2) all other grain ingredients are whole grains. The ingredients statements below show examples of 100 percent whole-grain commercial products.

- Ingredients: *Whole-wheat flour*, sugar, wheat gluten. Contains 2% or less of each of the following: honey, salt, yeast, molasses, diacetyl tartaric acid esters of mono-diglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, mono- and diglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.
- Ingredients: Water, *whole-wheat flour*, *whole oats*, sugar, wheat gluten, yeast, soybean oil, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), monoglycerides, datem and/or sodium stearoyl lactylate, calcium sulfate, citric acid, calcium carbonate, soy lecithin, whey, nonfat milk.

Commercial products that are 100 percent whole grain meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

Identifying Whole Grains in Commercial Products

A grain is whole grain if it meets any of the criteria below. [Table 1](#) lists examples of whole-grain products and ingredients.

Grain name states “whole”

A grain is whole grain if the grain name contains the word “whole.” For example, “whole wheat flour” and “whole-grain corn” are whole grains, but “wheat flour” and “yellow corn” are not.

Other names for whole grains

Some grains that do not contain the word “whole” in the grain name are whole grains. Examples include berries (e.g., wheat berries), groats (e.g., oat groats), rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal), brown rice, brown rice flour, wild rice, quinoa, millet, triticale, teff, amaranth, buckwheat, and sorghum.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity

Some grains have a FDA standard of identity that indicates they are whole grain. These grains include cracked wheat, crushed wheat, whole-wheat flour, graham flour, entire-wheat flour, bromated whole-wheat flour, and whole durum wheat flour.

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Nixtamalized corn ingredients

Commercial corn products such as tortilla chips, taco shells, and tamales credit as whole grains if the product is labeled “whole grain” or the corn ingredient is nixtamalized (treated with lime).

Nixtamalization is the process of soaking and cooked dried corn in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process results in a product with nutrition content similar to whole-grain corn.

Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Masa is used for making tortilla chips, taco shells, tamales, pupusas, and other popular corn products. Hominy, corn masa, and masa harina credit as whole grains.



CACFP facilities may use the two methods below to identify commercial products made with nixtamalized corn.

1. **Corn is treated with lime:** If the ingredients statement indicates that the corn is treated with lime (such as “ground corn with trace of lime” and “ground corn treated with lime”), the corn ingredient is nixtamalized. The ingredients statements below show examples of commercial nixtamalized corn products. These products credit as 100 percent whole grains.
 - Ingredients: *Corn masa flour*, water, contains 2% or less of: cellulose gum, guar gum, amylase, propionic acid, benzoic acid, and phosphoric acid (to maintain freshness).
 - Ingredients: *Whole-white corn*, vegetable oil (contains soybean, corn, cottonseed, and/or sunflower oil), salt, *lime/calcium hydroxide* (processing aid).
 - Ingredients: *Limed whole-grain white corn*, palm oil, salt, TBHQ (preservative).
 - Ingredients: *Whole-grain yellow corn*, high oleic canola oil, water, *corn flour*, salt, *hydrated lime*.

If the ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information (such as “cornmeal” and “yellow corn flour”), CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating that ingredients are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. For information on PFS forms, see “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document.

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2. **Product includes FDA-approved whole grain health claim:** If a commercial product made with corn includes one of two FDA-approved whole grain health claims on its packaging, the corn in the product is at least 50 percent whole grain. These health claims are not common.

- **Low-fat claim:** “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.”
- **Moderate-fat claim:** “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.”

Products that contain a FDA whole-grain health claim credit as the grains component and meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

Crediting information for corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal is summarized in [USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Reconstituted grains

Reconstituted grains (such as “reconstituted whole-wheat flour”) are made by blending the crushed and separated products of milling (bran, germ, and endosperm) from the same type of grain in the same proportions originally present in the intact grain kernel. A reconstituted grain is considered whole grain when the reconstitution is done by the original milling facility to ensure the same batch of whole grain is returned to its natural proportions. To credit a reconstituted grain, CACFP facilities must request documentation stating that the milling company recombined the grain components to the natural proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm.



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Table 1. Whole-grain products and ingredients ¹

<p>Barley</p> <p>Dehulled barley Dehulled-barley flour Whole barley Whole-barley flakes Whole-barley flour Whole-grain barley Whole-grain barley flour</p> <p>Brown rice</p> <p>Brown rice Brown rice flour Sprouted brown rice</p> <p>Corn</p> <p>Corn masa (whole corn treated with lime) ² Cornmeal, nixtamalized ² Hominy made from nixtamalized corn ² Masa harina (corn flour) ² Whole corn Whole-corn flour Whole cornmeal Whole-grain corn Whole-grain corn flour Whole-grain grits Whole-ground corn</p> <p>Oats</p> <p>Instant oats Oat groats ³ Oatmeal Old-fashioned oats Quick-cooking oats Rolled oats Whole oats Whole-oat flour Whole-grain oat flakes Whole-grain oat flour</p>	<p>Rye</p> <p>Whole rye Rye berries ³ Rye groats ³ Sprouted whole rye Whole-rye flour Whole-rye flakes</p> <p>Wheat (red) ⁴</p> <p>Bulgur (cracked wheat) Bromated whole-wheat flour Cracked wheat Crushed wheat Entire-wheat flour Graham flour Sprouted whole wheat Sprouted wheat berries ³ Stone ground whole-wheat flour ⁵ Toasted crushed whole wheat Wheat berries ³</p> <p>Wheat (white) ⁶</p> <p>Wheat groats ³ Whole bulgur Whole durum flour Whole durum wheat flour Whole-grain bulgur Whole-grain wheat Whole-grain wheat flakes Whole wheat Whole-wheat flour Whole-wheat pastry flour Whole-wheat flakes Whole white wheat Whole white wheat flour</p>
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Table 1. Whole-grain products and ingredients ¹

<p>Wild rice Wild rice Wild rice flour</p> <p>Other grains Amaranth Amaranth flour Buckwheat Buckwheat flour Buckwheat groats ³ Einkorn Einkorn berries Einkorn flour Emmer (farro) Kamut®Millet Millet flour</p>	<p>Other grains, <i>continued</i> Quinoa Sorghum (milo) Spelt Spelt berries Sprouted buckwheat Sprouted einkorn Sprouted spelt Teff Teff flour Triticale Triticale flour Whole-grain spelt flour</p>
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¹ This list is not all-inclusive.

² Hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and cornmeal must be nixtamalized to credit as whole grains. Nixtamalization is a process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline solution. SFSP sponsors may need to obtain a PFS to determine if a corn ingredient is nixtamalized. For more information, see [“Crediting corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal”](#) and [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document.

³ Groats and berries are the hulled kernels of cereal grains such as oat, wheat, rye, and barley.

⁴ Red wheat is the most common kind of wheat in the United States.

⁵ “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal and does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement for “whole” in combination with “stone ground.”

⁶ White whole-wheat products are lighter in color and lack the slightly bitter taste associated with the bran in red wheat. Read labels carefully to be sure products are “white whole wheat” and not “white wheat,” which is not a whole grain.



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Criteria that do not Indicate Whole Grain Content

Menu planners cannot use the following to determine if a commercial grain product contains whole grains: certain statements about grain content on the product’s package; or the product’s color and fiber content.

Label statements about grain content

Careful label reading is important because the packaging for grain products can be misleading. Manufacturers often use terms in their product names or labels that make a product appear to contain a significant amount of whole grain when it does not.

Table 2 includes some common misleading terms found on product packages. Products with these terms are usually not 100 percent whole grain. They often contain refined flour, or other ingredients that are not whole grain, as the first or second ingredient.

Table 2. Common misleading terms for grains	
“Made with whole grains”	These products must have some whole grains but may contain mostly refined flour. The amount of whole grains can vary greatly among different products.
“Made with whole wheat”	These products must have some whole wheat but may contain mostly refined flour. The amount of whole wheat can vary greatly among different products.
“Contains whole grain”	These products may contain a small amount of whole grain but usually are mostly refined grains. The amount of whole grains can vary greatly among different products.
“100% wheat”	All breads made from any part of the wheat kernel are 100 percent wheat, which is not the same as 100 percent whole wheat. “100% wheat” products may contain some whole-wheat flour or may contain only refined flour. Look for the terms “100% whole wheat” or “100% whole grain” to indicate that the product is made from only whole grains.
“Multigrain” or specifies number of grains, e.g., “seven-grain bread”	These products must contain more than one type of grain, which can include refined grains, whole grains, or both. Some multigrain breads may have enriched flour as the primary ingredient with multiple grains in smaller amounts, while others contain mostly whole grains.

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Table 2. Common misleading terms for grains, *continued*

“Cracked wheat bread”	While cracked wheat is a whole grain, cracked wheat bread may contain refined flour as the primary ingredient with small amounts of cracked wheat.
“Stone ground” flour or meal	“Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal. It does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement for the term “whole” in combination with “stone ground.”

Color

A product’s color does not indicate whether it contains whole grains. While whole-grain products are usually browner than products made with refined white flour, sometimes the brown color comes from coloring (e.g., caramel coloring) or molasses, not from whole-grain ingredients. Read the ingredients statement or the standardized recipe to determine if the food contains any whole grains.



Fiber content

Whole grains and fiber both provide health benefits, but they are not the same. The fiber content on the Nutrition Facts label is not a good indicator of whether a commercial product contains whole grains. Grain-based foods that are good sources of fiber, such as bran cereal, may contain added fibers but few or no whole grains. The Nutrition Facts label lists total fiber, which includes naturally occurring fiber and sources added by the manufacturer, such as cellulose, inulin, and chicory root.

Serving Size for Whole-grain Foods

The required amount for the CACFP grains component is in servings through September 30, 2021, and changes to ounce equivalents effective October 1, 2021. The USDA allows two methods for determining the servings or ounce equivalents of a creditable grain product or recipe. CACFP facilities may use either method, but must document how the crediting information was obtained.

- **Method 1 (USDA’s Exhibit A Chart)** is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for recipes that indicate the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. This method uses the USDA’s chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#), to determine the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group. The CSDE’s resource, [Grain Servings for the CACFP](#), lists the Exhibit A grain servings that

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apply through September 30, 2021. Groups F and G are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- **Method 2 (creditable grains)** is used for recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products that have a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving (see “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document). This method determines the grain servings for creditable grain products and recipes by calculating the total weight (grams) of creditable grains per manufacturer’s serving (from the PFS) or recipe serving (from the quantities listed in the recipe). For some commercial grain products, CACFP facilities must use method 2 (instead of the USDA’s Exhibit A chart) to determine the grain servings.

For detailed guidance on both methods, review the CSDE’s resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in CACFP](#).

Required Crediting Documentation

If the ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information to determine if a commercial product is whole grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer stating the amount of whole grains per serving. For information on PFS forms, review the CSDE’s resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#); and the USDA’s documents, [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings](#) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#). For additional guidance, visit the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” or “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpage.

To determine if foods made on site contain whole grains, the CACFP facility must review the recipe’s grain ingredients. For more information, review the CSDE’s resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP](#). For information on standardized recipes, visit the “[Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” or “[Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpage.



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Crediting Grains in the CACFP Infant Meal Patterns

The grains component and WGR requirement of the CACFP meal patterns for children do not apply to the CACFP infant meal patterns for birth through 11 months. When infants are developmentally ready (typically ages 6-11 months), creditable grains in the CACFP infant meal patterns include only:

- iron-fortified infant cereal at breakfast, lunch/supper, and snack;
- whole-grain or enriched breads and crackers at snack only; and
- RTE breakfast cereals at snack only, if they meet the sugar limit, and are made with enriched or whole-grain meal or flour, or are fortified.



Examples of creditable breads and crackers for infants include small strips or pieces of whole-grain or enriched dry bread or toast, such as whole-wheat, French, or Italian bread; small pieces of whole-grain or enriched soft tortilla, soft pita bread, English muffins, rolls, cornbread, or corn muffins; whole grain or enriched teething crackers, biscuits, and toasts; small pieces of whole-grain or enriched crackers without seeds, nuts, or whole-grain kernels; and RTE breakfast cereals that dissolve easily in the mouth and do not include nuts, dried fruits, or other hard food items. For guidance on crediting foods in the CACFP infant meal pattern, visit the CSDE's [Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Examples of grain foods that may cause choking include hard pretzels; pretzel chips; corn chips; breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels (such as wheat berries), and hard chunks (such as granola); and crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of grain foods to offer in CACFP menus. This consideration is also important for children or adult participants with a disability that requires dietary restrictions. For additional guidance, visit the "Choking Prevention" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocumentationCACFP.pdf>

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu – Handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/adding-whole-grains-your-cacfp-menu>

Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP (*through September 30, 2021*) (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainCalculationCACFP.pdf>

Choking Prevention (CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#ChokingPrevention>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCerealsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedGrainsCACFP.pdf>

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP (*effective October 1, 2021*) (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainOzEqCACFP.pdf>

Grain Servings for the CACFP (*through September 30, 2021*) (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainServingsCACFP.pdf>

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP – Handouts and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp>

Grains Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#Grains>

Grains Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#Grains>

How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/IdentifyCreditableGrainsCACFP.pdf>

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Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Adult-Centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (*through September 30, 2021*) (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (*through September 30, 2021*) – Completed Sample (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Samples_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/ResourcesCACFPMealPattern.pdf>

USDA Final Rule (84 FR 50287): Delayed Implementation of Grains Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/09/25/2019-20808/delayed-implementation-of-grains-ounce-equivalents-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers>

USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNLabelCACFP.pdf>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFSacfp.pdf>

Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGRCriteriaCACFP.pdf>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrainsCACFP.pdf>.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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