

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Sample Hot Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes

This document provides guidance and sample breakfast menus for ages 3-5 in child care centers, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and family day care homes that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CACFP. The specified servings meet or exceed the requirements of the [CACFP Meal Patterns for Children](#) and are indicated in parentheses after each menu item. Servings may be adjusted for other ages.

The CACFP breakfast meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables, fruits, or both; and $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains. Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week.

Each component must provide at least the minimum serving in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Breakfast menus may include additional foods or larger servings beyond the minimum requirements. Serve nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to the nutrition needs of each age group.



For detailed guidance on the CACFP meal patterns for children, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, [Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#). For additional resources, refer to the CSDE's [Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns](#) and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer in CACFP menus. Modify menus as appropriate and use preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking. For additional guidance, visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Menu Planning Considerations for Breakfast

Consider the meal pattern requirements and recommendations below when planning breakfast menus. For detailed guidance on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

- **Fruits and vegetables:** Before planning juice at breakfast, check that the other meals and snacks that same day do not include juice. Pasteurized full-strength juice (including fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice) credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. For more

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information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP](#). Dried fruits credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. For more information on crediting fruits and vegetables, visit the “[Fruits Component](#)” section and the “[Vegetables Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

- **Grains:** Grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains (whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ). At least one serving of grains per day must be whole-grain rich (WGR). The USDA’s [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#), [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#), [Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP](#) and [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP](#). Grains must meet the required weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP](#) or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the CACFP](#). Grain-based desserts (such as cookies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, cake, and brownies) do not credit. The CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal 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](#). For more information on crediting grains, visit the “[Grains Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- **Meat/meat alternates substituted for grains:** Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A ½-ounce serving of meat/meat alternates (such as half of a large egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, ¼ cup of yogurt, ½ ounce of cheese or ⅛ cup of cottage cheese) credits as ½ oz eq of the grains component. The serving refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. Nut and seed butters credit by volume (tablespoons) not weight. Yogurt cannot exceed 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (3.83 grams per ounce). Commercial meat products with binders and extenders (such as deli meats, hot dogs, and sausage) and commercial combination foods (such as pizza and chicken nuggets) require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to determine crediting information. For more information on crediting meat/meat alternates, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP](#), and visit the “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage. The USDA’s [CACFP Best Practices](#) 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.
- **Noncreditable foods:** Noncreditable foods cannot be served in place of the required components. Examples of noncreditable foods include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#).

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Crediting Documentation

CACFP facilities must be able to document that breakfast menus provide the required food components and quantities. Use the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the required serving for each meal pattern component. Commercial processed foods not listed in the FBG require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*, and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.

Foods made from scratch must have a recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. For more information, visit the “Crediting Foods Made from Scratch” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.

Abbreviations for Sample Menus

M = Milk component

G = Grains component

VF = Fruits component

WGR = Whole grain-rich

MMA = Meat/meat alternate substituted for the grains component

Not credited

A = Additional creditable food (not full serving)

O = Other food (noncreditable)

c = cup

Tbsp = tablespoon

tsp = teaspoon

oz = ounce

oz eq = ounce equivalent

Note: The CSDE’s sample menus are intended for informational purposes and do not guarantee compliance with the CACFP breakfast meal pattern. Crediting information for local menus will vary depending on the types of foods purchased by the CACFP facility and the recipes and preparation techniques used. CACFP facilities are responsible for ensuring that their menus meet the CACFP meal patterns for children and maintaining appropriate crediting documentation on file (refer to “Crediting Documentation” above).

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		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
	G ½ oz eq	Scrambled eggs (½ large) MMA	Toasted whole-grain English muffin (½ oz) WGR	Oatmeal (¼ c) WGR	Hot bread pudding: Enriched bread (½ oz)	Whole-grain pancakes (1 oz) WGR
	FV ½ cup	Hash-brown potatoes (½ c)	Sliced strawberries (½ c)	Blueberries (½ c)	Mandarin oranges in juice (½ c)	Warm cinnamon apple slices (½ c)
	A		Low-fat cheese (½ oz)		Vanilla yogurt (¼ c)	
	O		Jelly (1 tsp) or margarine (1 tsp)	Brown sugar (1 tsp)		Syrup (½ Tbsp)
Week 2	M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
	G ½ oz eq	Breakfast pizza: Whole-wheat pita (½ oz) WGR	Enriched cream of wheat cereal (¼ c)	Avocado toast: Whole-wheat toast (½ oz) WGR	Vegetable frittata: Eggs (½ large) MMA	Cinnamon noodle kugel: Enriched noodles (¼ c)
	FV ½ cup	Pineapple-orange juice (½ c)	Sliced pears (½ c)	Mashed avocado (¼ cup) Fresh peach slices (½ cup)	Sliced oranges (½ c)	Canned apricots in juice (½ c)
	A	Pizza sauce (½ Tbsp) Low-fat mozzarella cheese (¼ oz)			Vegetable frittata: Broccoli and potatoes (¼ cup)	
	O		Sugar (1 tsp)			
Week 3	M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
	G ½ oz eq	Warm cinnamon quinoa (¼ c) WGR	Oatmeal with raisins: Oatmeal (¼ c) WGR	Whole-grain waffles (½ oz) WGR	Hot whole-grain cereal (¼ c) WGR	Warm whole-grain granola with yogurt topping: Granola (¼ c) WGR
	FV ½ cup	Diced strawberries (½ c)	Diced apples (½ c)	Seasonal berries (½ c)	Diced peaches in juice (½ c)	Mango chunks (½ c)
	A		Raisins (½ Tbsp)			
	O		Brown sugar (1 tsp)	Syrup (1 Tbsp)	Brown sugar (1 tsp)	Low-fat vanilla yogurt (⅛ c)

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		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 4	M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
	G ½ oz eq	Warm enriched banana bread (1 oz)	Enriched pancakes (¾ oz)	Apple cinnamon oatmeal (¼ c) WGR	Veggie omelet: Eggs (½ large) and cheese (⅛ oz) MMA	Toasted cheese triangles: Whole-grain tortilla (½ oz) WGR
	FV ½ cup	Papaya slices (½ c)	Warm blueberry sauce (¼ c blueberries) Orange juice (¼ c)	Sliced strawberries (½ c)	Peppers and mushrooms (¼ c) Tangerine segments (¼ c)	Veggie salsa (¼ c) Sliced green grapes (¼ c)
	A					Low-fat shredded cheese (¼ ounce)
	O					
Week 5	M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
	G ½ oz eq	Whole-grain French toast (1¼ oz) WGR	Scrambled eggs (½ large) MMA with spinach	Toasted ham and cheese: Whole-wheat bread (½ oz) WGR	Apple cinnamon oatmeal (¼ cup) WGR	Toasted whole-grain bagel (½ oz) WGR
	FV ½ cup	Banana slices (¼ c) Blueberries (¼ c)	Cooked spinach (⅛ c) Mandarin oranges (¾ c)	Pineapple tidbits (½ cup)	Sliced peaches (½ cup)	Cantaloupe slices (½ c)
	A		Fresh veggie salsa (⅛ c)	Ham (¼ oz) and cheese (¼ oz)		Sunflower butter (1 tsp)
	O	Syrup (1 Tbsp)				

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Resources

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE's training program for child care facilities):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Related-Resources#BiteSize>

CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/CACFP_Meal_Pattern.pdf

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_CACFP.pdf

Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers (Institute of Child Nutrition):
<https://theicn.org/resources/1575/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers/118740/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers.pdf>

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Guide_CACFP_Meal_Patterns.pdf

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Menu Planning Basics: A Guide for CACFP Operators in Child Care (Institute of Child Nutrition):
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menu-planning-basics-cacfp>

Menu Planning for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Related-Resources#MenuPlanning>

Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning#Recipes>

Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Menu_Planning.pdf

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Resources_CACFP_Meal_Pattern.pdf

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For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, refer to the CSDE's guide, *Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs*, and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Menu_CACFP_Breakfast_Hot.pdf

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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