Nutrition Policies and Guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Meal Pattern Requirements
FOR CACFP CHILD CARE PROGRAMS
Child Care Centers · Family Day Care Homes
Emergency Shelters · At-risk Afterschool Care Centers

October 1, 2017, Through September 30, 2019

Revised January 2019
Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504
Hartford, CT 06103-1841
Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs
Connecticut State Department of Education • Revised January 2019

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About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs applies to CACFP child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes. This guide provides information on the CACFP meal patterns for children, which are defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) final rule, Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24348), the final rule corrections, and the USDA’s policies for the CACFP.

Meals for infants (birth through 11 months) must follow the CACFP infant meal patterns. For more information, see the CSDE’s Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

This guide is effective October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019. Effective October 1, 2019, the serving sizes for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. Prior to this change, the CSDE will revise this guide to include the new requirements for ounce equivalents.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA.

The contents of this guide are subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance for the CACFP. Please check the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage for the most current version.

For more information, contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, at susan.fiore@ct.gov or 860-807-2075.
CSDE Contact Information

For questions regarding the CACFP meal patterns for children, please contact the CACFP staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.

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<th>CACFP Staff</th>
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</thead>
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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APP</td>
<td>alternate protein products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACFP</td>
<td>Child and Adult Care Food Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCNS</td>
<td>Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>Code of Federal Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN</td>
<td>Child Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNP</td>
<td>Child Nutrition Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSDE</td>
<td>Connecticut State Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBG</td>
<td>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDA</td>
<td>Food and Drug Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNS</td>
<td>Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHFKA</td>
<td>Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Institute of Child Nutrition (formerly National Food Service Management Institute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSLP</td>
<td>National School Lunch Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVS</td>
<td>offer versus serve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS</td>
<td>product formulation statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>point of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBP</td>
<td>School Breakfast Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>school food authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA</td>
<td>United States Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR</td>
<td>whole grain-rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children</td>
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1 — CACFP Meal Patterns for Children

The updated CACFP meal patterns for children took effect on October 1, 2017. The CACFP meal patterns are defined by the USDA’s final rule, *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (81 FR 24348), released on April 25, 2016, and the *Final Rule Corrections*, released on November 1, 2016. The CACFP meal patterns for children apply to:

- children ages 1-12;
- children ages 15 and younger of migrant workers;
- children of any age with disabilities; and
- children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool care centers and emergency shelters.

Meals for infants (birth through 11 months) must follow the CACFP infant meal patterns. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

The USDA’s final rule updates the CACFP meal patterns for children to better align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The CACFP meal patterns for children require CACFP facilities to serve more whole grains and a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, and reduce the amount of added sugars and solid fats in meals. They also better align the CACFP with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and other Child Nutrition Programs.

The CACFP’s goal is to improve and maintain children’s health and nutrition while promoting the development of good eating habits. The CACFP meal patterns for children are designed to meet children’s needs for calories and key nutrients. To receive reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children, CACFP facilities (child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes) must provide the required food components in the appropriate serving size for each age group.
Overview of Changes

The updated CACFP meal patterns for children include the changes below.

- Flavored milk cannot be served to children ages 1-5.
- Flavored fat-free milk can be served to children ages 6 and older, but the USDA recommends serving only unflavored milk.
- The grains/breads component changed to the grains component.
- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR).
- Grain-based desserts cannot credit as the grains component.
- Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce.
- Grain servings are based on ounce equivalents effective October 1, 2019.
- Tofu and soy yogurt credit as the meat/meat alternates component.
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce).
- Vegetables and fruits are two separate components.
- Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch or supper.
- Juice may fulfill the entire vegetables component or fruits component. However, juice cannot credit as the vegetables component or fruits component at more than one meal or snack per day.
- Foods cannot be deep-fat fried on site, i.e., cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat.
- Parents and guardians may provide one meal component for children without a disability who have medical or special dietary needs. Note: As of the date of this publication, the USDA has not released policy guidance on the implementation requirements for this provision. Until the USDA guidance is released, CACFP facilities cannot claim reimbursement for meals that contain a family-provided meal component for children without a disability that restricts their diet.
- Offer versus serve can be implemented in at-risk afterschool child care centers.

This guide provides detailed information on these changes and the requirements of the CACFP meal patterns for children.
Age Groups
The CACFP meal patterns for children consist of minimum servings of food components for four age groups:

- ages 1-2;
- ages 3-5;
- ages 6-12; and
- ages 13-18 (only for at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters).

The minimum serving sizes in the CACFP meal patterns for children might not be sufficient for older children. Menu planners may choose to provide additional foods or larger serving sizes. For example, a breakfast menu of ¼ cup of oatmeal, ½ cup of blueberries, and ¾ cup of milk may be adequate for a 3-year-old, but a 5-year-old may need a larger serving size (such as ½ cup of oatmeal) or additional food items (such as another serving of fruit).

The meal patterns for ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool care programs and emergency shelters are the same as the meal patterns for ages 6-12. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet these older children’s nutritional needs.

Reimbursable Meals
The USDA reimburses CACFP facilities for meals and snacks served to children, not for individual foods. A meal or snack is reimbursable if it meets the CACFP meal patterns for children and contains the required food components in the minimum serving for each age group. Meals that contain foods in addition to the required food components are also reimbursable. The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to choose nutrient-dense foods for additional servings. Examples include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat milk products, legumes, and lean meats, fish, poultry. Some additional foods do not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns and cannot be served, or should only be served in moderation. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” in section 3.
**Food Components**

A food component is one of the five food groups that comprise the reimbursable meal, including milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains. Menu items contribute to the food components. A menu item is any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk. For example, a hamburger (meat/meat alternates component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one menu item that contributes to two food components.

Table 1-1 indicates the required servings of each food component for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1-1. Required servings in the CACFP meal patterns for children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three food servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One serving of milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One serving of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetables, fruits,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One serving of grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 A serving is the amount specified for each age group in the CACFP meal patterns for children.
2 Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. For more information, see “Meat/meat alternates at breakfast” in section 3.
3 Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch and supper. If the meal includes two servings of vegetables, they must be two different kinds. For more information, see “Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch and supper” in section 3.
4 Snack must include two of the five components.

The following pages include the CACFP meal patterns for children for breakfast (table 1-2), lunch and supper (table 1-3), and snack (table 1-4). A handout of the CACFP meal patterns for children is available on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
### Table 1-2. CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food components ¹</th>
<th>Ages 1-2</th>
<th>Ages 3-5</th>
<th>Ages 6-12</th>
<th>Ages 13-18 ²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk, fluid ³</td>
<td>4 fl oz</td>
<td>6 fl oz</td>
<td>8 fl oz</td>
<td>8 fl oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(½ cup)</td>
<td>(¾ cup)</td>
<td>(1 cup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both ⁴, ⁵, ⁶</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains ⁷, ⁸, ⁹, ¹⁰, ¹¹</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ¹², cereal grain ¹³, or pasta</td>
<td>¼ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>⅓ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>⅓ cup or 1 ounce</td>
<td>¼ cup or 1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold) ¹², ¹⁴</td>
<td>¼ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>⅓ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>⅓ cup or 1 ounce</td>
<td>¼ cup or 1 ounce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

▶ See below for important menu planning notes ▶

### Menu planning notes for breakfast

¹ Breakfast must include all three components. Use the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting commercial foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, and *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*.

² This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.

³ Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk to ages 2 and older. Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.

⁴ Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. 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. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*. 

---

1. **Breakfast must include all three components.** Use the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting commercial foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, and *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*.

2. **This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.** Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.

3. **Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk to ages 2 and older.** Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.

4. **Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned.** 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. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*. 

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5. **Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs** • Connecticut State Department of Education • January 2019
### Menu planning notes for breakfast, continued

5. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Juice includes all 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. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP* and *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*.

6. Fruits include fresh, frozen, canned, and dried. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.

7. To credit as the grains component, a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ must be the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, *How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP*.

8. At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any remaining grains are enriched. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

9. Except for sweet crackers such as graham crackers and animal crackers, grain-based desserts cannot credit, e.g., cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP*.

10. Through September 30, 2019, all grains must meet the applicable weights or volumes in *Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP* or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP*. Beginning October 1, 2019, the grains component changes to ounce equivalents. For more information, see CSDE’s handout, *WGR Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*.

11. Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-ounce serving of meat/meat alternates substitutes for 1 serving of the grains component. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast*.

12. Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.

13. Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

14. Beginning October 1, 2019, the serving size for cold breakfast cereals is in ounce equivalents. The required volume for 1 ounce equivalent is 1 cup of flakes or rounds, 1 ¼ cups of puffed cereal, and ¼ cup of granola. The required volume for ½ ounce equivalent is ½ cup of flakes or rounds, ¼ cups of puffed cereal, and ¼ cup of granola.
**Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children**

October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food components ¹</th>
<th>Ages 1-2</th>
<th>Ages 3-5</th>
<th>Ages 6-12</th>
<th>Ages 13-18 ²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk, fluid ³</strong></td>
<td>4 fl oz (½ cup)</td>
<td>6 fl oz (¾ cup)</td>
<td>8 fl oz (1 cup)</td>
<td>8 fl oz (1 cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meat/meat alternates ⁴</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meat, poultry, or fish</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ½ ounces</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products (APP) ⁵</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ½ ounces</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheese</strong></td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ½ ounces</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cottage cheese</strong></td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egg, large</strong></td>
<td>½</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooked dry beans or peas ⁸</strong></td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>⅝ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>3 tablespoons</td>
<td>4 tablespoons</td>
<td>4 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds ⁷</td>
<td>½ ounce = 50%</td>
<td>⅝ ounce = 50%</td>
<td>1 ounce = 50%</td>
<td>1 ounce = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened ⁸</td>
<td>4 ounces or ½ cup</td>
<td>6 ounces or ¾ cup</td>
<td>8 ounces or 1 cup</td>
<td>8 ounces or 1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables ⁹, ¹⁰</strong></td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits ¹⁰, ¹¹, ¹²</strong></td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grains ¹³, ¹⁴, ¹⁵, ¹⁶</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ¹⁷, cereal grain ¹⁸, or pasta</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold) ¹⁷, ¹⁹</td>
<td>¼ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>½ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>¾ cup or 1 ounce</td>
<td>¾ cup or 1 ounce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† See next page for important menu planning notes †
Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children, continued

Menu planning notes for lunch and supper

1. Lunch and supper must include all five components. Use the USDA’s FBG to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting commercial foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP, Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP, and Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP.

2. This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.

3. Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk to ages 2 and older. Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends serving only unflavored milk.

4. A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. 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. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP and Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP.

5. APP must meet the requirements in appendix A of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP and Crediting Tofu in the CACFP.

6. Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Legumes in the CACFP.

7. Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. At lunch and supper, nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the total requirement. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP.

8. Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP.

9. Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. 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. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP.
### Menu planning notes for lunch and supper

10 Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Juice includes all 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. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP* and *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*.

11 Vegetables can substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch or supper. If serving two vegetables, they must be two different kinds.

12 Fruits include fresh, frozen, canned, and dried. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.

13 To credit as the grains component, a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ must be the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, *How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP*.

14 At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any remaining grains are enriched. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

15 Except for sweet crackers such as graham crackers and animal crackers, grain-based desserts cannot credit, e.g., cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP*.

16 Through September 30, 2019, all grains must meet the applicable weights or volumes in *Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP* or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP*. Beginning October 1, 2019, the grains component changes to ounce equivalents. For more information, see CSDE’s handout, *WGR Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*.

17 Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.

18 Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

19 Beginning October 1, 2019, the serving size for cold breakfast cereals is in ounce equivalents. The required volume for 1 ounce equivalent is 1 cup of flakes or rounds, 1 ¼ cups of puffed cereal, and ¼ cup of granola.
# Table 1-4. CACFP snack meal pattern for children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food components¹</th>
<th>Ages 1-2</th>
<th>Ages 3-5</th>
<th>Ages 6-12</th>
<th>Ages 13-18 ²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk, fluid ³</strong></td>
<td>4 fl oz (½ cup)</td>
<td>4 fl oz (½ cup)</td>
<td>8 fl oz (1 cup)</td>
<td>8 fl oz (1 cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meat/meat alternates⁴</strong></td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meat, poultry, or fish</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products (APP) ⁵</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egg, large</strong></td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked dry beans or peas ⁶</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds ⁷</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>½ ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened ⁸</td>
<td>2 ounces or ¼ cup</td>
<td>2 ounces or ¼ cup</td>
<td>4 ounces or ½ cup</td>
<td>4 ounces or ½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables⁹, ¹⁰</strong></td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits¹⁰, ¹¹, ¹²</strong></td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grains¹³, ¹⁴, ¹⁵, ¹⁶</strong></td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ¹⁷, cereal grain ¹⁸, or pasta</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold) ¹⁷, ¹⁹</td>
<td>⅔ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>⅔ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>¾ cup or 1 ounce</td>
<td>¾ cup or 1 ounce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See next page for important menu planning notes
Table 1-4. CACFP snack meal pattern for children, continued

Menu planning notes for snack

3 Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk to ages 2 and older. Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends serving only unflavored milk.

4 A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. 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. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP and Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP.

5 APP must meet the requirements in appendix A of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP and Crediting Tofu in the CACFP.

6 Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Legumes in the CACFP.

7 Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. At lunch and supper, nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. They must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the total requirement. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP.

8 Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP.

9 Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. 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. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP.

10 Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Juice includes all 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. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Juice in the CACFP and Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP.

11 Vegetables can substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch or supper. If serving two vegetables, they must be two different kinds.

12 Fruits include fresh, frozen, canned, and dried. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
### Menu planning notes for snack, continued

13. To credit as the grains component, a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ must be the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, *How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP*.

14. At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any remaining grains are enriched. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

15. Except for sweet crackers such as graham crackers and animal crackers, grain-based desserts cannot credit, e.g., cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP*.

16. Through September 30, 2019, all grains must meet the applicable weights or volumes in *Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP* or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP*. Beginning October 1, 2019, the grains component changes to ounce equivalents. For more information, see CSDE’s handout, *WGR Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*.

17. Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.

18. Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

19. Beginning October 1, 2019, the serving size for cold breakfast cereals is in ounce equivalents. The required volume for 1 ounce equivalent is 1 cup of flakes or rounds, 1 ¼ cups of puffed cereal, and ¼ cup of granola.
Menu Planning Recommendations

The updated CACFP meal patterns for children better align the CACFP with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which provide recommendations that help Americans ages 2 and older make healthy food and beverage choices. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourages a variety of nutrient-dense foods (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat milk products, lean meats, fish, poultry, and dry beans), while limiting added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.

CACFP facilities can ensure that meals and snacks meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans by following the CSDE’s Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CC CNS). The CCCNS reflects current nutrition science and national health recommendations, and provides the healthiest choices for infants and children in child care by promoting whole or minimally processed nutrient-rich foods that are low in fat, added sugars, and sodium. For more information, see the CSDE’s Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies, and the CSDE’s Planning Healthy Meals in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Overview of CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements

The information below summarizes the crediting requirements for the CACFP meal patterns for children. For information on the required menu records for documenting meal pattern compliance, see section 2. For detailed guidance on each food component, see section 3.

Breakfast

- Breakfasts must include one serving of the milk component; one serving of vegetables, fruits, or both; and one serving of the grains component. The serving provided for each component must be at least the minimum amount for each age group in the CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children (see table 1-2).

- The meat/meat alternates component may be substituted for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for one serving of the grains component. For more information, see “Meat/meat alternates at breakfast” in section 3.

- If the menu indicates “juice” or “fruit,” the CACFP facility must indicate the specific varieties of juice and fruit served. This information can be listed on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of juice and fruit served in CACFP meals and snacks.
If the menu indicates “cereal,” the CACFP facility must indicate the specific varieties (type and brand) of RTE (cold) breakfast cereals and cooked (hot) breakfast cereals, and whether they are WGR or enriched. Menu planners can write “WGR” next to the product name to indicate that a product is WGR. For example, “General Mills Cheerios (WGR)” or “Quaker Oatmeal (WGR).” Alternatively, the CACFP facility can list this information on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all cereals served in CACFP meals and snacks. For more information, see “Required documentation for grains” in section 3.

If the CACFP facility serves RTE breakfast cereal with milk, the menu must list the specific type of cereal as one component (e.g., “whole-grain granola”) and the specific type of fluid milk as another (e.g., “unflavored low-fat milk”). “Cereal with milk” does not indicate that the CACFP facility is serving each age group an appropriate amount of RTE breakfast cereal or an appropriate amount or type of milk.

The CACFP facility must make water available during the breakfast meal service, but cannot offer water in place of the required food components. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.

**Lunch and supper**

Lunches and suppers must include one serving of the milk component, one serving of the meat/meat alternates component, one serving of the vegetables component, one serving of the fruits component (or vegetable substitutions), and one serving of the grains component. The serving for each component must be at least the minimum amount in the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children (see table 1-3).

Vegetables can substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch or supper. Lunch and supper menus must include one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component, or two different servings of the vegetables component.

If the lunch or supper menu lists “salad,” the CACFP facility must provide a specific description of the type of salad on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of salads served in CACFP meals and snacks. Examples include carrot-raisin salad; garden salad with lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes; and fresh fruit salad with apples, oranges, bananas, and strawberries.
The CACFP facility must make water available during the lunch meal service, but cannot offer water in place of the required food components. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.

Snack

- Snacks must include two of the five components. The serving for each component must be at least the minimum amount in the CACFP snack meal pattern for children (see table 1-4). A snack that contains two servings from the same component is not reimbursable. For example, a snack of orange juice (fruits component) and applesauce (fruits component) contains two food items but only one food component, and is not reimbursable. However, a snack of orange juice (fruits component) and carrot sticks (vegetables component) contains two different components and is reimbursable.

- If the snack menu includes a creditable beverage (such as milk, juice, or a fruit smoothie), the other snack component cannot be a beverage. CACFP facilities cannot served juice when milk is the only other snack component.

- If the snack menu includes milk, the other snack component should not be yogurt. The CSDE recommends this practice to increase nutrient variety.

- If the snack menu includes three or more different food items, at least two food items must meet the required food components and serving sizes. The menu must clearly indicate which items contribute to the CACFP snack meal pattern for children, and the serving size provided.

- If the snack menu includes a noncreditable food, it must also include the minimum required serving of at least two components. For example, a snack consisting of strawberry gelatin (noncreditable food), whole-grain crackers (grains component), and unflavored low-fat milk (milk component) contains three food items but only two components. To be reimbursable, this snack menu must provide the minimum serving of both milk and crackers.

- The snack menu should include a vegetable or fruit as often as possible. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends making at least one of the two required snack components a vegetable or a fruit.

- The CACFP facility must make water available during the snack service, but cannot offer water in place of the required food components. The CACFP facility should offer water at snack when no other beverage is served. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.
Meal pattern documentation

- The CACFP facility must have a written menu documenting that all meals and snacks provide the required components and appropriate serving size for each age group in the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, see “CACFP Menus” in section 2.

- The CACFP facility must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer’s production formulation statement (PFS) on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial foods served in CACFP menus, such as entrees, grains, and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients, e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad. Note: CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component, but usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (grains, vegetables, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, see “Child Nutrition (CN) labels” in section 2.

- The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that all WGR foods were identified using one of the USDA’s six allowable methods for determining compliance with the CACFP WGR criteria. For more information, see “Grain-based desserts” and “WGR requirement” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP.

- The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the CACFP sugar limit (no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce) and that the CACFP facility determined compliance using one of the USDA’s three allowable methods. For more information, see “Crediting criteria for breakfast cereals” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP.

- The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that all yogurt and soy yogurt meet the CACFP sugar limit (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce). For more information, see “Yogurt and soy yogurt” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP.

- The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that APP meet the requirements in appendix A of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). For more information, see “Alternate protein products” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP.

- The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that tofu and tofu products contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see “Commercial tofu and tofu products” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Tofu in the CACFP.
• The CACFP facility must have standardized recipes on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods made on site, such as entrees, grains, and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients, e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad. For more information, see “Standardized recipes” in section 2.

• If a CACFP child care center operates under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the center must have a daily production record on file for all CACFP meals. The production record must include all meal components and menu items including all meal choices, food components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods. For more information, see “Production records” in section 2.

Meal Pattern Resources
The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on planning meals to meet the CACFP meal patterns for children. For detailed information on crediting foods in the CACFP meal patterns for children, see the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

• CACFP Best Practices (USDA):
  https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_bestpractices.pdf

• CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):

• CACFP Nutrition and Nutrition Education (USDA):

• CACFP Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):

• CACFP Training Tools (USDA):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-training-tools

• Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern Revision: Best Practices (USDA):
  https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf

• Child Meal Pattern (USDA):
  https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childmealpattern.pdf

• Final Rule: Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (USDA):


• New Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns: Child and Adult Meals (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childadultmealstandards.pdf


For information on recipes, see “Standardized recipes” and “Recipe resources” in section 2. For additional resources, see section 5.
2 — Menu Records

CACFP facilities must be able to document that meals and snacks provide the food components and serving sizes required by the CACFP meal patterns for children. Without appropriate documentation, foods and beverages cannot credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. The CSDE will disallow reimbursement for noncompliant meals.

Family day care home sponsors must provide training, early monitoring, and technical assistance to ensure that new providers are able to serve reimbursable meals and snacks. CACFP regulations do not allow grace periods for new day care homes that are not meeting the CACFP meal patterns in the early months of participation. While serving meals with missing components or insufficient portion sizes may not rise to the level of serious deficiency for new homes, family day care sponsors must always disallow ineligible meals.

CACFP facilities should ensure that all appropriate staff are aware of the documents needed to demonstrate the CACFP menu’s compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Table 2-1 summarizes the required documentation for meal pattern compliance. CACFP facilities must maintain these records on file for the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2-1. Documentation for meal pattern compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commercial foods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Nutrition (CN) labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product formulation statement (PFS) forms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Production records are not required in the CACFP unless a CACFP child care center follows the NSLP meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use production records because they provide appropriate documentation of compliance with the CACFP meal patterns.
CACFP Menus

CACFP facilities must develop menus that represent the actual food components served for each meal and snack claimed for reimbursement. The menu must identify the date of the meal service and all food items served, including the type of milk and which grain products are WGR. Cycle menus or menus developed in advance of the meal service must specify the month and day, and indicate any menu substitutions that occur. For more information, see “Using cycle menus” in this section.

Each CACFP facility must have a written “menu of record” on file to document the specific meal pattern components served to all enrolled children each day. The CACFP facility must maintain all menus on file with other required CACFP records in accordance with the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.10(d)).

Menu forms

The menu form is an important tool to help CACFP facilities comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Using an appropriate menu form makes it easier to ensure that all meals and snacks include the required food components in the proper portion sizes. When reviewing CACFP menus for meal pattern compliance, CSDE staff cannot determine if meal components are offered unless they are indicated on the menu.

The CSDE strongly discourages CACFP facilities from using a blank calendar as a menu form because food components might be omitted and serving sizes may be insufficient. This may result in menus that do not comply with the CACFP requirements. Meals with missing food components or insufficient portion sizes are not reimbursable in the CACFP.

The CSDE’s sample CACFP weekly menu forms help menu planners include the required food components in the appropriate portion sizes. These forms are available on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage, and include:

- AM and PM Snack for Ages 1-2;
- AM and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- AM or PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters;
- AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18;
- At-risk Snack for Ages 6-18;
- At-risk Supper for Ages 6-18;
- Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 6-12;
• Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 1-2;
• Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 3-5;
• Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 6-12; and
• Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters.

CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to fit individual program needs. If a CACFP facility chooses to use a different menu format, it should contain appropriate guidance regarding the required food components and portion sizes for each meal served to each age group.

Using cycle menus
The CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to use cycle menus for meals and snacks. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a specific period (such as four weeks) with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help CACFP facilities to increase variety, control food cost, and save time.

The CSDE recommends a period of at least four weeks for cycle menus. This time period increases the variety of meals offered and ensures that children are not served the same combination of foods too often. The resources below provide additional information on cycle menus.

- Menus for Child Care (ICN): https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menus-for-child-care/

For more resources, see the CSDE’s Menu Planning and Food Production Resource List.

Note: These resources were developed prior to the USDA’s final rule and do not include the requirements of the updated CACFP meal patterns for children. CACFP facilities must ensure that local menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Menu planners should check resources for meal pattern compliance and adapt recipes, as needed.
Sample CACFP menus

The CSDE’s sample CACFP menus provide ideas for meals and snacks for children in child care programs. These menus are available on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage, and include:

- Sample Cold Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes;
- Sample Hot Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes;
- Sample Cold Lunch/Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes;
- Sample Hot Lunch/Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes; and
- Sample Snack Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes.

The serving sizes in these menus are for ages 3-5 and can be adjusted for other ages. Each menu contains at least the minimum required food components and serving sizes. Some menus include additional components or exceed the minimum serving requirements.

The type of foods purchased and the recipes and preparation techniques used by the CACFP facility will determine whether local menus meet the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CCCNS. CACFP facilities should 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. A CN label or manufacturer’s PFS must be on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial foods served in CACFP menus. A standardized recipe must be on file to document the meal pattern compliance of foods made on site in the adult day care center. For more information on crediting documentation, see section 2.

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to evaluate their menus for compliance with the CCCNS. For more information, see section 4 and the CSDE’s Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.

For resources on menu planning, see “Menu Planning Resources” in this section and the CSDE’s Menu Planning and Food Production Resource List.
Production Records

The USDA regulations require that CACFP facilities must document compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children and maintain records of food purchases. Production records are only required for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages all CACFP facilities to use production records because they provide appropriate documentation that meals and snacks meet the CACFP meal patterns.

A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. A production record should include:

- name of site;
- meal date;
- meal type (breakfast, lunch, supper, or snack);
- all planned menu items including food components, type of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and noncreditable foods such as condiments;
- recipe name and number or product name and code;
- planned serving size and number of servings for reimbursable meals for each age/grade group and, if applicable, nonreimbursable meals (e.g., meals for CACFP staff and incomplete meals served to children);
- total amount/quantity of food prepared, e.g., number of servings, pounds, cans, and pieces;
- amount of leftover food for each food item or menu item;
- total amount of food served;
- number of reimbursable meals served for each age group; and
- number of nonreimbursable meals served, e.g., meals for CACFP staff and incomplete meals served to children.

The CSDE’s sample CACFP production records help menu planners document compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children. These forms are available on CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage, and include:

- AM and PM Snack;
- AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Emergency Shelters;
- AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack;
- Any Meal;
- At-Risk Snack and Supper;
- Breakfast and PM Snack;
- Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack;
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Emergency Shelters; and
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack.

CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to fit individual program needs. If a CACFP facility
Menu Records

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs

Connecticut State Department of Education

January 2019

Menu Records

does not use production records, the CSDE recommends developing an alternate system to document the actual serving sizes provided for each meal and snack, such as maintaining a list of serving sizes. For more information on production records, see “Menu Planning Records” (chapter 6) in the USDA’s Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals.

Standardized Recipes

When CACFP facilities prepare foods on site, standardized recipes must document that a serving of the menu item provides the appropriate portion size of each meal component being credited toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. For example, if the menu planner credits macaroni and cheese as the meat/meat alternates component and grains component for ages 3-5 at lunch, the CACFP facility’s recipe must indicate that each serving contains 1 ½ ounces of cheese and ¼ cup of whole-grain or enriched pasta.

The CSDE strongly encourages the use of standardized recipes to ensure that menus provide the correct CACFP food components and portion sizes. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

Standardized recipes have many benefits. They help to ensure:

- consistent food quality;
- predictable yield;
- consistent nutrient content;
- customer satisfaction;
- food cost control;
- efficient purchasing procedures;
- inventory control;
- labor cost control;
- increased employee confidence;
- reduced record keeping; and
- successful completion of the Administrative Review of the CACFP, conducted by the CSDE.

CACFP facilities can standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA’s recipes. The CSDE’s Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP provides a template that CACFP facilities can use when developing standardized recipes. For more information on using standardized recipes, see “Recipe Resources” and “Determining In-house Product Yields” in this section.
Recipe resources

The resources below assist CACFP facilities with developing and using standardized recipes.

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):  
  https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/

- CACFP recipes (USDA):  
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-recipes

- Food Buying Guide Calculator for Child Nutrition Programs (ICN):  
  http://fbg.nfsmi.org/

- Manager’s Corner: Standardized Recipes (ICN):  

- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning

- Menu Planning Tools for Child Care Providers (USDA):  

- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Portion Control (ICN)  
  https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/16/portion-control

- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Recipe Adjustments (ICN)  
  https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/17/recipe-adjustments

- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Weights and Measures (ICN)  
  https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/19/weights-and-measures

- Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers (USDA):  

- Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Schools (USDA):  

- Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP (CSDE):  
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/stdrecipeCACFP.doc

- Team Nutrition Recipes and Cookbook Toolkit (USDA):  
Menu Records

- USDA Recipes for Child Care: https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-recipes-child-care
- USDA Standardized Recipes: https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-standardized-recipe

**Note:** CACFP facilities must ensure that local menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Menu planners should check resources for meal pattern compliance and adapt recipes, as needed.

**Documentation for Commercial Products**

Commercially prepared foods served in CACFP meals and snacks must provide the amount of the food components being credited toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. For example, to credit commercially prepared chicken nuggets as the meat/meat alternates component and grains component for ages 3-5 at lunch, the manufacturer’s documentation must indicate that one serving of the product contains 1 ½ ounces of cooked chicken and ½ serving of whole grain, WGR, or enriched breading.

To credit commercial products toward the CACFP meal patterns for children, CACFP facilities must obtain:

- the original CN label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.

These are the only acceptable records for documenting a commercial product’s contribution to the CACFP meal patterns for children. A product’s Nutrition Facts label, ingredients statement, and packaging do not provide sufficient information to document the CACFP meal pattern contribution. Only CN labels provide a guarantee of the product’s contribution to the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Table 2-2 compares the criteria for a CN labels and PFS forms.
Table 2-2. Comparison of CN labels and PFS forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>CN labels</th>
<th>PFS forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard information required</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed and monitored by the USDA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes USDA’s guarantee of meal component contribution for Child Nutrition Programs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct six-digit product identification number</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACFP facilities must check crediting information for accuracy</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CACFP facilities cannot use commercial products without a CN label or PFS to credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, see the CSDE’s handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, and CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 7A-16, 9C-16 and 9H-16: *Requirements for Documenting CACFP Meal Pattern Contribution of Processed Foods.*

**Child Nutrition (CN) labels**

The USDA’s CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for Child Nutrition Programs. It provides food manufacturers the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels. The USDA approves labels prior to use and manufacturers must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet the USDA’s requirements. All manufacturers participating in the CN Labeling Program must have a quality control program approved by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The USDA does not require that manufacturers make CN-labeled products or that CACFP facilities purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the local CACFP facility. If the CACFP facility requires a CN-labeled product, this must be clearly stated in the CACFP facility’s purchasing specifications.

A CN label is a statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates.
component of the USDA’s meal patterns. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled cheese pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains, and vegetables components; and CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates and grains components. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*. 

**Product formulation statements**

A PFS is an information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA’s meal pattern requirements, and documents how the manufacturer obtained this information by citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. A PFS must:

- indicate how the product credits toward the USDA’s meal pattern requirements;
- document how the manufacturer obtained the crediting information by citing specific Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations such as the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) and USDA policy on crediting foods (such as the USDA’s CACFP policy memos and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) instructions for Child Nutrition Programs); and
- be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. The signature can be handwritten, stamped, or electronic.

All creditable ingredients in the PFS must match a description in the USDA’s FBG. Sample USDA PFS templates for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components are available on the USDA’s CN Labeling website.

Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims and is not monitored by the USDA. CACFP facilities must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy prior to including the item in reimbursable meals. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*, and the USDA’s handout, *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement*. 
Determining Food Yields

The USDA’s FBG provides yield information for common types and customary sizes of meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains, including commercially available foods and USDA Foods. The FBG helps CACFP facilities determine:

- how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide;
- what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe; and
- how much food to buy.

CACFP facilities should use the FBG to determine how much food to purchase to meet the minimum meal pattern portion sizes, and calculate how recipes contribute to the CACFP meal patterns for children. For example, menu planners can use the FBG to determine how much raw broccoli provides 50 servings of ½ cup of cooked vegetable, or how much uncooked brown rice provides 100 servings of ½ cup of cooked rice. This information is essential for documenting compliance with the meal pattern requirements.


Determining in-house product yields

The yield information provided in the FBG represents average yields based on research conducted by the USDA. Many factors affect yield, including:

- the quality and condition of the food purchased;
- storage conditions and handling;
- the equipment used in preparation;
- cooking method and time;
- the form in which the food is served, e.g., whether potatoes are mashed, fried, or baked; and
- the serving utensils and portion control methods used.

If a food service operation consistently obtains a higher or lower yield for a product than the yield listed in the FBG, the CACFP facility should conduct an in-house yield study to determine the actual number of portions of a specified size that the product provides. In-house yields are also required for products not listed in the FBG. The CSDE allows CACFP facilities to use in-house yields if they are properly documented and follow the CSDE’s yield study procedures.
Yield study procedures

CACFP facilities can use the procedures below to determine and document in-house yields for food products.

1. Select a day when the product is served on the menu. Use at least four separate samples of the product to determine yields. A “sample” is the product pack unit, such as number 10 cans or 5-pound bags. If the CACFP facility uses more samples, the yield data will be more accurate.

2. For the best yield estimate, at least two people should independently portion and count the samples. Each person completes half of the samples. For example, with a sample of four cans, each person works alone to measure and count the servings from two cans.

3. Select the appropriate measuring utensil for the portion size being served, such as a number 16 scoop/disher or ½-cup measuring spoon.

4. Fill the measuring utensil level to the top of the measure.

5. Carefully count and document the number of portions in each sample.

6. Add the total number of servings from each of the samples.

7. Divide the total number of servings by the number of samples to get the average number of servings per sample.

8. Complete the CSDE’s Yield Study Data Form and maintain on file for review by the CSDE staff during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

For additional technical assistance with yield studies, contact the CSDE’s CACFP staff (see “Contact Information” at the beginning of this guide).
3 — Meal Components

Each food component of the USDA’s CACFP meal patterns has specific criteria for determining how foods credit toward reimbursable meals. The menu planning guidance in this section assists CACFP facilities with meeting the requirements for the five food components of the CACFP meal patterns for children, including milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains. For additional guidance on crediting foods, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Creditable Foods

Creditable foods are foods and beverages that count toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA considers the following factors when determining whether a food credits:

- nutrient content;
- function in a meal;
- regulations concerning the USDA Child Nutrition Programs (quantity requirements and definition);
- the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) standards of identity;
- the USDA’s standards for meat and meat products; and
- administrative policy decisions on the crediting of particular foods.

The websites and resources below address the requirements for crediting foods in the CACFP meal patterns for children for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs.

- Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs
- CSDE Operational Memos for the CACFP: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-the-CACFP
- USDA CACFP Policy Memos: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/policy
- USDA CACFP Regulations: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/regulations
Meal Components

- USDA FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs:
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs

**Minimum creditable amounts**

Each component has a minimum amount that credits toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. Foods served in amounts less than the minimum do not credit.

CACFP facilities must provide the milk component as one full serving of fluid milk. When meals include breakfast cereals, CACFP facilities may serve fluid milk as a beverage, on cereal, or both. For fruit and vegetable smoothies, the minimum creditable amount of milk is ¼ cup. If the amount of milk in a smoothie is less than the full-required serving of the milk component, the meal or snack must include an additional serving of milk to meet the full-required serving for each age group.

The minimum creditable amounts for the other food components are ⅛ cup for the vegetables component, ⅛ cup for the fruits component, ¼ serving for the grains component (through September 30, 2019), and ¼ ounce for the meat/meat alternates component. If a food item provides less than the full-required serving of a component, the menu must include additional foods to meet the full-required serving for each age group.
Noncreditable Foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that cannot credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. Examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, and condiments such as syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter.

CACFP facilities may serve noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Some examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens, and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees.

To ensure that CACFP meals and snacks meet children’s nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.

The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends that CACFP menus avoid noncreditable foods that are sources of added sugars. Examples include sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, and syrup), mix-in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, and cookie pieces), and sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks and sodas).

Note: CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase noncreditable foods, except for condiments served with creditable foods, and herbs and spices used to prepare and enhance the flavor of meals. For example, CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase grain-based desserts, gelatin, pudding, or canned cream soups.

For more information and examples of noncreditable foods in the CACFP, see the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs.

Water

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act requires that CACFP facilities make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service. However, water does not credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children. CACFP menus cannot offer a choice between water and milk or juice. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.
**Milk Component**

Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements, and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the FDA. The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of fluid milk at breakfast, lunch, and supper. Milk may be served as one of the two required snack components. However, only one snack component can be a creditable beverage. Milk cannot be served when juice is the only other snack component.

**Allowable types of milk**

The CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat milk or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 2-5. Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk. Table 3-1 summarizes the allowable types of milk for each age group in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of milk</th>
<th>Age 1</th>
<th>Age 2</th>
<th>Ages 3-5</th>
<th>Ages 6-12</th>
<th>Ages 13-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole, unflavored</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole, flavored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced-fat (2%), unflavored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced-fat (2%), flavored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-fat (1%), unflavored</td>
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<td>Low-fat (1%), flavored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fat-free (skim), unflavored</td>
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<td>Fat-free (skim), flavored</td>
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</table>

1. This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.
2. Unflavored whole milk and unflavored reduced-fat milk can only be served during a one-month transition period when switching a 24-month-old child from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk. For example, a CACFP facility can help ease the transition by adding a small amount of reduced-fat milk to whole-milk, then gradually changing to low-fat or fat-free milk mixed with whole milk, and increasing the amount over time.
3. Flavored milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.
CACFP facilities cannot serve milk that does not comply with the specific fat content of the CACFP meal patterns for children. For example, low-fat milk, fat-free milk, and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to 1-year-olds; and whole milk and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to ages 2-5. However, if a child has a disability that requires milk with a fat content that is different from the requirements for the CACFP meal patterns for children, the CACFP facility can make the substitution prescribed in the medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*, and the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

**State requirements for milk for CACFP child care centers in public schools**

In addition to meeting the USDA’s requirements for the milk component, all milk sold in public schools must meet the state beverage requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). This includes milk sold as part of reimbursable meals and milk sold a la carte (separately from reimbursable meals).

The state beverage statute requires that milk sold to students contains no more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce. The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Products that meet the federal and state requirements for milk are listed on the CSDE’s *List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages*, a brand-specific list of foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that meet the requirements of state statute. For more information on the state beverage statute, see the CSDE’s *Beverage Requirements* webpage.

**Menu documentation for milk**

CACFP menus must document the type of milk served to each age group. For example, the menu must state “unflavored low-fat milk” instead of “low-fat milk,” and “unflavored fat-free milk” instead of “fat-free milk.”

**Transitioning from infant formula to whole milk**

Iron-fortified infant formula does not meet the fluid milk requirement of the CACFP meal patterns for children. However, meals that contain an allowable iron-fortified infant formula are reimbursable for a one-month transition period when children are 12 to 13 months of age and are weaning (transitioning) from infant formula to whole cow’s milk. When a child is weaned from formula (or breast milk) to cow’s milk, it is common practice to provide the infant with both foods at the same meal. A small amount of whole milk is added to the iron-fortified infant formula, and gradually increased over time. This eases the transition by helping the infant to accept some of the new food.
Meal Components

Milk

For children ages 13 months and older who are not in this transitional stage, a meal containing iron-fortified infant formula is only eligible for reimbursement when a child has a disability that requires this dietary substitution, and the family provides a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs,* and USDA Memo CACFP 02-2018: *Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Questions and Answers.*

**Transitioning from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk**

The CACFP meal patterns for children for children do not allow whole milk for ages 2-4. However, CACFP facilities may serve unflavored reduced-fat milk and unflavored whole milk during a one-month transition period when a 24-month-old child is switching from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk. For example, a CACFP facility can help ease a child’s transition to low-fat or fat-free milk by:

- adding a small amount of reduced-fat milk to whole-milk;
- gradually changing to low-fat or fat-free milk mixed with whole milk; and
- decreasing the amount of whole milk over time so the entire serving is low-fat or fat-free milk by the end of the one-month transition period.

**Milk substitutes for children without disabilities**

CACFP facilities may choose, but are not required, to offer one or more allowable milk substitutes for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The two types of allowable substitutes for children without disabilities include:

- nondairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk) that meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes; and
- lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk with the appropriate fat content for each age group.

Parents or guardians must submit a written request for a nondairy milk substitute for their child. A medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority is not required for nondairy milk substitutes.

A written request is not required for lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk. CACFP facilities may offer lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk as a substitute for regular milk at any time. For more information, see “Lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk” in this section.

CACFP facilities cannot offer any other beverages as a choice instead of milk, including juice and water. Juice and water are not allowable milk substitutes for children without disabilities. Only fluid milk credits as the milk component in the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.
USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes

CACFP facilities that choose to offer a milk substitute as part of reimbursable meals for children without disabilities must provide products that meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Table 3-2 summarizes these requirements. CACFP facilities cannot offer any nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA’s nutrition standards, such as rice milk, almond milk, and cashew milk.

CACFP facilities cannot determine if a product meets the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes by reading the product’s label. The Nutrition Facts label lists only a few of the nine nutrients required by the USDA for allowable fluid milk substitutes. To determine if a product meets the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, CACFP facilities must obtain documentation from the manufacturer that includes the nutrition information for all nine nutrients.

For more information on nondairy milk substitutes, see the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*, and the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-2. Nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnesium</td>
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<td>Phosphorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potassium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riboflavin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin B12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The FDA labeling laws require manufacturers to round nutrition values to the nearest 5 percent. The unrounded minimum DV is 27.6% for calcium, 22.2% for phosphorus, 9.97% for potassium, 25.88% for riboflavin, and 18.33% for vitamin B12.
State requirements for nondairy milk substitutes for CACFP child care centers in public schools

In addition to meeting the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, all nondairy milk substitutes sold as part of reimbursable meals and a la carte in public schools must meet the state beverage requirements of C.G.S Section 10-221q. The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Nondairy milk substitutes may be unflavored or flavored but cannot contain:

- artificial sweeteners;
- more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce;
- more than 35 percent of calories from fat; and
- more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fats.

The CSDE’s List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages includes milk substitute products that meet the federal and state requirements.

Lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk

Children who cannot digest the lactose found in regular milk may be able to drink lactose-free (e.g., Lactaid) or lactose-reduced milk. These types of milk are regular fluid milk modified by the addition of lactase enzymes to reduce or eliminate the lactose (milk sugar). Lactose-reduced milk has part of the lactose removed, while lactose-free milk has all of the lactose removed.

Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk credit the same as regular milk and must meet the same requirements. Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk must be unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat milk or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 2-4.

CACFP facilities may offer lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk as a substitute for regular milk at any time. A written request from a parent or guardian is not required to make this substitution.

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to make lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk available to children as needed. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP, and the CSDE’s guide, Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs.

In addition to meeting the CACFP meal patterns for children, any lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk served as part of reimbursable meals in public schools must meet the sugar limit of the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. CACFP facilities cannot sell lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that does not meet the state requirements, either as...
part of reimbursable CACFP meals and snacks or a la carte. For more information, see “State requirements for milk for CACFP child care centers in public schools” in this section.

The CSDE’s *List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages* includes lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that meets the federal and state requirements.

**Milk in prepared foods**

Only fluid milk meets the USDA’s definition for milk and the FDA’s standard of identity for milk. The CACFP meal patterns for children require fluid milk as a beverage. When CACFP meals and snacks include breakfast cereals, CACFP facilities may serve fluid milk as a beverage, on cereal, or both.

Milk does not credit when cooked in cereals, puddings, cream sauces, or other foods. For example, milk does not credit when used to make quiche or macaroni and cheese.

Foods made from milk (such as cheese, yogurt, and ice cream) cannot credit as the milk component. For information on crediting cheese and yogurt as meat/meat alternates, see the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” section.

**Noncreditable foods in the milk component**

Examples of foods that do not credit as the milk component include, but are not limited to:

- for age 1, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%) milk; plain or flavored low-fat (1%) milk, and plain or flavored fat-free milk;
- for ages 2-4, plain or flavored whole milk, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%) milk, and flavored low-fat (1%) milk;
- nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, e.g., rice milk, almond milk, and cashew milk; and
- milk that is cooked or baked in prepared foods, such as cereals, puddings, and cream sauces.

For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” at the beginning of this section, and the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP.*
Resources for crediting milk

The resources below assist CACFP facilities with crediting foods as the milk component in the CACFP meal patterns for children.


For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
Meat/Meat Alternates Component

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of the meat/meat alternates component at lunch and supper. The meat/meat alternates component is not required at breakfast, but may be substituted for the entire grains component up to three times per week. The meat/meat alternates component may be served as one of the two required snack components. 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.

**Serving size for meat/meat alternates**

Menu planners should consult the USDA’s FBG to determine the crediting information for foods in the meat/meat alternates component. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 1 ounce of natural cheese, e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss or process cheese, e.g., American (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- ¼ cup of cottage cheese (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- 2 ounces of cheese food/spread or cheese substitute;
- ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt (plain or flavored) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (3.83 grams per ounce);
- 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) of tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the USDA’s APP requirements.
3 | Meal Components

**Meat/Meat Alternates**

Amounts in the meat/meat alternates component refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. A serving must contain the appropriate size edible portion of meat/meat alternates before any other ingredients are added. For example, tuna salad for ages 3-4 at lunch or supper must contain 1 ½ ounces of tuna fish before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, celery, and seasonings.

Commercially prepared foods (such as pizza and chicken nuggets) must provide the amount of the meal components credited in CACFP menus. For example, to credit a commercially prepared cheese pizza as 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component, the product’s CN label or PFS must indicate that the product contains 1 ½ ounces of cheese per serving. For more information, see “Documentation for commercial products” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*.

**Main dish requirement for lunch and supper**

At lunch and supper, the meat/meat alternates component must be served in a main dish, or in a main dish and only one other food item. The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items.

Foods that are not a main dish do not credit toward the meat/meat alternates component. Examples include soup made with blended soft tofu, pasta made with legumes, and muffins made with peanut butter or yogurt. The USDA’s intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP facilities offer the meat/meat alternates component in a form that is recognizable to children. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs, which includes the goal of helping children easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

**Note:** The USDA allows an exception to the main dish requirement for yogurt or soy yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies. Yogurt or soy yogurt credits as the meat/meat alternates component when served in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility. Other meat/meat alternates, such as peanut butter, cannot credit when served in smoothies. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*.

**Meat/meat alternates at breakfast**

The meat/meat alternates component is not required at breakfast, but CACFP facilities may substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component up to three times per week, regardless of the number of days in the week. For example, a CACFP facility could choose to substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component three times during a three-day week or three times during a five-day week.
A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for 1 serving of the grains component. For example, a CACFP facility could substitute 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, ½ ounce of cheese, ¼ of a large egg, or ¼ cup of yogurt for ½ serving of the grains component for ages 3-5. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP.

**Commercial products with added liquids, binders, and extenders**

Meat products with binders and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula, which must be documented by a CN label or PFS. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, see “Product formulation statement” and “Child Nutrition (CN) label” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP.

Table 3-3 shows examples of binders and extenders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-3. Examples of binders and extenders ¹</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agar-agar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcium-reduced dried skim milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrageenan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dried milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry or dried whey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gums, vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated soy protein (APP) ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locust bean gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methyl cellulose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified food starch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced lactose whey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced minerals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium caseinate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soy flour (APP) ²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soy protein concentrate (APP) ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starchy vegetable flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapioca dextrin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetable starch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wheat gluten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whey protein concentrate (APP) ²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xanthan gum</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Regulations, 9 CFR 318.7.

² Products can contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s APP requirements. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP.
Meal Components

Cheese
To help reduce saturated fats in CACFP meals, menu planners should use low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese whenever possible for ages 2 and older. Natural cheese is cheese that is produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, Muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheese does not include pasteurized process cheese such as American cheese, pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, and pasteurized process cheese products.

The serving size for cheese depends on the type. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component equals:

- 1 ounce of natural cheese (e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss) or process cheese (e.g., American); and
- 2 ounces (¼ cup) of cottage or ricotta cheese,
- 2 ounces of cheese food or cheese spread, and cheese substitutes.

Cheese substitute, cheese food substitute, and cheese spread substitute must meet the FDA’s standard of identity for substitute foods and must be labeled as “cheese substitute,” “cheese food substitute,” or “cheese spread substitute.” The FDA’s standard of identity requires that a cheese substitute is not nutritionally inferior to the standardized cheese for which it is substituting. A 2-ounce serving of cheese food, cheese spread, or cheese substitute credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. Imitation cheese and cheese products do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

Legumes as meat/meat alternates
Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. Menu planners must decide in advance how legumes will credit in CACFP menus.

Legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component based on volume. A ¼-cup serving (4 tablespoons) of legumes credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The minimum creditable amount of legumes is 1 tablespoon (¼ ounce). If a menu item contains less than the full CACFP serving, the meal must include an additional menu item from the meat/meat alternates component to provide the full-required serving.

The serving size refers to the amount of cooked legumes without any added liquid, such as the sauce in baked beans. For example, if the menu planner credits ¼ cup of baked beans as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, the serving must contain ¼ cup of beans, not including the sauce.
Roasted or dried legumes (such as roasted edamame and roasted chickpeas) credit as the meat/meat alternates component the same as nuts and seeds, which credit based on weight (ounces). A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried legumes provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

For more information on crediting legumes and guidance on how to calculate the contribution of legumes in a recipe, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Legumes in the CACFP*.

**Nuts and seeds**

Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. **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.

At lunch and supper, nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. They must be combined with another food from the meat/meat alternate component to meet the full requirement for each age group. For example, a lunch for ages 3-4 can include ¾ ounce of nuts or seeds and ¾ ounce of cheese to meet the required 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component. For more information on crediting nuts and seeds, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP*.

**Nut and seed butters**

Creditable nut and seed butters include almond butter, cashew nut butter, peanut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, and sunflower seed butter. Reduced-fat peanut butter credits if it meets the FDA’s standards of identity for peanut butter *(21 CFR 164.150)*, which requires that products contain at least 90 percent peanuts.

The serving size for nut and seed butters is based on volume (tablespoons), not weight (ounces). A serving of 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butter credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of a nut or seed butter in one menu item, such as a peanut butter sandwich. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller portion of peanut butter and supplementing with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to provide the full serving.
3 | Meal Components

Meat/Meat Alternates

For example, the lunch meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component (3 tablespoons of peanut butter). The lunch menu could provide the required 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component from 1 ½ tablespoons of peanut butter (¼ ounce of meat/meat alternates) served with ¼ ounce of low-fat cheese (¼ ounce of meat/meat alternates). For more information on crediting nut and seed butters, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP*.

**Yogurt and soy yogurt**

Yogurt includes plain yogurt, flavored yogurt, and yogurt with added fruit (either blended or on the bottom). Yogurt must meet the FDA’s standards of identity for yogurt (21 CFR 131.200), low-fat yogurt (21 CFR 131.203), or nonfat yogurt (21 CFR 131.206). Frozen yogurt, drinkable yogurt, and squeezable yogurt do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

The required serving size for yogurt is based on volume (cups) or weight (ounces) and is the same for all types, flavors, and fat contents. A ½-cup serving (volume) or 4 ounces (weight) credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce). Yogurt and soy yogurt used in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility must also meet this requirement. The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that yogurt and soy yogurt served in CACFP meals and snacks comply with the sugar limit.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP* and *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP* and the USDA’s handouts, *Choose Yogurts Lower in Added Sugars* and *Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP*.

**Commercial tofu and tofu products**

Commercial tofu and tofu products must meet two criteria to credit as the meat/meat alternates component. They must be easily recognizable as meat substitutes (such as a tofu burger or tofu sausage) and the tofu ingredient must contain at least 5 grams of protein in a 2.2-ounce serving by weight (¼ cup volume equivalent). The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that tofu products comply with these requirements. For more information on crediting tofu and how to calculate the grams of protein per serving, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP*. 
Alternate protein products (APP)

APP are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods, such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APP may be used alone or in combination with meat or other meat alternates. Examples of foods with added APP include beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos, and tuna salad. APP are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods, such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein.

APP must meet the USDA’s requirements specified in appendix A of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210) and appendix A of the SBP regulations (7 CFR 220). The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that APP comply with these requirements. For more information on crediting APP, see the CSDE’s handout, Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP, and the USDA’s handout, Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products.

Noncreditable foods in the meat/meat alternates component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component include, but are not limited to:

- bacon;
- commercial canned soups, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice;
- cream cheese;
- drinkable yogurt;
- egg whites;
- frozen whites;
- imitation cheese;
- products made with tofu that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes;
- sour cream;
- tofu that contains less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2-ounce serving by weight;
- yogurt or soy yogurt that contains more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce; and
- yogurt or soy yogurt in commercial smoothies.

CACFP facilities should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, see “Noncreditable foods” at the beginning of this section, CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 27-11: Shelf-stable, Dried Snacks Made from Meat, Poultry or Seafood, and the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP.
Resources for crediting meat/meat alternates

The resources below assist CACFP facilities with crediting foods as the meat/meat alternates component in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

- Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditYogurtCACFP.pdf
- Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/APPReqCACFP.pdf

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
Vegetables Component

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of the vegetables component at lunch and supper. At breakfast, vegetables and fruits are one component and can include vegetables, fruits, or both. The vegetables component may be served as one of the two required snack components.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables. Menu planners should consult the USDA’s FBG to determine the crediting information for specific vegetables.

The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends providing at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP.

The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends incorporating seasonal and locally produced foods into meals. For more information, see the USDA’s Farm to Preschool webpage and the CSDE’s Farm to School webpage.

Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch and supper

Vegetables can replace the fruits component at any lunch or supper. Lunch and supper can contain one serving of vegetables and one serving of fruits, or two different servings of vegetables. Lunch cannot contain only two servings of fruits.

Serving size for vegetables

The serving size for vegetables is based on volume (cups) except for leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach, which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of leafy greens credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. Examples of raw leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce such as iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix.

Cooked and roasted leafy greens (such as spinach, kale, kale “chips,” and collard greens) credit based on the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of cooked leafy greens or roasted kale credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the water in which it is packed.
Legumes as vegetables

Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the vegetables component or meat/meat alternates component, but not both in the same meal. Menu planners must decide in advance how to credit legumes in CACFP menus.

The serving size refers to the amount of cooked legumes without any added liquid, such as the sauce in baked beans. For example, if the menu planner credits ¼ cup of baked beans as ¼ cup of the vegetables component, the serving must contain ¼ cup of beans, not including the sauce. For more information on crediting legumes and guidance on how to calculate the contribution of legumes in a recipe, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Legumes in the CACFP*.

Vegetable mixtures at lunch and supper

Vegetable mixtures can credit toward both the vegetables component and the fruits component at lunch and supper if they contain at least ⅛ cup of two different kinds of vegetables. For example, a lunch menu for ages 3-5 includes ¼ cup of broccoli and ¼ cup of cauliflower mixed together. The menu planner can credit the broccoli as the full vegetables component (¼ cup) and use the cauliflower to replace the full fruits component (¼ cup) because it provides the minimum required CACFP serving for the fruits component.

If the quantities of the different vegetables are not known, such as frozen mixed carrots and peas, the vegetable mixture credits as one serving of vegetables and cannot credit as the fruit component. In this case, the CACFP menu would require either a serving of the fruits component or another serving of vegetables substituted for the fruits component.

Vegetable juice

Vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice or a combination of vegetable and fruit juices. It can be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. The name of the full-strength juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.”

Pasteurized full-strength juice can meet the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. For more information on juice, see “Juice limit” in the “Fruits Component” section, and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP*. 
Soups

Only certain types of commercial vegetable soups credit toward the vegetables component. Allowable commercial soups include tomato, vegetable, clam chowder with potatoes, corn chowder, minestrone, and lentil, pea, or bean (legumes). Commercial beef barley, chicken/turkey noodle, and chicken/turkey rice soup are noncreditable foods, and cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

Soups made on site by the CACFP facility credit based on the amount of vegetables contained per serving, which must be documented by the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe. However, commercial soups credit differently, based on the information in the FBG. A 1-cup serving of commercial lentil, pea, or bean soup credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. A 1-cup serving of all other allowable commercial vegetable soups credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component.

Menu planners must ensure that a serving of soup is sufficient to provide the required amount of the vegetables component. A 1-cup container (8 fluid ounces) does not provide 1 cup of soup unless it is completely filled to the top, which is impractical. To avoid spilling and ensure that the served portion complies with the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving size of soup. For example, CACFP facilities could use a 10-fluid ounce bowl to hold 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of soup and a 6-fluid ounce bowl to hold 4 fluid ounces (½ cup) of soup. Note: The 1-cup serving required for a commercial soup to credit as the vegetables component may not be practical for young children.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Soup in the CACFP*.

Pureed vegetables

Pureed vegetables must be recognizable to credit in the CACFP meal patterns. Pureed foods made from one vegetable (such as tomato sauce, split pea soup, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, and pureed butternut squash) are recognizable creditable vegetables. Combination foods with pureed (unrecognizable) vegetables may contribute to the vegetables component if the dish that contains them also provides an adequate amount of recognizable creditable vegetables. For example, a serving of macaroni and cheese that contains ⅛ cup of diced butternut squash (recognizable) and ⅛ cup of pureed carrots (unrecognizable) credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. Pureed vegetables credit based on the volume served, not the volume before pureeing.
3 | Meal Components | Vegetables

**Dehydrated vegetables**

Dehydrated vegetables used for seasonings, such as dried onion and dried parsley, do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns. Dehydrated vegetables credit when rehydrated only if the product’s PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving. CACFP facilities should check the accuracy of the manufacturer’s PFS prior to including foods with dehydrated vegetables in reimbursable meals.

**Noncreditable foods in the vegetables component**

Examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables component include, but are not limited to:

- chili sauce;
- dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning;
- cream vegetable soups (e.g., cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom);
- home-canned products (for food safety reasons ketchup; pickle relish; and
- snack-type foods made from vegetables such as potato chips.

CACFP facilities should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the vegetables component. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” at the beginning of this section, and the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP.*
Resources for crediting vegetables

The resources below assist CACFP facilities with crediting foods as the vegetables component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSmoothieCACFP.pdf?
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
Fruits Component

The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of the fruits component at lunch and supper. However, CACFP facilities can substitute vegetables for the full fruits component at any lunch or supper. At breakfast, vegetables and fruits are one component and can include vegetables, fruits, or both. The fruits component may be served as one of the two required snack components. However, only one snack component can be a creditable beverage (such as milk, juice, or a fruit smoothie). Juice cannot be served when milk is the only other snack component.

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, dried, and canned fruits; and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. Menu planners should consult the USDA’s FBG to determine the crediting information for specific fruits.

The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices encourages CACFP facilities to serve a variety of fruits and choose whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice. It also recommends making at least one of the two required snack components a vegetable or a fruit.

Serving size for fruits

The serving size for the fruits component is based on volume (cups) except for dried fruit, which credits as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of dried fruit such as raisins or dried apricots credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

Canned fruit

Choose canned fruits in water, 100 percent fruit juice, or light syrup. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup.

The juice from canned fruit counts toward the CACFP juice limit if the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component. Juice from canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit if the menu planner plans the juice as an extra food that does not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. For example, if the CACFP facility provides ½ cup of the fruits component, juice from canned fruit does not count toward the daily juice limit if food service personnel portion ½ cup of canned fruit in a 5 ½-ounce container and add the juice after measuring the full ½-cup serving of fruit.
**Fruit juice**

Juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice or a combination of fruit and vegetable juices. The name of the full-strength juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” Juice can be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. Juice may be served liquid or frozen, e.g., full-strength frozen juice pops.

**Juice blends**

Juice blends must be a combination of full-strength (100 percent) fruit juices, full-strength vegetable juices, or full-strength fruit and vegetable juices. At lunch, fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the first juice ingredient. If the first juice ingredient is fruit juice, the product credits as the fruits component. If the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice, the product credits as the vegetables component.

**Juice limit**

Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. The daily juice limit includes all sources of 100 percent juice, such as 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. Drained canned fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the juice limit. For more information, see “Canned fruit” in this section.

If a meal or snack includes any type of juice as the fruits component or vegetables component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other meal or snack that day. For example:

- if the breakfast menu includes juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch, supper, or snack that same day;

- if the lunch menu includes canned fruit in juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, supper, or snack that same day; and

- if the snack menu includes a smoothie made with pureed fruit as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, lunch, or supper that same day.

If the daily CACFP menu already meets the juice limit, the CACFP facility could choose to offer juice as an extra noncreditable food that does not count toward the CACFP meal.
Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs

Meal Components

Fruits

patterns. However, the USDA encourages CACFP facilities to limit juice in CACFP menus to ensure that meals and snacks meet children’s nutrition needs. Children might not consume the actual meal components if the menu includes noncreditable foods. In addition, CACFP facilities must consider the cost issues of providing noncreditable foods. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Juice in the CACFP and Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP.

Fresh fruit

The meal pattern contribution of fresh fruit varies depending on the type and size (count pack) of the fruit. Menu planners should consult the FBG to determine the proper crediting information for an individual piece of whole or cut-up fresh fruit. For example, the FBG indicates that:

- one 60-count plum and one 2 ¼-inch diameter peach each credit as ⅜ cup of fruit;
- one 100-count and 120-count banana, one 150-count pear, one 80-count peach, one 138-count orange, and one 45-count (2-inch diameter) plum each credit as ½ cup of fruit; and
- one 113-count and 125-count orange each credit as ⅝ cup of fruit.

One piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut-up) might not credit as the full-required serving of the fruits component, depending on the meal and age group being served. If an individual piece of fruit does not provide the full CACFP serving, the CACFP menu must include additional fruit to meet the full-required serving.

For example, breakfast for ages 3-4 and snack for ages 1-4 require ½ cup of the fruits component. One 120-count tangerine credits as ⅜ cup of the fruits component. The CACFP menu must include another ⅛ cup of the fruits component to provide the full-required serving.

Table 3-3 lists the FBG’s meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits and, if applicable, the additional amount required to provide a ½-cup serving.

Table 3-3 lists the FBG’s meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits and, if applicable, the additional amount required to provide a ½-cup serving.
Table 3-3. Meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit (one piece)</th>
<th>CACFP meal pattern contribution (from FBG)</th>
<th>Additional amount for ½ cup ¹,²</th>
<th>Additional amount for ¾ cup ²,³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple, 125-138 count</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricot, medium (1 ⅜-inch diameter)</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana, 150 count (7 to 7 7/8 inch)</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana, 100-120 count, regular</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clementine, whole, peeled</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit, 27-32 count, large</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi, 33-39 count</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarine, size 88-96 (2 ¼-inch diameter)</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarine, size 56-64 (2 ¼-inch diameter)</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 88 and 84 (2 ¼-inch diameter)</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 64 and 60 (2 ½-inch diameter)</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 80</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 56</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 56</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, 150 count</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, 120 count</td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, D’Anjou, Bosc or Bartlett, 100 count</td>
<td>1 ¼ cups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Meal Components

#### Fruits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit (one piece)</th>
<th>CACFP meal pattern contribution (from FBG)</th>
<th>Additional amount for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup $^{1,2}$</th>
<th>Additional amount for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup $^{2,3}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{2}$ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{4}$ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum, purple, red, or black, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$-inch diameter</td>
<td>$\frac{5}{8}$ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{8}$ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{8}$ cup</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{8}$ cup</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{8}$ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangerine, 120 count</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{8}$ cup</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{8}$ cup</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{8}$ cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A $\frac{1}{2}$-cup serving of the fruits component is required for ages 3-18 at breakfast and for ages 1-5 at snack (if the snack menu includes fruit as one of the two required snack components).
2. The additional required amount can be from the same fruit or a different fruit.
3. A $\frac{3}{4}$-cup serving of the fruits component is required for ages 6-18 at snack (if the snack menu includes fruit as one of the two required snack components).

**Pureed fruit**

Pureed fruits must be recognizable to credit in the CACFP meal patterns. Pureed foods made from one fruit (such as applesauce) are recognizable creditable fruits. Combination foods with pureed (unrecognizable) fruits may contribute to the fruits component if the dish that contains them also provides an adequate amount of recognizable creditable fruit. Pureed fruit credits based on the volume served, not the volume before pureeing.

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility credit only as juice. Crediting is based on the actual volume of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving, which must be documented by the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*. 

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Table 3-3. Meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits, continued
Fruits

Meal Components

Fruit in grain-based desserts

The fruit portion of grain-based desserts (such as pies, cobblers, or crisps) credits toward the fruits component based on the amount of fruit per serving. This information must be documented by the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe (for foods made on site) or the manufacturer’s PFS (for commercial foods).

The grain portion of grain-based desserts cannot credit toward the grains component. The USDA indicates that CACFP facilities should serve sweetened fruit in moderation to help reduce children’s consumption of added sugars and help children develop a taste preference for unsweetened fruit. For more information, see “Grain-based desserts” in the “Grains Component” section.

Smoothies made on site

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility credit only as juice toward the CACFP meal patterns. Crediting is based on the actual volume of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving.

Smoothies that contain a mix of pureed fruits and vegetables, or that contain 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends, credit as the fruits component if fruit juice or fruit puree is the predominant ingredient. If vegetable juice or vegetable puree is the predominant ingredient, the smoothie credits as the vegetables component.

Menu planners must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the CACFP juice limit. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day, between all meals and snacks served to children. For example, if a smoothie credits as the fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack.

For more information, see “Juice limit” in this section and the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP.
Meal Components

Fruits

Noncreditable foods in the fruits component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the fruits component include, but are not limited to:

- fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups, fruit leathers, fruit wrinkles, fruit twists, and yogurt-covered fruit snacks);
- banana chips;
- home-canned products (for food safety reasons);
- jams, jellies, and preserves; and
- juice drinks that are not 100 percent juice such as grape juice drink, orange juice drink, pineapple-grapefruit drink, cranberry juice cocktail, and lemonade.

CACFP facilities should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the fruits component. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” at the beginning of this section, and the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP*.

Resources for crediting fruits

The resources below assist CACFP facilities with crediting foods as the fruits component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

- Crediting Juice in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf

- Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP (CSDE):

- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers (USDA):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
Grains Component

The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of the grains component at breakfast and lunch. The grains component may be served as one of the two required snack components. CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children.

The grains component for the preschool meal patterns includes a variety of products, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard bread sticks, and tortilla chips;
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- RTE breakfast cereals, such as puffed cereals, whole grain rounds or flakes, and granola;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat;
- bread products used as an ingredient in another menu item, such as combination foods, e.g., breading on fish or poultry and pizza crust in pizza; and
- pasta products, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.

Products that are 100 percent whole grain, such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice, provide the best nutrition and should be served most often.

Grain-based desserts
donot include sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers), muffins, quick breads, e.g., banana bread and zucchini bread (except for cinnamon streusel), cornbread, pancakes, waffles, French toast, savory scones (such as cheese and herb), and pie crusts in entrees such as quiche, meat pies, and chicken pot pie.
Meal Components

Grains

As a best practice, the USDA encourages CACFP menus to limit sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers) because of their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks.

CACFP facilities may choose to serve grain-based desserts as an additional food item that does not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. For example, serving cake or cookies at special celebrations. However, the USDA and CSDE encourage CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods and beverages, to ensure children’s nutritional needs are met.

Note: The USDA does not allow CACFP facilities to use CACFP funds to purchase noncreditable foods such as grain-based desserts. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” in this section.

For more information, see the USDA’s handout, Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP, and USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers.

Serving size for grains

CACFP facilities must ensure that grain menu items provide the appropriate CACFP serving size for each meal and age group, based on groups A-I in the USDA’s grains serving size chart. This chart groups foods based on the average grain content of similar products.

- Through September 30, 2019, the grains component must meet the appropriate weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) in Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP.
- Effective October 1, 2019, the grains component changes to ounce equivalents and must meet the appropriate weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) in Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP.

For guidance on how to determine the CACFP grain servings for a grain product or recipe, see the CSDE’s handout, Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in CACFP.
Grains

Grain crediting worksheets
The CSDE’s CACFP crediting worksheets evaluate grain-based foods for compliance with the CACFP crediting, WGR, and serving size requirements. The worksheets include:

- Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP;
- Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP;
- Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP;
- Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP; and
- Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP.

These worksheets are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Creditable grains
To credit as the grains component, a grain product or recipe must contain a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, and germ) as the primary (greatest) ingredient by weight. For information on identifying whole and enriched grains, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP and Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP.

The CACFP crediting requirements are different for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility. These requirements are summarized below. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP.

Crediting criteria for commercial grain products
Commercial grain products in groups A-G (baked goods such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, and waffles) and group H (pasta and cereal grains such as quinoa, rice, and millet) credit as the grains component if a creditable grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a creditable grain is the second ingredient). The ingredients statements below show examples of commercial grain products that credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Ingredients: Enriched wheat flour (flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), canola and/or sunflower oil, salt, contains 2% or less of: yeast, nonfat milk, sugar, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, paprika, spices, celery, onion powder.

- Ingredients: Water, whole-wheat flour, yeast, wheat gluten, contains less than 2% of each of the following: soybean oil, sugar, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), fumaric acid, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate.
• Ingredients: Water, enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, vitamin B1 [thiamin mononitrate], vitamin B2 [riboflavin], folic acid), whole-wheat flour, vegetable oil (soybean, palm, and/or canola oil), egg whites, wheat bran, sugar, contains 2% or less of leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate, monocalcium phosphate), salt, malt flavoring, whey, soy lecithin.

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the commercial grain product contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer. To credit in the preschool meal patterns, the product’s PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains in the product is the greatest ingredient by weight. For more information on PFS forms, see “Product formulation statements” in section 2.

For examples of how to determine if commercial grain products are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP. Menu planners can use the CSDE’s Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP to determine if commercial grain products comply with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see “Grain crediting worksheets” in this section.

Crediting criteria for breakfast cereals
RTE breakfast cereals in group I (such as puffed cereals, whole-grain rounds or flakes, and granola) and cooked breakfast cereals in group H (including instant and regular, such as oatmeal and cream of wheat) credit as the grains component if the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. For examples of how to determine if breakfast cereals are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP.

Menu planners can use the CSDE’s Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP and Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP to determine if breakfast cereals comply with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see “Grain crediting worksheets” in this section.
Crediting criteria for commercial combination foods

Commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-I (such as pizza crust in pizza, noodles in lasagna, and breading or batter on meat, fish, or poultry) credit as the grains component if the first grain ingredient is a creditable grain. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a combination food (breaded chicken nuggets) that contains a whole grain (whole-wheat flour) as the first grain ingredient, and credits in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Ingredients: Boneless, skinless chicken breast with rib meat, water, whole-wheat flour, contains 2% or less of the following: dried garlic, dried onion, salt, sea salt, soybean oil, spice, sugar, torula yeast, turmeric, yeast, yeast extract. Breading set in vegetable oil.

A commercial combination food that lists the ingredients for the grain portion separately credits as the grains component if a creditable grain is the first ingredient in the grain portion (or water is the first ingredient in the grain portion and a whole grain is the second ingredient in the grain portion). The ingredients statement below shows an example of a combination food (cheese ravioli) that lists the grain portion (pasta) separately. This product credits in the preschool meal patterns because the first ingredient (whole-wheat flour) in the grain portion is a whole grain.

- Ingredients: Filling: Fat-free ricotta cheese (whey, skim milk [made from nonfat dry milk powder], vinegar, xanthan gum, carrageenan), water, egg, low moisture part skim mozzarella cheese (cultured part skim milk, salt, enzymes), whey protein isolate, sodium caseinate, romano cheese made from cow's milk (cultured milk, salt, enzymes), bleached wheat flour, garlic salt (salt, dehydrated garlic), salt, corn starch, sugar, dehydrated garlic. Pasta: Whole-wheat flour, enriched durum wheat flour (wheat flour, niacin, ferrous sulfate, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), water, egg.

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain portion of the combination food contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer. To credit in the preschool meal patterns, the product’s PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains in the grain portion of the product is the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion. For more information on PFS forms, see “Product formulation statements” in section 2.

For examples of how to determine if commercial combination foods are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP.
Crediting criteria for grain foods made on site
Grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility credit as the grains component if a creditable grain (or the combined weight of all creditable grains) is the greatest ingredient by weight in the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe. For examples of how to determine if grain foods made on site are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP.*

Menu planners can use the CSDE’s *Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP* or *Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP* to determine if grain foods made on site comply with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see “Grain crediting worksheets” in this section.

Crediting criteria for combination foods made on site
Combination foods made on site by the CACFP facility credit as the grains component if a creditable grain (or the combined weight of all creditable grains) is the greatest grain ingredient by weight in the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe. Menu planners can use the CSDE’s *Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP* or *Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP* to determine if the grain portion of grain foods made on site complies with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see “Grain crediting worksheets” in this section.
Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement

CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children. Menu planners may choose to serve a WGR food at any meal or snack. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day.

- If a CACFP facility serves only one meal per day, the grain served at that meal must be WGR.
- If a CACFP facility serves only breakfast and substitutes meat/meat alternates for the grains component at breakfast (allowed up to three times per week), a WGR food is not required.
- The grains component is not required at snack, but may be served as one of the two required snack components. If a CACFP facility serves only snack and offers a grain as one of the two snack components, the grain must be WGR.

The WGR requirement applies to the CACFP facility, not to each child. If a CACFP facility serves more than one meal, and two different groups of children are at each meal (such as one group of children at breakfast and another group of children at lunch), only one meal must contain a WGR food. However, the USDA strongly encourages CACFP facilities to vary the meal that includes a WGR item. For example, a CACFP facility could serve whole-grain toast at breakfast on Monday and brown rice at lunch on Tuesday. This helps to ensure that all children are served a variety of whole grains, and benefit from the important nutrients these foods provide.
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3  Grains

WGR criteria

WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains (every grain ingredient is whole grain) and foods that contain a blend of whole (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. All WGR foods credit in the CACFP meal patterns, but not all creditable grain foods are WGR. The CACFP facility must determine if foods are WGR by using one of the six methods allowed by the USDA for determining if foods comply with the CACFP WGR criteria. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

The USDA’s “rule of three” is one of the methods that CACFP facilities can use to determine if commercial foods meet the WGR criteria for the CACFP meal patterns. The “rule of three” requires that the first ingredient (excluding water) is a whole grain, and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable grains. When reviewing a commercial product’s ingredients statement for compliance with the CACFP “rule of three” WGR criteria:

- a whole grain must be the first ingredient and may be the second or third grain ingredients;
- an enriched grain may be the second or third grain ingredients; and
- bran and germ may be the second or third grain ingredients.

Noncreditable grains (such as modified food starch, yellow corn flour, and wheat flour) cannot be any of the first three grain ingredients. If a food meets the “rule of three,” the menu planner does not need to check any other grain ingredients further down on the ingredients statement to verify if they are creditable.

The “rule of three” CACFP WGR criteria are different for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and foods made on site by the CACFP facility. These requirements are summarized on the following pages. For detailed guidance and examples of how to determine if grain products are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*. 
WGR criteria for commercial grain products

Commercial grain products in groups A-H (such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, cereal grains (e.g., quinoa, rice, and millet), waffles, pancakes, and pasta) are WGR if a whole grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient), and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ. The ingredients statements below show examples of grain products that meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

- **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 monoglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, monoglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.

- **Ingredients:** Water, whole-wheat flour, yeast, wheat gluten, contains less than 2% of each of the following: soybean oil, sugar, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), fumaric acid, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate.

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain product contains more than one whole grain, the adult day care center must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that states the weight of all whole grains and the weight of all other creditable grains. The ingredients statement below shows an example.

- **Ingredients:** Unbleached enriched wheat flour [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid], water, whole-wheat flour, whole oats, sugar, yeast, soybean oil, salt.

To meet the CACFP WGR criteria, the product’s PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains (whole-wheat flour and whole oats) is more than the weight of the other creditable grains (unbleached enriched wheat flour). For more information on PFS forms, see “Product formulation statements” in section 2.
3 | Meal Components

**Grains**

**WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals**

Cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular) such as oatmeal are WGR if the first ingredient is a whole grain, and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ; and the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a cooked breakfast cereal that is WGR, provided it meets the sugar limit.

- **Ingredients:** Whole-grain rolled oats, sugar, natural flavors, salt.

For examples of how to determine if cooked breakfast cereals are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.

**WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals**

RTE breakfast cereals are WGR if the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified; and the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a RTE breakfast cereal that is WGR, provided it meets the sugar limit.

- **Ingredients:** Whole-grain oat flour, sugar, corn flour, whole-wheat flour, rice flour, salt, calcium carbonate, disodium phosphate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, BHT (a preservative), yellow 5, yellow 6, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid.

For examples of how to determine if RTE breakfast cereals are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.
WGR criteria for commercial combination foods

Commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-I (such as pizza crust in pizza, noodles in lasagna, and breading or batter on meat, fish, or poultry) are WGR if a whole grain is the first grain ingredient, and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a combination food (breaded chicken nuggets) that is WGR because a whole grain (whole-wheat flour) is the first and only grain ingredient.

- Ingredients: Boneless, skinless chicken breast with rib meat, water, whole wheat flour, contains 2% or less of the following: dried garlic, dried onion, salt, sea salt, soybean oil, spice, sugar, torula yeast, turmeric, yeast, yeast extract. Breading set in vegetable oil.

A commercial combination food that lists the ingredients for the grain portion separately is WGR if a whole grain is the first ingredient in the grain portion (or water is the first ingredient in the grain portion and a whole grain is the second ingredient in the grain portion), and the next two grain ingredients in the grain portion (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a combination food (breaded chicken patty) that lists the grain portion (breading) separately. This food is WGR because the first grain ingredient (whole-wheat flour) in the breading is a whole grain, the second grain in ingredient is an enriched grain, and the product does not contain any other grains.

- Ingredients: Chicken, water, salt and natural flavor. Breaded with: White whole-wheat flour, water, salt, enriched yellow corn flour, dried onion, dried garlic, dried yeast, brown sugar, extractives of paprika, and spices. Breading set in vegetable oil.

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain portion of the combination food contains more than one whole grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer. To meet the CACFP WGR criteria, the product’s PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains in the grain portion of the product is the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion. For more information on PFS forms, see “Product formulation statements” in section 2.

For examples of how to determine if commercial combination foods are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP.
WGR criteria for grain foods made on site

Grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility (such as breads, rolls, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) are WGR if a whole grain (or the combined weight of all whole grains) is equal to or greater than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe. For example, the following recipes are WGR:

- a muffin recipe that contains 2 pounds of whole-wheat flour and 2 pounds of enriched flour; and
- a bread recipe that contains ¾ pound of whole-grain flour, ½ pound of rolled oats, and 1 pound of enriched flour.

For examples of how to determine if grain foods made on site are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

WGR criteria for combination foods made on site

Combination foods made on site by the CACFP facility that contain a grain portion from groups A-I (such as pizza crust in pizza, noodles in lasagna, and baked chicken coated with bread crumbs or crushed cereal flakes) are WGR if the whole grain in the grain portion of the standardized recipe (or the combined weight of all whole grains in the grain portion of the standardized recipe) is equal to or greater than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the grain portion of the CACFP facility’s standardized recipe.
**Grains**

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Required documentation for grains

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that grain products and recipes comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR requirements. Acceptable documentation includes CN labels (if the grain portion is part of a meat/meat alternate) or PFS forms for commercial foods, and standardized recipes for foods made on site. For more information, see “Documentation for commercial products” in section 2. The CSDE will review this documentation as part of the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

CACFP facilities may choose to include information about the grains component on CACFP menus, for example, listing:

- whole-wheat bread, whole grain-rich bread, or enriched white bread instead of bread;
- brown rice or enriched rice instead of rice;
- enriched spaghetti instead of spaghetti;
- whole-corn tortilla instead of tortilla; and
- fortified whole-grain cereal instead of breakfast cereal.

Other acceptable methods for menu documentation of WGR grains include using abbreviations, such “WW bread” for whole-wheat bread or “WGR blueberry muffin” for whole grain-rich blueberry muffin; using symbols to indicate WGR foods; or having a check box to signify that a food is WGR. When using abbreviations or symbols, CACFP facilities should include a key on the menu to help families and staff understand what the symbols mean.

Alternatively, CACFP facilities may indicate the crediting and WGR information for the grains component on the daily production record or provide other menu documentation such as:

- a binder of nutrition information for commercial products that includes Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients statements;
- a list of all grain products served and whether they are whole grain, WGR, enriched, or fortified (breakfast cereals only);
- standardized recipes for foods made on site; and
- CN labels and PFS forms for commercial foods.

CACFP facilities must also maintain documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the CACFP sugar limit. Documentation should include the products’ Nutrition Facts label and the adult day care center’s calculation showing that the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. For information on calculating if a breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP.*
Information for school food authorities (SFAs) working with CACFP child care centers

The grain crediting and WGR criteria for the CACFP meal patterns for children are different from the grain crediting and WGR criteria for the NSLP and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns for grades K-12. All grains served in school meals for grades K-12 must be WGR.

Grain foods (excluding grain-based desserts) that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 will meet the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria, and may be served as WGR foods in CACFP meals and snacks. If the SFA serves the breakfast cereals to children in the CACFP and grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, the breakfast cereals must meet the NSLP WGR criteria and must also comply with the CACFP sugar limit.

Note: Grain foods that credit in the CACFP may or may not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. If SFAs serve the same grain foods to grades K-12 and children in CACFP child care centers, these foods must comply with the WGR criteria for grades K-12. SFAs must ensure that the same grain foods served to both groups meet the specific crediting and WGR criteria for each meal pattern.

Noncreditable foods in the grains component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the grains component include, but are not limited to:

- products that are do not contain a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ as the first ingredient (excluding water);
- noncreditable ingredients such as oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours);
- breakfast cereals that contain more than 6 grams of sugars per ounce; and
- grain-based desserts such as brownies, cookies, cake, coffee cake, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), sweet pie crusts, rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding. For more information, see “Grain-based desserts” in this section.

CACFP facilities should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the grains component. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” at the beginning of this section, and the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP.
Resources for crediting grains

The resources below assist CACFP facilities with crediting foods as the grain component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (USDA):

- Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (USDA):

- Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (USDA):

- Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP (CSDE):

- Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grain in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit1.xlsx

- Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit2.xlsx

- Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit3.xlsx

- Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit4.xlsx

- Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit5.xlsx

- Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars (USDA):

- 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):
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- Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrainsCACFP.pdf

- Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP (USDA):

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

- Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Q&As:
  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:

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

- Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP (CSDE):

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
CACFP Best Practices

The USDA’s optional best practices help CACFP facilities to provide the healthiest environment for children, and ensure they are getting the optimal benefit from CACFP meals. The CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to follow these recommendations.

Milk

- Serve only unflavored milk to all children. The CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk for ages 2-5. For ages 6 and older, milk must be unflavored low-fat or unflavored or flavored fat-free (skim) milk. The USDA and CSDE encourage CACFP facilities to serve only unflavored milk.

- If serving flavored milk to children ages 6 years and older, use the Nutrition Facts Label to select flavored milk that contains no more than 22 grams of sugars per 8 fluid ounces. If flavored milk within this sugar limit is not available, choose the flavored milk with the lowest amount of sugar.

Grains

- Provide at least two servings of WGR grains per day. The CACFP meal patterns for children require at least one serving of WGR grains per day. WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains (every grain ingredient is whole grain) and foods that contain a blend of whole (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

Meat and meat alternates

- Serve only lean meats, nuts, and legumes.

- Limit processed meats to no more than one serving per week. Processed meats and processed poultry (e.g., sausages, luncheon meats, bacon, and beef jerky) are products preserved by smoking, curing, salting, or the addition of chemical preservatives. Processed meats are sources of sodium and saturated fats. For more information, see “Commercial products with added liquids, binders, and extenders” in the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” section.

- Serve only natural cheeses and choose low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses. Natural cheese is cheese that is produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. For more information, see “Cheese” in the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” section.
Vegetables and fruits

- Make at least one of the two required snack components a vegetable or a fruit. This helps CACFP menus provide healthier snacks that meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- Serve a variety of fruits and choose whole fruits (fresh, canned, frozen, and dried) more often than juice. The CACFP meal patterns for children allow pasteurized full-strength juice to meet the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. For more information, see “Juice limit” in the “Fruits Component” section.

- Provide at least one serving each of dark green vegetables, red/orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables each week. These are the five vegetable subgroups recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the vegetables group of Choose MyPlate. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP.

Additional best practices

- Incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods into meals. For more information, see the USDA’s Farm to Preschool webpage and the CSDE’s Farm to School webpage.

- Limit purchased pre-fried foods to no more than one serving per week. The CACFP meal patterns for children prohibit deep-fat frying foods, i.e., cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat, but allows pre-fried foods. Pre-fried foods are commercially prepared foods such as meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables that are fried by the manufacturer during preparation. They are usually cooked by the food service operation in the oven or microwave. Pre-fried foods include refrigerated or frozen items that are breaded or battered, most frozen potato products, and most frozen products described as “crispy” or “crunchy.” Examples include chicken nuggets, chicken patties, fish sticks, french fries, tater tots, hash browns, and onion rings.

- Avoid serving noncreditable foods that are sources of added sugars. Examples include sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam and syrup), mix-in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, or cookie pieces), and sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks or sodas). Note: The USDA does not allow CACFP facilities to use CACFP funds to purchase these noncreditable foods. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” in this section, the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs, and the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

For more information on best practices and planning healthy menus to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, see the CSDE’s Planning Healthy Meals in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
This section addresses the meal service requirements for the CACFP, including family-style meal service, children’s intent to participate in the meal service, water availability, meals consumed off site, and offer versus serve.

**Family-style Meal Service**

The goal of the CACFP is to provide nutritious meals to young children and help them establish good eating habits at a young age. Family-style meal service enhances this goal by establishing a pleasant eating environment that supports and promotes mealt ime as a learning experience. It encourages supervising adults to set a personal example and provide educational activities that are centered on foods. The USDA and the CSDE strongly encourage family-style meal service in all CACFP child care facilities.

Family style is an optional type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from communal platters or bowls of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. This approach allows children to identify and be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good eating habits. It also helps young children develop motor skills and the dexterity and hand strength needed to serve foods.

Unlike other types of meal service (such as cafeteria lines, vended meals, pre-plated service, and offer versus serve), family-style meals allow some latitude in initial serving sizes of food because additional servings of each food are readily available at each table and more can be served at any time. When a complete family-style service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer some meal components in a family-style manner, particularly when smaller children are being served or when a new food item is being introduced.

To ensure CACFP compliance when implementing family-style meal service, CACFP facilities must follow the practices below.

- A sufficient amount of prepared food and milk must be placed on each table to provide the full-required portions of each food component for all children at the table, and to accommodate the supervising adults, if they eat with the children.

- Children must be allowed to serve the food components themselves, with the exception of beverages such as milk and juice. During the course of the meal, supervising adults are responsible for actively encouraging each child to serve themselves the full-required meal pattern component. If a child initially refuses a food
component or does not accept the full-required portion, the supervising adults should offer the food component to the child again.

- Supervising adults who choose to serve beverages (including milk and juice) directly to the children must serve the required minimum quantity to each child. For example, children ages 3-5 must be served ¾ cup of milk at breakfast, lunch, and supper.

- Centers and day care homes that use family style meal service cannot claim second meals for reimbursement.

Meals that follow these guidelines are reimbursable, even if supervising adults do not eat with the children. However, the CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to assist in the development of healthy eating practices by ensuring that supervising adults eat with the children and model healthy eating behaviors.

The resources below provide more information on family-style meal service in the CACFP.

- Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Supplement E: Support for Family Style Meals (USDA):

- USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
**Intent to Participate in the Meal Service**

For a CACFP facility to claim a meal or snack for CACFP reimbursement, children must participate in the meal service or have the intent to participate in the meal service. A child who makes no attempt (i.e., has no intent) to join other children at the meal or snack cannot be included in the reimbursable meal count, even if he or she was asked by the supervising adult to participate.

CACFP regulations allow for reimbursement of meals that are served and eaten by enrolled participants. They do not allow for reimbursement of ordered or plated meals. If a CACFP facility uses pre-plated meals or supervising adults serve the children, it may be difficult to judge the child’s intent to participate in the meal service. If a child refuses a meal that is pre-plated or served by a supervising adult, the CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. The child must show intent, for example:

- coming willingly to the table;
- helping himself or herself to food or asking to be served; and
- attempting to eat the meal.

The child does not have to eat the meal for the CACFP facility to claim the meal for reimbursement, but the child must demonstrate the intent to eat.

When a child who clearly has no intent to participate is forced to come to the table or forced to put food on his or her plate, the CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. A child may not have the intent to participate in a meal for many reasons, such as behavior issues or being sick, tired, angry, or upset. The scenarios in table 4-1 help to illustrate the principle of a child’s intent to eat and when CACFP facilities can claim CACFP meals and snacks.
### Table 4-1. Examples of child’s intent to eat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Can CACFP facility claim the meal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A child typically chooses not to participate in the meal service. A teacher forces the child to come and sit at the table, and serves the child some food. The child does not eat.</td>
<td>No. The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has not chosen (i.e., has no intent) to participate in the meal. Since the teacher knows this child typically does not eat, it would be clear that the child did not intend to participate in the meal. If the child willingly comes to the table, chooses to take a serving of food, but then does not eat, the meal is reimbursable. In this case, the child has the intent to eat, even if he or she did not follow through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child who normally participates in the meal service comes to the table then chooses not to take any food.</td>
<td>No. The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has chosen not to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At snack time, a child is crying and upset over an altercation with another child. The teacher asks her to come to the table but she refuses.</td>
<td>No. The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has chosen not to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child willingly comes to the table at mealtime. He helps himself to several meal components, takes one bite, then stops eating because he does not feel well.</td>
<td>Yes. The CACFP facility may claim the meal for reimbursement because the child chose to participate and had the intent to eat, even though he changed his mind when he did not feel well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child gets sick just before lunch. She is lying on a cot, waiting for her parent to pick her up.</td>
<td>No. The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child does not have the intent to participate in the meal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Water Availability**

USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: *Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* summarizes the requirements for water availability in the CACFP. The *Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act* requires that CACFP facilities must make drinking water available to children, as nutritionally appropriate. Throughout the day (including mealtimes), water must be made available to children to drink upon their request. CACFP facilities can also choose to make water available for children to self-serve, for example:

- providing disposable cups near sinks that are available to children, with a step stool if children are unable to reach the sink; and

- providing covered water pitchers and disposable cups if water fountains are not available.

While drinking water must be made available to children during mealtimes, it is not part of the reimbursable meal or snack and cannot be served instead of fluid milk. Additionally, if juice is served as one of the two required snack components, water cannot be served as a choice instead of juice.

Caregivers should not serve young children too much water before and during mealtimes. Excess water may reduce the amount of food and milk that children consume. CACFP facilities should serve water with snacks when no other beverage is being served. Water should also be made available instead of high-calorie, sweetened beverages that are served outside mealtimes, such as juice drinks, soda, and sports drinks. **Note:** The CSDE recommends not serving these types of sweetened beverages in child care programs. For more information, see the CSDE’s *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

If safe water is not readily available in a facility, purchasing water for children is a reasonable and allowable cost for CACFP facilities. However, purchasing water for consumption by adults or CACFP facility employees is not an allowable cost.

For more information, see USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: *Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities.*
Meals Consumed Off Site

The USDA regulations define meals as foods meeting the nutrition requirements that are served to enrolled participants at the CACFP facility. CACFP facilities receive reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children on the premises. A meal consumed off site is not reimbursable because a child who has left the premises is no longer participating in the activities of the institution.

If a child leaves the meal service early, uneaten meal or snack components cannot be packed “to go.” By leaving the facility and consuming the food off site, the child is not participating in the meal or snack service with the rest of the group. CACFP facilities cannot claim these meals and snacks for CACFP reimbursement.

The CACFP is a congregate feeding program intended to provide meals that are consumed on site unless children are on an approved field trip. Meals served on field trips are reimbursable if they meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements, and are served and consumed as part of a related function of the CACFP facility.

Offer versus Serve

Offer versus serve (OVS) is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack. OVS is only allowed in:

- CACFP at-risk afterschool programs; and
- CACFP centers that serve meals prepared by a CACFP facility participating in the NSLP and SBP. For information on the school meal patterns, see the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs and Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpages.

Generally, OVS is not considered appropriate for young children because it may interfere with CACFP nutrition goals and the CACFP facility’s efforts to introduce new foods to children. The USDA encourages CACFP institutions to consider using family-style meal service as a way to provide younger children some choice in the types and amounts of food selected. For more information, see “Family-style Meal Service” in this section.

CACFP institutions that may benefit from the use of OVS include those caring for school-age children in outside-school-hours care centers or at-risk afterschool care centers. These schools or community-based centers could be operated by the school or CACFP facility, or by another CACFP institution that contracts with the CACFP facility for meals. Eligible CACFP facilities that choose to implement OVS must notify CSDE. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP, and the USDA’s handout, Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP.
Note: In Connecticut, all at-risk afterschool centers currently operate under the NSLP, not the CACFP. The OVS requirements for the NSLP are different from the OVS requirements for the CACFP. For more information, see the CSDE’s Offer Versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

OVS in CACFP at-risk afterschool centers
Table 4-2 summarizes the OVS requirements for CACFP meals in at-risk afterschool centers.

- For a reimbursable breakfast, the CACFP center must offer at least four food items and the child must select at least three food items.
- For a reimbursable lunch or supper, the CACFP center must offer all five food components and the child must select at least three food components.

For more information on OVS, see the CSDE’s handout, Offer Versus Serve in At-risk Afterschool Centers.
### Table 4-2. OVS requirements for CACFP meals in at-risk afterschool centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>CACFP facility must offer</th>
<th>Child must select</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>A least four food items from three food components</td>
<td>At least three food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. One serving of milk (^2), (^3)</td>
<td>items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. One serving of vegetables and fruits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. One serving of grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. One serving of meat/meat alternates or one additional serving of fruits and vegetables or grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch and supper</strong></td>
<td>Five Components (^1)</td>
<td>At least three food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. One serving of milk (^3)</td>
<td>components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. One serving of fruits One serving of vegetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. One serving of grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. One serving of meat/meat alternates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The serving size for each component must be at least the minimum required quantities in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

\(^2\) The four food items cannot include two serving of milk.

\(^3\) Milk must be unflavored low-fat or unflavored fat-free. Flavored fat-free milk can be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends only unflavored milk.
OVS in NSLP and SBP meals

The CACFP regulations permit the substitution of the NSLP meal pattern, including the use of OVS, when meals are prepared by CACFP facilities and served by schools or other institutions participating in the CACFP. Table 4-3 summarizes the OVS requirements for centers operating under the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

- At breakfast, the meal must offer at least four food items and the child must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered).

- At lunch, the meal must offer all five components and the child must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full portion (minimum serving size) of at least two other components.

OVS must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch but is optional for breakfast. For junior high, middle schools and elementary schools, OVS is optional for both breakfast and lunch. For all grades other than high school, the local CACFP facility makes the decision of whether to implement OVS.

For CACFP facilities receiving meals from CACFP facilities, OVS is an option for breakfast, lunch and supper, but not for snack. CACFP facilities electing this option must implement OVS in accordance with the method used by the CACFP facility providing the meals. OVS cannot be used with snack services under either the NSLP or CACFP.

For more information, see the CSDE’s Offer Versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs webpage.
### Table 4-3. OVS requirements for NSLP and SBP meals in at-risk afterschool centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>CACFP facility must offer</th>
<th>Child must select</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td><strong>A least four food items from three food components</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. One serving of milk &lt;sup&gt;2,3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. One serving of vegetables and fruits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. One serving of grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. One serving of meat/meat alternates or one additional serving of fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch and supper</strong></td>
<td><strong>Five components</strong> &lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. One serving of milk &lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. One serving of fruits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. One serving of vegetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. One serving of grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. One serving of meat/meat alternates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>At least three food components</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. The serving size for each component must be at least the minimum daily required quantities in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The menu planner determines the daily serving size to meet the required weekly amounts for each component.

2. The four food items cannot include two serving of milk.

3. The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 require that schools offer a choice of at least two different varieties of milk, e.g., unflavored low-fat milk, unflavored fat-free milk, or flavored fat-free milk.
5 — Nutrition Policies

The CSDE strongly encourages all CACFP facilities to develop and implement nutrition policies that promote healthy practices for children, staff members, and families. Written policies benefit the child care program by helping to:

- identify the child care program’s plan for quality nutrition programs;
- document applicable federal and state requirements and accreditation standards;
- provide clear guidelines for staff members and families;
- standardize consistent practices between classrooms and among all staff members;
- communicate the child care program’s benefits to potential families;
- provide a basis to evaluate program activities and staff members;
- demonstrate the child care program’s commitment to children’s health and well-being;
- educate families regarding the child care program’s nutrition practices; and
- ensure compliance with best practices based on current science, public health research, and national health recommendations.

The CSDE’s *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* addresses comprehensive nutrition and physical activity policies to create the healthiest possible environment for infants and children in child care settings. It is intended to help local and community child care, early education, and afterschool programs establish and implement policies and practices that encourage healthy lifestyles in children.

The action guide includes best practices for promoting healthy eating and physical activity based on current science, public health research, and national recommendations and standards. It addresses six policy components for creating a healthy child care environment, including:

- Nutrition Standards (CCCNS);
- Eating Environment;
- Nutrition Education;
- Physical Activity;
- Communication and Promotion; and
- Evaluation.

The CSDE strongly encourages all CACFP facilities to use the *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* to develop and implement nutrition policies for all foods and beverages available in child care. Following the policy recommendations in the action guide will help all Connecticut child care programs implement best practices for creating a healthy child care environment.
Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs

5 | Nutrition Policies

Child Care Meals and Snacks
When meals and snacks are provided by the CACFP facility, policies should address the program’s approach to feeding children, such as menu planning, nutrition standards, eating environment, meal schedules, family-style meal service, modeling healthy behaviors, and procedures for handling special dietary needs. The CACFP facility should adopt nutrition standards that address foods and beverages served throughout the child care environment, including CACFP meals and snacks, celebrations, learning experiences, and other activities where foods and beverages are provided by the child care program or families. For more information, see the CSDE’s Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.

Family-provided Foods
Situations may arise when families want to bring food for their child as a substitution for a CACFP meal component or an entire meal. This may be due to cultural, religious, or personal food preferences, or a special dietary need. If a CACFP facility allows parents to provide foods and beverages from home, it must clearly define the policies and requirements for making any substitutions or modifications to the planned CACFP menus.

CACFP facilities must carefully consider food safety issues and the liability that might arise if a child gets a foodborne illness as a result of allowing families to bring food from home. Connecticut’s Public Health Code 19-13-B42 applies to all foods served in child care centers and emergency shelters, regardless of whether they are prepared on site or brought from home.

Public Health Code 19-13-B42 does not apply to family day care homes. However, family day care homes must follow proper procedures to ensure the safety of meals served to children in the CACFP. For information on food safety, see the CSDE’s Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Note: During the 2017 Connecticut legislative session, Senate Bill 901 was passed to adopt the FDA Food Code. The new code will replace the following current food regulations: 19-13-B40, 19-13-B42, 19-13-B48, and 19-13-B49. Public Act 18-168 (approved June 13, 2018) included language that extends the date for adoption of the FDA Food Code to “Not later than January 1, 2019.” Contact your local health department for more information. Effective October 1, 2017, hot and cold holding temperatures for foods that require temperature control to prevent bacterial growth must follow the FDA Food Code.

Program policies should address nutrition and food safety issues for foods brought from home. Nutrition standards for allowable foods and beverages should be based on the CACFP
meal patterns for children and the CCCNS. Policies should specify food restrictions for nutrition reasons, e.g., prohibiting foods of poor nutritional value (such as soda, iced tea, fruit drinks, cakes, cookies, and candy), either for an individual child’s consumption or to be shared with all children for parties and other events. The CSDE strongly recommends that CACFP facilities follow the CCCNS for all foods and beverages available in the child care setting, including those allowed from home.

Policies should also address food safety standards for any foods allowed from home, including:

- clearly labeling all foods with the child’s name, date, and type of food;
- storing foods at an appropriate temperature until they are eaten;
- prohibiting children from sharing lunches and snacks brought from home with other children; and
- restricting foods for food safety reasons, e.g., foods provided by families to be shared with other children for parties and other events cannot be homemade and must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods that are unopened and, when possible, individually wrapped.

The CSDE’s Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies provides policy recommendations and implementation strategies for family-provided meals and snacks. The CSDE’s guide, Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs, provides guidance on developing policies for meal modifications for special diets.

Note: The USDA’s final rule, Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, allows CACFP facilities to claim reimbursement for meals that contain one family-provided meal component. The USDA will be developing guidance on family-provided meal components for children without disabilities. As of the date of this publication, the USDA has not released policy guidance on the implementation requirements for this provision. Until the USDA guidance is released, CACFP facilities cannot claim reimbursement for meals that contain a family-provided meal component for children without a disability that restricts their diet. For more information, see “Family-provided Foods” in the CSDE’s guide, Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs.
Training Staff Members

Program staff members are critical to the successful implementation of the CACFP facility’s nutrition policy. All staff members need training on the nutrition policy for it to be effective. Be sure to include all staff members involved with the child care program, such as program directors, teachers, teacher’s aides, food service personnel (e.g., directors, coordinators, cooks, and general workers), and consultants (e.g., registered dietitians, nurses, and education consultants). Family day care home sponsors should address nutrition policy as part of their training for providers.

Written policies assist teachers and other staff members in responding appropriately and consistently to any food and nutrition issues in the child care setting. Training helps staff members understand why the nutrition policy is important, and its effect on children’s overall health. Training also helps provide clear and consistent messages regarding the nutrition services component of the CACFP facility. Staff members can better understand the program’s expectations for themselves, the children, and their families. This enables all child care personnel to better implement local nutrition policies and prepares them to deal with any problems that might arise. For more information, see the CSDE’s Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.
6 — Resources

This section includes links to federal and state regulations, policy memoranda, websites, and the CSDE’s guides, resource lists, forms, and handouts.

CSDE Forms and Handouts

All forms and handouts are available on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs and Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpages.

Crediting handouts

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP:

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP:

Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP:

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children:

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCerealsCACFP.pdf

Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedCACFP.pdf

Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP:

Crediting Juice in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditLegumesCACFP.pdf
Resources

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP:

Crediting Soup in the CACFP:

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditTofuCACFP.pdf

Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP:

Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP:

How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP:

Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs:

Offer Versus Serve in At-risk Afterschool Centers:

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP:

Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP (October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019):

Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/stdrecipeCACFP.doc

Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP:

Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP (Effective October 1, 2019):

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNlabelCACFP.pdf
Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP:

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP:

**Crediting worksheets**

Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Purchased Grains in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit1.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AdultCredit2.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AdultCredit3.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-Size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit4.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit5.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 6: Nutrition Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit6.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 7: Nutrition Standards for Soup:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit7.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 8: Nutrition Standards for Meat/Meat Alternates:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit8.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 9: Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP:

Child Care Worksheet 10: Nutrient Analysis of Recipes:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit10.xlsx

**Menu forms for at-risk supper and snack**

At-risk Snack for Ages 6-18:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfatrisksnack618.doc

At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfatrisksnacksup618.doc
Two-weeks At-risk Supper for Ages 6-18:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfattrisksup2wk618.doc

Menu forms for breakfast, lunch, and snack

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfbreaklunchsnack12.doc

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 3-5:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfbreaklunchsnack35.doc

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 6-12:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfbreaklunchsnack612.doc

Menu forms for breakfast and snack

Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfbreaksnacksnack35.doc

Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfbreakpmsnack35.doc

Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 6-12:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfbreakpmsnack612.doc

Menu forms for emergency shelters

AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfemergsnack618.doc

Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfemergbreaklunchsup618.doc
Menu forms for lunch and snack

AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfsnacklunchsnack35.doc

Menu forms for snack

AM and PM Snack for Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfsnackampm12.doc

AM and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfsnackampm35.doc

Two-week AM or PM Snack for Ages 3-5:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/mfsnack2wk35.doc

Production records

Any Meal:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/rcomponents.pdf

AM and PM Snack:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/pramsnackpmsnack.pdf

AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Emergency Shelters:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/premergsnack.pdf

AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prsnacklunchsnack.pdf

At-Risk Snack and Supper:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/pratrisksnacksup.pdf

Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prsnackbreaksnack.pdf
Breakfast and PM Snack:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prbreakpmsnack.pdf

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack (AM or PM):
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prbreaklunchsnack.pdf

Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Emergency Shelters:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/premergbreaklunchsup.pdf

Sample menus

Sample Cold Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menubreakcoldCACFP.pdf

Sample Hot Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menubreakhotCACFP.pdf

Sample Cold Lunch and Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:
Sample https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menulunchcoldCACFP.pdf

Sample Hot Lunch and Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menulunchhotCACFP.pdf

Sample Snack Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menusnackCACFP.pdf
CSDE Guides

Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs:

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies:

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs:

Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs:

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs:

Planning Healthy Meals in CACFP Child Care Programs:
CSDE Resource Lists

The CSDE resource lists are available on the CSDE’s Resources for Child Nutrition Programs webpage at https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs.

Child Nutrition Programs:

Competitive Foods:

Dietary Guidelines and Nutrition Information:

Food Safety:

Health and Achievement:

Menu Planning and Food Production:

Nutrition Education:

Physical Activity and Physical Education:

Promoting Healthy Weight:

Special Diets:

Wellness Policies for Schools and Child Care:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesWP.pdf
USDA CACFP Crediting Resources


Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (English):

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (Spanish):

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu Webinar (English):

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu Webinar (Spanish):

Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (English):

Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (Spanish):

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (English):

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (Spanish):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPSugarCalcYogurtSP.pdf

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars (English):

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars (Spanish):

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (English):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-%E2%80%9Cchoose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-added-sugars%E2%80%9D

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (Spanish):

Choose Yogurts That Are Lower in Added Sugars (English):

Choose Yogurts That Are Lower in Added Sugars (Spanish):
Choose Yogurts That Are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (English):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-choose-yogurts-are-lower-added-sugars

Choose Yogurts That Are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (Spanish):

Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP (English):

Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP (Spanish):

Methods for Healthy Cooking (English):

Methods for Healthy Cooking (Spanish):

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (English):

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (Spanish):

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (English):

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (Spanish):

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast Webinar (English):

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast Webinar (Spanish):

Serving Milk in the CACFP (English):

Serving Milk in the CACFP (Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMilk18SP.pdf
Websites

CACFP Afterschool Programs (USDA):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-programs

CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-At-Risk-Afterschool-Care-Centers

CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Child-Care-Centers

CACFP Emergency Shelters (CSDE):

CACFP Family Day Care Homes (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Family-Day-Care-Homes

CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA):

CACFP Handbooks (USDA):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-handbooks

CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):

Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Nutrition-Programs

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs

Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs

Forms for CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Forms-CACFP-Child-Care-Centers

Forms for CACFP Homes (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Forms-for-CACFP-Family-Day-Care-Homes
Resources

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Manuals-and-Guides-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs

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

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning

Operational Memoranda for the CACFP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-the-CACFP

Planning Healthy Meals in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Planning-Healthy-Meals-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs

Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs

Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs
USDA Regulations and Policy

CACFP Policy Memos (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/policy

CACFP Regulations (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/regulations

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 2C-18 and 2H-18: Requirements for Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Centers and Family Day Care Homes:

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 4A-16, 5C-16 and 5H-16: New Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 3A-16, 4C-16 and 4H-16: Statements Supporting Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities in the Child Nutrition Programs:

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 11C-11 and 04H-11: Fluid Milk and Milk Substitutions in the CACFP:

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 03C-07 and 03H-07: Reimbursement for Meals Provided by Parents for Medical Reasons in CACFP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OMEarlierYears/OM03C07_03H07.pdf

Final Rule: Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24348):

Final Rule Correction: Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24348):

Final Rule: Child and Adult Care Food Program: At-Risk Afterschool Meals in Eligible States (75 FR 16325):
FNS Instruction 783-13, Revision 3: Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons: Jewish Schools, Institutions and Sponsors.

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296):

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):

Operational Memos for the CACFP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-the-CACFP

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

USDA Memo SP 08-2019 CACFP 02-2019 SFSP 02-2019: Update of Food Crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs:


USDA Memo CACFP 10-2017: Taking Food Components Offsite in the At-Risk Afterschool Component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

USDA Memo CACFP 17-2016: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Q&As:

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern:

USDA Memo SP 30-2017 CACFP 13-2017: Transition Period for the Updated Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns and the Updated National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Infant and CACFP meal patterns for children:

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:

USDA Memo SP 01-2016 CACFP 01-2016 SFSP 01-2016: Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs:

USDA Memo SP 11-2015v2 CACFP 10-2015 SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation

USDA Memo SP 27 CACFP 09-2015 SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement:

USDA Memo SP 10-2014 CACFP 05-2014 SFSP 10-2014 (v3): Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2012: The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Questions and Answers:
USDA Memo SP 35-2011 CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer vs. Serve and Family Style Meal Service:

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2009: Meal Disallowance Policies for Family Day Care Homes in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):
Glossary

**Administrative Review:** A periodic review of an institution’s operations of the Child Nutrition Programs, conducted by the Connecticut State Department of Education to monitor performance and assess compliance with all USDA regulations.

**alternate protein products (APP):** APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APP in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP*.

**at-risk afterschool care centers:** The at-risk afterschool meals component of the CACFP provides reimbursement for snacks and suppers served to children through age 18 who are participating in afterschool programs in eligible (at-risk) areas. The program provides funds to public and private nonprofit (federal tax-exempt) and for-profit organizations, and schools, for nutritious snacks and suppers served as part of organized programs of care, which are known to help reduce or prevent children’s involvement in high-risk behaviors. All snacks must meet the requirements of the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, see the USDA’s *CACFP Afterschool Programs* webpage.

**bran:** The protective coating around the whole-grain kernel that is rich in nutrients, fiber, and other health promoting substances called phytochemicals. Bran is not a whole grain. **Note:** Bran credits in the CACFP meal patterns but does not credit in the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.

**CACFP facilities:** Child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, and at-risk afterschool care centers that participate in the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program.

**CACFP meal patterns for children:** The required food components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. The CACFP meal patterns for children apply to children ages 1-12; children ages 15 and younger of migrant workers; children of any age with disabilities; and children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool care centers and emergency shelters. For more information, see section 1 and the CSDE’s handout, *CACFP Meal Patterns for Children*. 
CACFP meal patterns for infants: The required food components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to infants from birth through 11 months to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to infants. For more information, see the CACFP Infant Meal Pattern, and the CSDE’s Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

CACFP sponsor: A public or private nonprofit organization that is entirely responsible for the administration of the CACFP in one or more day care homes, child care centers, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, or adult day care centers. In some situations, for-profit institutions may also be eligible to participate in the CACFP. For more information, see Section 226.2 of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): The USDA’s federally assisted meal program providing nutritious meals and snacks to children in child care centers, family day care homes, and emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to children participating in eligible at-risk afterschool care programs. The CACFP also provides meals and snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. For more information, see the USDA’s CACFP webpage and the CSDE’s CACFP webpage.

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Products eligible for CN labeling include main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. The CN label will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as grains, vegetables, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, see “Child Nutrition (CN) Label” in section 2, the CSDE’s handout, Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP, and the USDA’s Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, see the CSDE’s Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CCCNS): The CSDE’s recommended guidelines for the nutritional content of all foods and beverages served throughout the child care environment, including CACFP meals and snacks, celebrations and any other activities where foods and beverages are provided by the child care program or families. The CCCNS reflects current nutrition science and national health recommendations, and promotes whole or minimally processed nutrient-rich foods that are low in fat, added sugars, and sodium. For more information, see the CSDE’s Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.

creditable food: A food or beverage that can be counted toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see the meal components in section 3, and the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

creditable grains: Grains that credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns, including whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP. Note: Bran and germ credit in the CACFP meal patterns but do not credit in the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP.

cycle menu: A series of menus planned for a specific period of time, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help CACFP facilities to increase variety, control food cost, and save time. For more information, see “Using cycle menus” in section 2.

deep-fat frying: Cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat. The USDA’s final rule for the CACFP prohibits deep-fat frying foods on site in CACFP facilities.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans: A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly publish the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education and information programs. For more information, see the Dietary Guidelines for Americans webpage.

disability: A condition in which a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs.

edible portion: The portion of a food that can actually be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.
**enriched grains:** Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have certain vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B₁), riboflavin (B₂), niacin (B₃), folic acid, and iron. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP*.

**enrichment:** Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, see “enriched grains” in this section.

**family-style meal service:** A type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from common platters or bowls of food with assistance from supervising adults. For more information, see “Family-style Meal Service” in section 4.

**fluid milk substitutes:** Nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) that can be used as a substitute for fluid milk in the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. For reimbursable meals and snacks, nondairy beverages served to children without disabilities must comply with the USDA’s nutrition standards for milk substitutes. For more information, see “USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*.

**food components:** The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the CACFP, including milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains. For information on the individual food components, see section 3 and the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.

**fortification:** Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage, or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (e.g., fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body’s absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., an “energy” bar made from processed flour that is fortified with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

**full serving:** The quantity of food that meets the minimum required amount of a specific component in the CACFP meal patterns.
**full-strength fruit or vegetable juice:** An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP*.

**germ:** The sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel that contains B vitamins, vitamin E, trace minerals, healthy fats, antioxidants, and phytochemicals. Germ is not a whole grain. **Note:** Germ credits in the CACFP meal patterns but does not credit in the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.

**juice drink:** A product resembling juice that contains full-strength juice along with added water and possibly other ingredients, such as sweeteners, spices, or flavorings. Juice drinks do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

**meal:** A grain made by coarsely grinding corn, oats, wheat, or other grains. Meal credits toward the USDA’s meal patterns only if it is whole grain, enriched, or fortified.

**meals:** See “reimbursable meals” in this section.

**meat alternates:** Foods that provide a similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products; cheese; eggs; cooked dry beans or peas; nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut and coconut); tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume); and yogurt and soy yogurt (plain or flavored) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces. For more information, see “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” in section 3 and the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.

**medical statement:** A document that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate dietary accommodations for children with special dietary needs. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*, and the CSDE’s *Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.

**menu item:** Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items.

**menu of record:** The official menu that documents exactly what is served each day in the CACFP facility. This provides a record of the meal pattern components and portion sizes served to all enrolled children and infants, and provides documentation for the number of CACFP meals claimed for reimbursement.
**Glossary**

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, see the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program webpage](#).

**natural cheese:** Cheese that is produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheeses do not include pasteurized process cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, or pasteurized process cheese products.

**noncreditable foods:** Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward any meal pattern components in the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” in section 3, and the CSDE’s handout, [Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#).

**noncreditable grains:** Grain ingredients and products that do not contribute toward the grains component of the CACFP meal patterns. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*, and the CSDE’s guide, [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#), which is available on the [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

**nutrient-dense foods:** Foods and beverages that provide vitamins, minerals, and other substances that contribute to adequate nutrient intakes or may have positive health effects, and contain little or no solid fats, added sugars, refined starches, or sodium. Ideally, these foods and beverages are also in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. Examples include all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry (when prepared with little or no added solid fats, sugars, refined starches, and sodium). The term “nutrient dense” indicates the nutrients and other beneficial substances in a food have not been “diluted” by the addition of calories from added solid fats, sugars, or refined starches, or by the solid fats naturally present in the food.

**nutrient-rich foods:** See “nutrient-dense foods” in this section.
nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The nutrition requirements for nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk and meet the following nutrients based on a 1-cup serving (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 500 international units (IU) of vitamin A; 100 IU of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, see “USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP.

offer versus serve (OVS): An optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack. OVS is only allowed in CACFP at-risk afterschool programs and CACFP facilities that serve meals prepared by a school food authority (CACFP facility) participating in the National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP). For more information, see “Offer versus Serve” in section 4.

other foods: See “noncreditable foods” in this section.

ounce equivalent: The amount of food that meets the USDA’s requirement for 1 ounce of the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns, effective October 1, 2019. An ounce equivalent of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as pretzels, bread sticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as muffins and pancakes). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP.

point-of-service (POS) meal count: A meal count taken as the children are seated and eating.

potable water: Water that is safe for human consumption.

pre-fried foods: Commercially prepared foods such as meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables that are fried by the manufacturer during preparation. These foods are usually cooked by the food service operation in the oven or microwave. Pre-fried foods include refrigerated or frozen items that are breaded or battered, most frozen potato products, and most frozen products described as “crispy” or “crunchy.” Examples include chicken nuggets, chicken patties, fish sticks, french fries, tater tots, hash browns, and onion rings.

primary grain ingredient: The greatest grain ingredient by weight in a food.

product fact sheet: See “product specification sheet” in this section.
**product formulation statement (PFS):** An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how the product credits toward the USDA’s meal pattern requirements, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in a PFS must match a description in the USDA’s FBG. Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. CACFP facilities must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy. For more information, see “Product formulation statement” in section 2 and the CSDE’s handouts, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*.

**product specification sheet:** Manufacturer sales literature that provides various information about the company’s products. These materials do not provide the specific crediting information that is required on a product formulation statement, and cannot be used to determine a product’s contribution toward the USDA’s meal pattern components.

**production record:** A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare CACFP meals. Production records demonstrate how meals contribute to the required food components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. Production records are only required for CACFP sponsors that follow the NLSP meal pattern. For more information, see “Production Records” in section 2, and the CSDE’s sample production records on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

**recognized medical authority:** A state-licensed health care professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law and is recognized by the State Department of Public Health. In Connecticut, recognized medical authorities include physicians, physician assistants, doctors of osteopathy, and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

**refined grains:** Grains that have been processed to remove the bran and germ, making the product less nutritious than whole grains. Refined grains may or may not be enriched. For more information, see “enriched grains” in this section.

**reimbursable meals:** Meals and snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the CACFP regulations, and are eligible for USDA funds.

**School Breakfast Program (SBP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, see the CSDE’s School Breakfast Program webpage.
school food authority (SFA): The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and that has the legal authority to operate the school meals programs in those schools.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, or number of pieces or slices of a food or beverage. CACFP facilities must provide the minimum serving sizes in the USDA’s meal patterns for meals and snacks to be reimbursable.

standardized recipe: A recipe that a given food service operation has tested and adapted for use. This recipe produces the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment, and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield and portion size. For more information, see “Standardized Recipes” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP.

supplements: Reimbursable snacks served in the CACFP.

USDA Foods: Foods available to the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE Food Distribution Program. For more information, see the USDA’s Food Distribution Programs webpage, and the CSDE’s Food Distribution Program webpage.

wheat bread: Bread that often has wheat flour or enriched wheat flour (not whole-wheat flour) as an ingredient. Wheat bread is not whole grain unless it is labeled “whole-wheat bread.” Wheat bread is low in fiber unless the manufacturer has added fiber.

whole foods: Foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, and sodium.

whole fruits and vegetables: Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, or sodium.

whole-grain flour: Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Flour or meal that does not contain all parts of the grain is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour.
**whole grain-rich (WGR):** For the CACFP, WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains (every grain ingredient is whole grain) and foods that contain a blend of whole (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For information on identifying WGR foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP* and *Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP*. The WGR requirement does not apply to infants (birth through 11 months). **Note:** For school nutrition programs that work with CACFP child care centers, the CACFP WGR definition is different from the WGR definition for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP because it does not require a specific limit for noncreditable grains. Foods that meet the WGR definition for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP will comply with the CACFP WGR criteria. However, foods that meet the CACFP WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12.

**whole grains:** Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP*.

**whole-wheat bread:** Bread that contains the whole grain, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Whole-wheat flour will be listed as the first grain ingredient.