Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12

Connecticut State Department of Education

Project Director
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About this Guide

This guide contains information and guidance on planning menus to meet USDA’s meal patterns for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, based on USDA regulations and policy and Connecticut statutes and regulations. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. This guide applies to all public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP and SBP.

The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 are defined by the final rule, *Nutrition Standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (77 FR 4088), as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296). The USDA provides additional guidance on the meal pattern requirements through the policy memos on the USDA’s FNS Documents & Resources webpage. Links to the USDA’s regulations and final rules for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns are available in the “Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs” section of the CSDE’s Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Each section of this guide contains links to other sections when appropriate, and to websites with relevant information and resources. These can be accessed by clicking on the blue text throughout the guide.

The contents of this guide are subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance regarding the preschool meal patterns. Please check the CSDE’s Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 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.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA.
USDA Nationwide Waivers for COVID-19

Pursuant to the COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act (H.R. 6201, Title II), and the exceptional circumstances of the current COVID-19 public health emergency, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has established a variety of nationwide waivers to support access to nutritious meals, while enforcing recommendations from public health experts with regard to social distancing measures. For more information, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Operation of Child Nutrition Programs during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreaks webpage.

School food authorities (SFAs) must apply to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to implement any of the current USDA waivers. If a sponsor has received approval from the CSDE to implement any of the national waiver provisions, these approvals supersede the applicable requirements in this guide. For more information, visit the CSDE’s Operation of Child Nutrition Programs during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreaks webpage.

For information on the NSLP and SBP meal pattern flexibilities for 2021-22, refer to “Meal Pattern Flexibilities During COVID-19” in section 1.
CSDE Contact Information

For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.

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For information on the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), visit the CSDE’s Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
# Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<td>APP</td>
<td>alternate protein product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Administrative Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
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<td>C.G.S.</td>
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<td>CSDE</td>
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<td>FBG</td>
<td>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Food Distribution Program</td>
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<td>FDA</td>
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<td>FNS</td>
<td>Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture</td>
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<td>HHFKA</td>
<td>Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Institute of Child Nutrition</td>
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<td>LEA</td>
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<td>RCCI</td>
<td>residential child care institution</td>
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