

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

School Year 2022-23 (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has different crediting requirements for the milk component of the meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP).

- The meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 are defined by the USDA regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR Part 210](#)), SBP ([7 CFR Part 220](#)), and SMP ([7 CFR Part 215](#)). The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.
- The preschool meal patterns follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns and are defined by the CACFP regulations ([7 CFR 226.20\(c\)](#)).



In addition to the USDA's meal pattern requirements, milk and nondairy milk substitutes sold to students in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must also comply with the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.).

This document summarizes the federal and state milk requirements for each school nutrition program and provides applicable resources. School food authorities (SFAs) must ensure that milk meets the specific requirements for each school nutrition program and grade group. For additional guidance, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Operational Memorandum No. 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\), School Breakfast Program \(SBP\), Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program \(SMP\)](#).

For information on complying with the meal patterns for school nutrition programs, refer to the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#). For information on crediting foods, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages.

This information is subject to change as the USDA continues to issue policy guidance on the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. The CSDE will notify SFAs when new guidance is available.

Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

USDA Requirements for the Milk Component in the Meal Patterns for the NSLP, SBP, ASP, SSO, and SMP				
Requirement	Grades K-12		Preschoolers (Ages 1-4)	
	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP
R1: Fat Content	Must be low-fat or fat-free milk.	Same	Age 1: Must be whole milk Ages 2-4: Must be low-fat milk or fat-free milk	Same
R2: Flavored Milk	Allowed: Must be flavored low-fat or fat-free milk.	Same	Not allowed. Milk must be unflavored.	Same

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Requirement	Grades K-12		Preschoolers (Ages 1-4)	
	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP
<p>R3: Allowable Types of Milk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored * • Fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored * <p style="margin-left: 20px;">* This includes any of the following types of milk that meet the fat content restrictions: lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.</p> <p>Additional state requirements for milk in public schools: In addition to the USDA’s requirements, milk sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce. Milk that meets federal and state requirements is included in list 16 on the CSDE’s List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage.</p> <p>Resources Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage) List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored * • Fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored * <p style="margin-left: 20px;">* This includes any of the following types of milk that meet the fat content restrictions: lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.</p>	<p>Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored *</p> <p>Age 2-4: Low-fat milk or fat-free milk, unflavored *</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">* This includes any of the following types of milk that meet the fat content restrictions: lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.</p> <p>Note: Breastmilk meets the milk component and may be served in place of fluid milk.</p> <p>Additional state requirements for milk in public schools: In addition to the USDA’s requirements, milk sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce. Products that meet federal and state requirements are included in list 16 on the CSDE’s List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage.</p> <p>Resources Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage) List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage) Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Same</p>

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	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP
R4: Variety of Milk	Required: SFAs must serve at least two different choices of milk. At least one choice must be unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk.	Not required: SFAs may serve one type of allowable milk (such as unflavored low-fat milk) to all grades.	Not required: SFAs may serve one type of allowable milk (such as unflavored low-fat milk) to ages 2-4. Unflavored whole milk must be served to age 1.	Same

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Requirement	Grades K-12		Preschoolers (Ages 1-4)	
	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP
<p>R5: Nondairy Milk Substitutes for Children without a Disability</p>	<p>SFAs may choose to serve nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) to children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The child’s parent or guardian must submit a written request for a nondairy milk substitute. The nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes are defined by the NLSLP regulations (7 CFR 210.10). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, <i>Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs</i>.</p> <p>Note: SFAs cannot offer any other beverages (including water and juice) in place of milk for reimbursable meals.</p> <p>Additional state requirements for nondairy milk substitutes in public schools: In addition to the USDA’s requirements, nondairy milk substitutes sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners or more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Products that meet federal and state requirements are included in list 17 on the CSDE’s List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage.</p>	<p>Same</p>	<p>SFAs may choose to serve nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) to children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The child’s parent or guardian must submit a written request for a nondairy milk substitute. The nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes are defined by the NLSLP regulations (7 CFR 210.10). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, <i>Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs</i>.</p> <p>Note: SFAs cannot offer any other beverages (including water and juice) in place of milk for reimbursable meals.</p> <p>Additional state requirements for nondairy milk substitutes in public schools: In addition to the USDA’s requirements, nondairy milk substitutes sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners or more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Products that meet federal and state requirements are included in list 17 on the CSDE’s List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage.</p>	<p>Same</p>

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	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP	NSLP, SBP, and SSO	ASP and SMP
R5: Nondairy Milk Substitutes for Children Without a Disability, <i>continued</i>	Resources Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE) Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs (CSDE) Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage) List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage) USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010 and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions	Same	Resources Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE) Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs (CSDE) Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage) List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage) USDA Memo CACFP 17-2016: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the CACFP, Q&As USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010 and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions	Same

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Regulations and Policy

National School Lunch Program Regulations (7 CFR 210):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210>

Program Legislation and Regulations (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/program-legislation-regulations>

School Breakfast Program Regulations (7 CFR 220):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220>

Special Milk Program Regulations (7 CFR 215):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-215>

USDA Final Rule (77 FR 4088): Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs):

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

USDA Final Rule (81 FR 24347): CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516>

USDA Final Rule (84 FR 50287): Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/07/2022-02327/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium>

USDA Memo SP 04-2022 and CACFP 04-2022: Question and Answer

Guidance on the Final Rule Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Effective July 1, 2022:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/question-answer-final-rule-transitional-standards>

USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Effective July 1, 2022:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/sp052022-questions-answers-program-operators>

USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/flexibility-co-mingled-preschool-meals-questions-and-answers>

USDA Memo SP 38-2019: Meal Requirements under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Q&As for Program Operators:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/meal-requirements-under-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program>

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Websites and Resources

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASP_Handbook.pdf

CSDE Operational Memorandum 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM06-19.pdf>

Food Buying Guide Section 5: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Milk Component (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section5_Milk.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 5: Yield Table for Milk (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section5_MilkYieldTable.pdf

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs: Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Milk>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program/Documents#MilkK12>

Milk Component for Preschoolers (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Milk>

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

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Policy Memos for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources_Preschool_Meal_Patterns.pdf

Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Seamless-Summer-Option-SSO-of-the-NSLP>

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Special Milk Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Milk-Program>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison_Milk_Requirements_SNP.pdf.

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