

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

This guidance applies through September 30, 2021, to the meal patterns for preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. Effective October 1, 2021, the required amount for the grains component changes to ounce equivalents. For information on the preschool meal patterns and crediting foods, review the CSDE’s guide, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Breakfast cereals credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. “Breakfast cereals” are defined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (21 CFR 170.3(n)(4)) and include ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (such as puffed rice cereals, round or flaked cereal, and granola) and instant and regular hot cereals (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). RTE cereals can be eaten as sold and are typically fortified with vitamins and minerals.

To credit in the preschool meal patterns, breakfast cereals must:

- contain a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) as the first ingredient or be fortified;
- contain no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce; and
- provide the required volume or weight.

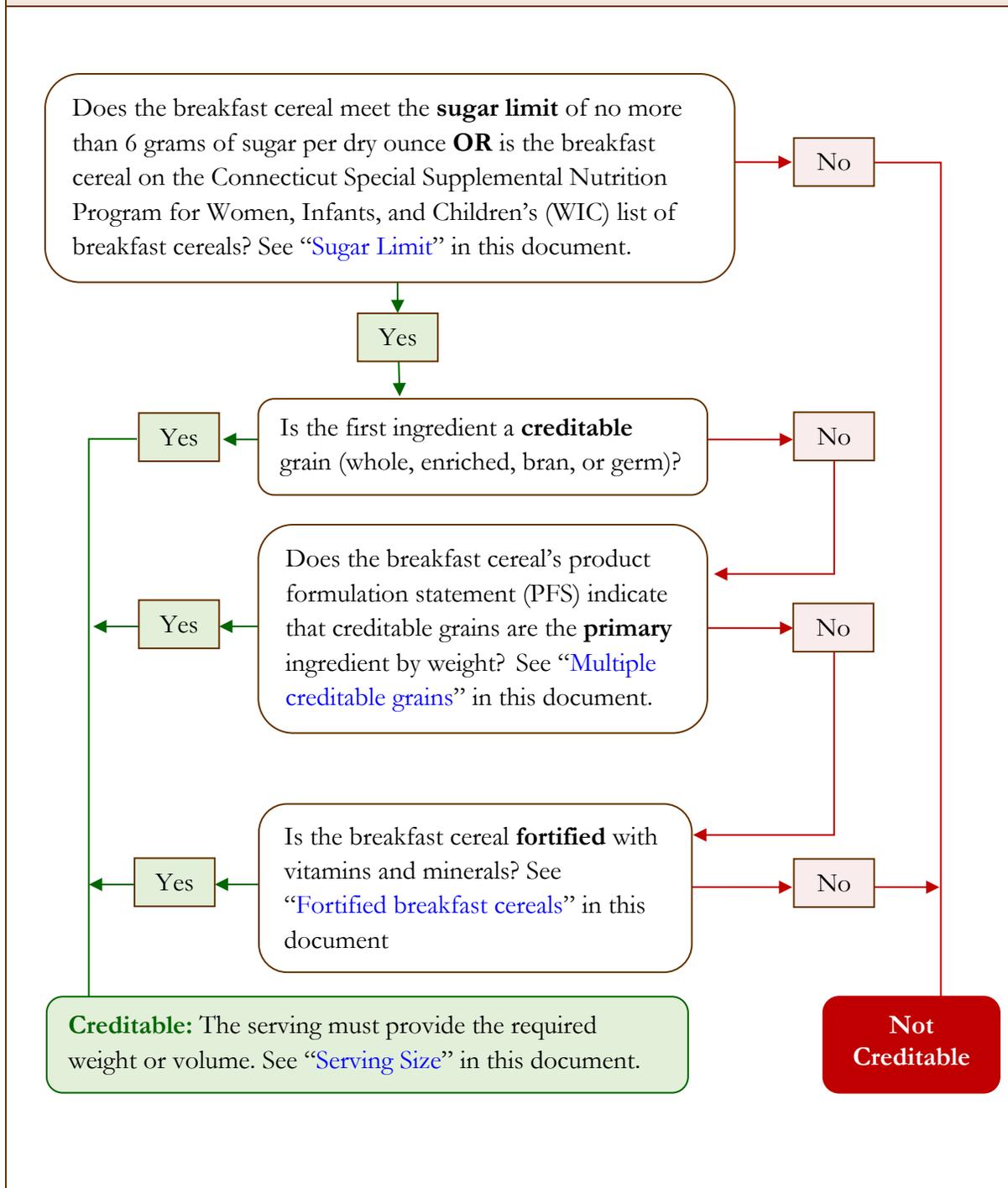


Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels such as wheat berries, and hard chunks (such as granola) may be choking hazards for young children. Consider children’s ages and developmental readiness when deciding what types of breakfast cereals to offer in preschool menus. This consideration is also important for children or adult participants with a disability that requires dietary restrictions. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Table 1 summarizes the steps for determining if breakfast cereals credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. The CSDE recommends that school food authorities (SFAs) check the cereal’s sugar content **first**, before determining if the cereal contains creditable grains. Breakfast cereals that exceed the sugar limit do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.

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Table 1. Identifying creditable breakfast cereals for the preschool meal patterns



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Sugar Limit

RTE and cooked 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). The sugar limit applies only to breakfast cereals as purchased. SFAs may choose to add toppings to breakfast cereals to increase their appeal. However, the USDA strongly encourages SFAs to offer healthy toppings for breakfast cereals, such as fruit instead of sugar. Minimizing sweet toppings will help reduce consumption of added sugars, which contribute calories without essential nutrients.

The USDA allows three methods for determining if breakfast cereals meet the preschool sugar limit. A breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit if it complies with at least one of these methods.



SFAs must maintain crediting documentation for breakfast cereals on file for the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs. This must include information on how the SFA determined that the cereal meets the sugar limit, and if the cereal meets the preschool whole grain-rich (WGR) criteria.

Method 1: WIC breakfast cereals list

A breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit if it is listed on the Connecticut WIC Program’s approved breakfast cereals list. WIC-approved whole-grain foods must comply with the same WGR criteria as the preschool meal patterns. Connecticut WIC food guides are available on the Connecticut State Department of Public Health’s [Approved Food Guide](#) webpage.

Method 2: USDA’s sugar limit chart

A breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit if the sugars per serving on the product’s Nutrition Facts panel do not exceed the maximum amount in the sugar limit chart listed in the USDA’s handout, [Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar](#). This chart includes common breakfast cereal serving sizes with the maximum amount of sugars per serving. Method 2 eliminates the need for SFAs to perform calculations for the sugar limit. The USDA’s handout is available in English and Spanish on the USDA’s [Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar](#) webpage.

The USDA’s [Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar](#) webpage has handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish on meeting the preschool sugar limit for breakfast cereals.

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Method 3: Calculation of grams of sugars per serving (standard and rounding options)

A breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit if the SFA’s calculations document that the product does not contain more than 0.212 grams of sugars per dry gram of cereal weight. This is the gram equivalent of no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (28.35 grams). Method 3 includes two options for calculating compliance with the sugar limit. Both options use the sugars per serving from the product’s Nutrition Facts panel.

1. The **standard method** calculates the grams of sugars per dry gram of cereal weight.
2. The **rounding method** calculates the sugar limit (grams) based on the serving weight (grams) of the cereal. It uses the standard rules for rounding, which are:
 - round up to the next whole number if the number after the decimal point is 0.5 or greater (e.g., 4.52 rounds up to 5); and
 - round down to the next whole number if the number after the decimal point is less than 0.5 (e.g., 6.148 rounds down to 6).

The rounding method is the calculation method used in the USDA’s worksheet, *Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar* (see “[Method 2: USDA’s sugar limit chart](#)” above).

Tables 2 and 3 show sample calculations for the standard and rounding options of method 3, using the Nutrition Facts panel for the RTE breakfast cereal on the right. Each method shows that this breakfast cereal meets the preschool sugar limit. To credit in the preschool meal patterns, this cereal must also meet the requirements for creditable grains and provide the required weight or volume (see “[Creditable grains](#)” and “[Serving Size](#)” in this document).

Note: The standard and rounding calculation methods are both valid ways of demonstrating that a breakfast cereal meets the preschool sugar limit. There may be times when a breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit using one of these methods, but not the other. If a breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit using at least one of these calculation methods, it complies with the sugar limit.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	¾ cup (29 g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	110
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0 g	8%
Saturated Fat 0g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 150 mg	1%
Potassium 35 mg	1%
Total Carbohydrates 26g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g 20%	
Sugars 4g	
Including 0g Added Sugars	
Protein 3 g	

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Table 2. Calculating compliance with preschool sugar limit using standard method

1. List the grams (g) of sugars per serving from the cereal's Nutrition Facts label.	A	4	grams of sugars per serving of cereal
2. List the serving size in grams from the cereal's Nutrition Facts label.	B	29	serving size (grams)
3. Calculate the grams of sugars per gram of serving weight (Divide A by B).	C	0.1379	sugars per gram
4. Is C equal to or less than 0.212? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If "yes," the breakfast cereal meets the preschool sugar limit.			

Table 3. Calculating compliance with preschool sugar limit using rounding method

1. List the serving size in grams (g) from the cereal's Nutrition Facts label.	A	29	grams
2. Calculate the sugar limit for the product's serving size: Multiply A by 0.212.	B	6.148	grams of sugars per serving (required limit)
3. Calculate the rounded sugar limit: If the number in B ends in 0.5 or more, round up to the next whole number. If the number in B ends in 0.49 or less, round down to the next whole number.	C	6	allowable grams of sugars per serving (rounded limit)
4. List the grams (g) of sugars per serving from the cereal's Nutrition Facts label	D	4	grams of sugars per serving of cereal
5. Is D equal to or less than C? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If "yes," the breakfast cereal meets the preschool sugar limit.			

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Creditable Grains

Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. To credit as the grains component, breakfast cereals must contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient, or be fortified. SFAs must check the ingredients statement to determine if breakfast cereals meet these crediting criteria.

Bran and germ do not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12.



Whole-grain breakfast cereals

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel (starchy endosperm, fiber-rich bran, and nutrient-rich germ) after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. A 100 percent whole-grain cereal lists a whole grain as the first ingredient and contains only whole grains. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a whole-grain breakfast cereal.

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

For more information on identifying whole grains, see CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#).

Enriched breakfast cereals

Enriched breakfast cereals contain five vitamins and minerals added in amounts required by the FDA to replace some of the nutrients lost during processing. The enrichment nutrients include thiamin (vitamin B₁, thiamin mononitrate, or thiamin hydrochloride); riboflavin (vitamin B₂); niacin (vitamin B₃ or niacinamide); folic acid (folate); and iron (reduced iron, ferrous sulfate, or ferric orthophosphate). A breakfast cereal is enriched if the food is labeled as “enriched” or an enriched grain is the first ingredient. The ingredients statement below shows an example of an enriched breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Puffed rice, *ferrous sulfate (a source of iron)*, *niacinamide*, citric acid, *thiamin mononitrate*, *riboflavin*, *folic acid*.

For more information on identifying enriched grains, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#).

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Fortified breakfast cereals

Fortified breakfast cereals have nutrients added by the manufacturer that were not originally present in the food, or that are at higher levels than originally present. Manufacturers may choose which additional nutrients to use for fortification. Fortified breakfast cereals typically contain the five enrichment nutrients plus other vitamins and minerals that do not exist naturally in grains.

Different cereal brands may list different fortification nutrients. The USDA does not specify a minimum number of nutrients or a minimum percentage for the level of fortification for breakfast cereals in Child Nutrition Programs. If a breakfast cereal is fortified, it does not need to be enriched.

A breakfast cereal is fortified if the food is labeled as “fortified” or the ingredients statement lists the vitamins and minerals added to the product. These nutrients are typically listed after “Vitamins and Minerals.” The ingredients statements below show some examples of fortified breakfast cereals.

- Ingredients: *Whole-grain wheat*, raisins, wheat bran, sugar, brown sugar syrup, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. **Vitamins and Minerals:** *Potassium chloride, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), zinc oxide, vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), vitamin B₁ (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B₁₂.*
- Ingredients: *Milled corn*, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** *Iron, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate, ascorbic acid), niacinamide, vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), vitamin B₁ (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B₁₂.*

The first fortified cereal is creditable and WGR because it contains a whole grain (whole-grain wheat) as the first ingredient. The second fortified cereal is creditable, but not WGR because milled corn is not a whole grain.

If the ingredients statement does not list any vitamins and minerals, the breakfast cereal is not fortified. To credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns, breakfast cereals that are not fortified must contain a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) as the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the breakfast cereal contains more than one creditable grain, the SFA must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer stating the weight of all creditable grains.



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Bran and germ

Bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran) is the seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Germ (such as wheat germ) is the vitamin-rich embryo of the grain kernel. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a creditable RTE breakfast cereal that contains wheat bran as the first ingredient.

- Ingredients: *Wheat bran*, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** *Calcium carbonate, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid), reduced iron, niacinamide, vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), folic acid, vitamin B₁ (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B₁₂, vitamin D.*

This cereal credits in the preschool meal patterns, but does not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12.

Multiple creditable grains

If a breakfast cereal is not fortified and a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the breakfast cereal contains more than one creditable grain, the SFA must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating the weight of all creditable grains. To credit in the preschool meal patterns, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight in the breakfast cereal. For information on PFS forms, see the CSDE's handouts, [Product Formulation Statements](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP](#), and the USDA's handouts, [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings](#) (through September 30, 2021) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#).

Whole-Grain Rich (WGR) Requirement

The preschool meal patterns require at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day.

The WGR criteria are different for RTE breakfast cereals in group I (such as puffed cereals, flaked or round cereals, and granola) and cooked breakfast cereals in group H (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina) of the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#). The CSDE's handout, [Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#), lists the Exhibit A grain servings that apply to the preschool meal patterns through September 30, 2021.

- **Preschool WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** A whole grain must be the first ingredient, and the cereal must be fortified and meet the sugar limit. For more information, see “[Sugar Limit](#)” and “[Fortified breakfast cereals](#)” in this document. Table 4 summarizes the steps for determining if RTE breakfast cereals meet the preschool WGR criteria.

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- **Preschool WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** Cooked breakfast cereals must comply with the USDA’s “rule of three” WGR criteria (the first ingredient must be a whole grain, and the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be whole, enriched, bran, or germ) and meet the sugar limit. For guidance on the USDA’s “rule of three” WGR criteria for preschool meals, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*. For information the sugar limit, see “Sugar Limit” in this document. Table 5 summarizes the steps for determining if cooked breakfast cereals meet the preschool WGR criteria.

Multiple whole grains

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the breakfast cereal contains more than one whole grain, the SFA must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that states the weight of all whole grains and the weight of all other creditable grains. To meet the preschool WGR criteria, the manufacturer’s PFS must document that the **combined** weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight in the breakfast cereal.

Noncreditable grains

Grain ingredients that are not whole, enriched, bran, or germ do not credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. The preschool WGR criteria for cooked and RTE breakfast cereals have different requirements for noncreditable grains.

- **Cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** SFAs must consider noncreditable grains when determining if the first three grain ingredients in a cooked breakfast cereal meet the preschool “rule of three” WGR criteria. Examples of noncreditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include legume flours, corn flour, corn grits, farina, malted barley flour, milled corn, nut or seed flours, oat fiber, potato flour, potato starch, rice, soy fiber, soy flakes, wheat flour, and yellow corn flour.

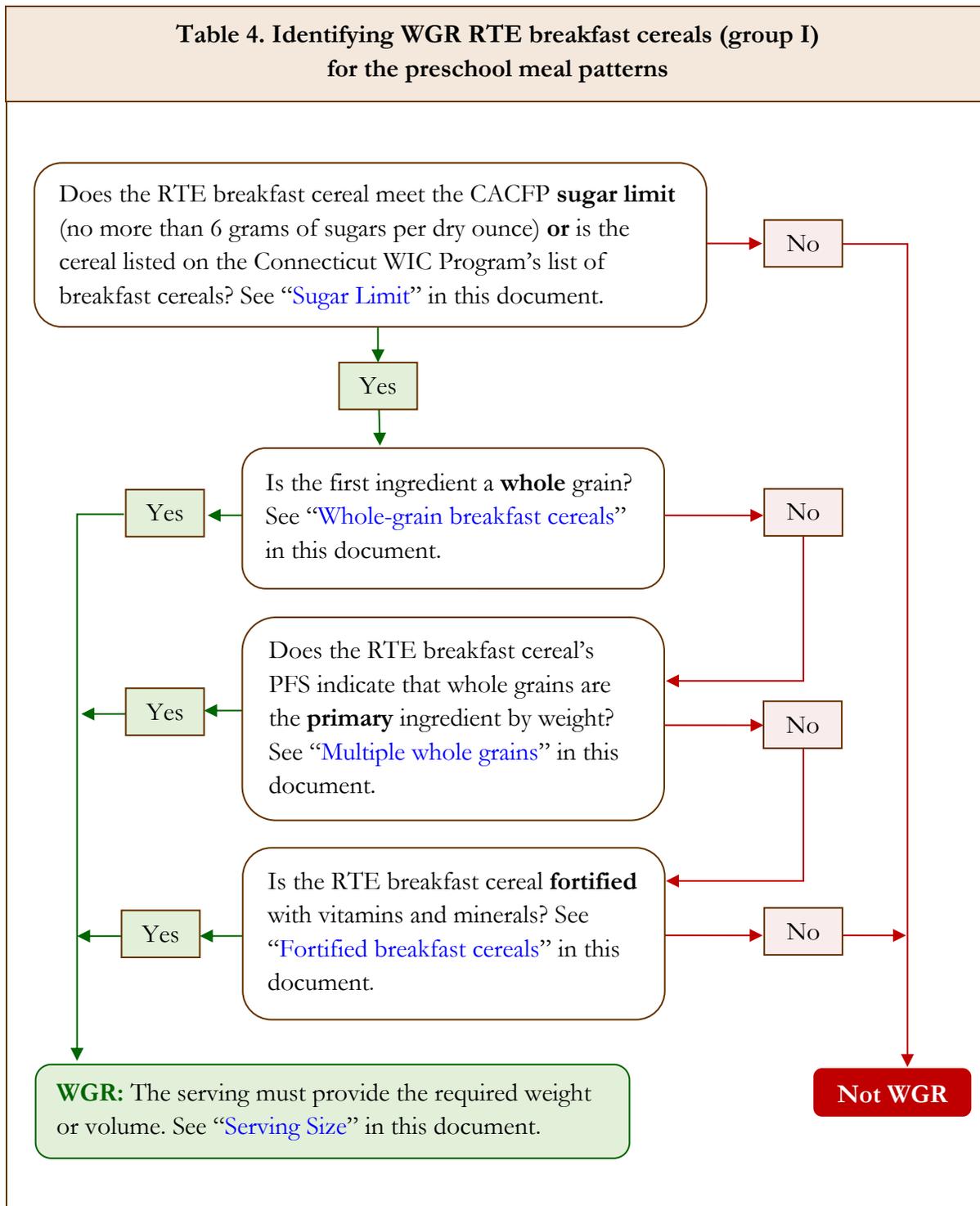
Noncreditable grains listed after the statement “contains 2% or less” are insignificant, and are not considered for the “rule of three.” For example, if the ingredients list states “contains less than 2% of wheat flour and corn flour,” SFAs can ignore the wheat flour and corn flour (noncreditable grains) when reviewing the cereal’s ingredients. Noncreditable grains in the sublisting for a non-grain ingredient are also ignored.

SFAs can ignore grain derivatives when determining if cooked breakfast cereals meet the preschool WGR criteria. Examples of grain derivatives for the preschool meal patterns include corn dextrin, corn starch, cultured wheat starch, malt powder, maltodextrin, modified food starch, modified corn starch, modified rice starch, potato starch, tapioca starch, vital wheat gluten, wheat dextrin, wheat gluten, and wheat starch. For more information on noncreditable grains and grain derivatives, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*.

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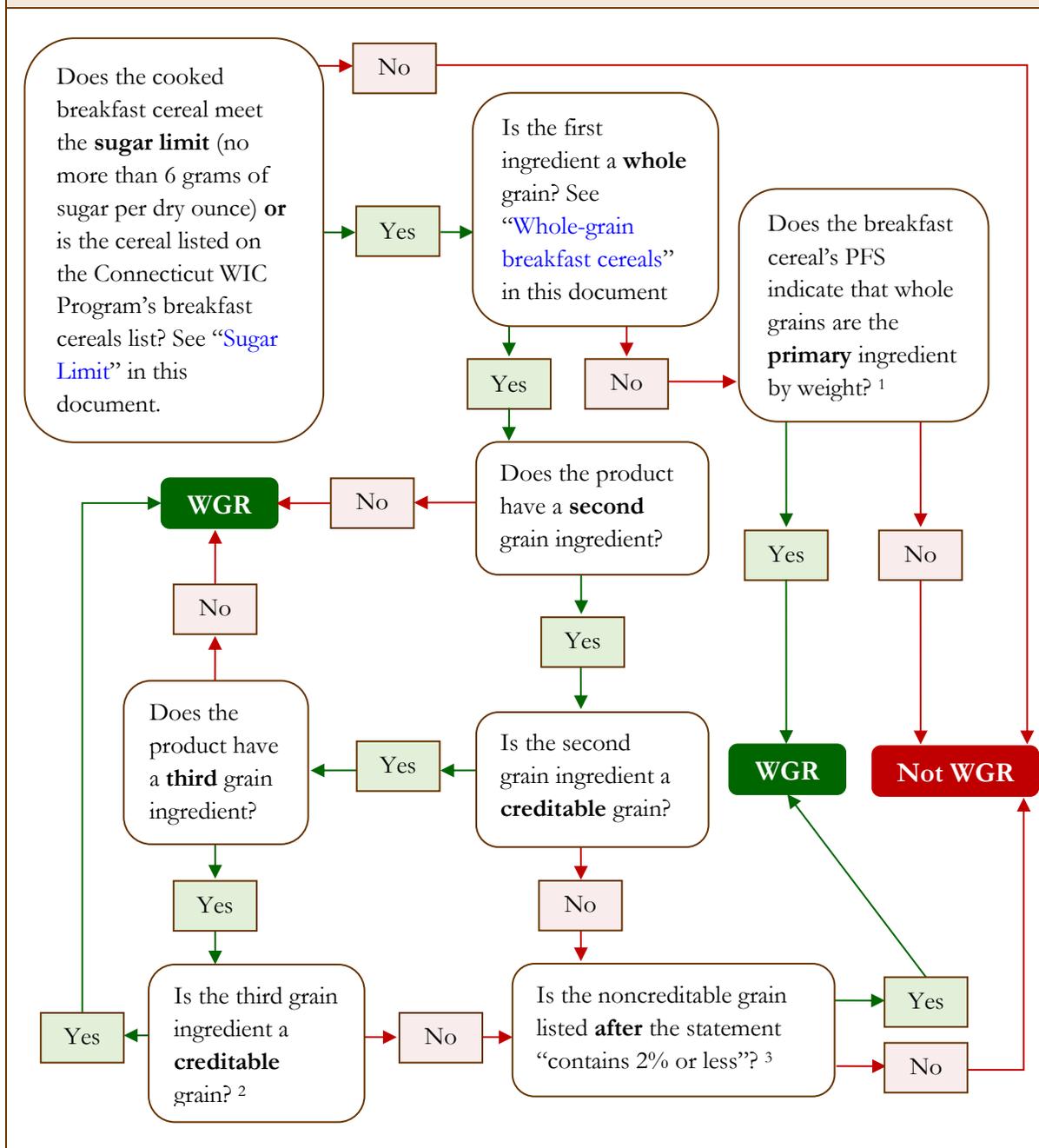
- **RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** SFAs can ignore grain derivatives, and can also ignore noncreditable grains if a whole grain is the first ingredient and the RTE breakfast cereal is fortified.

Table 4. Identifying WGR RTE breakfast cereals (group I) for the preschool meal patterns



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Table 5. Identifying WGR cooked breakfast cereals (group H) for the preschool meal patterns



¹ The SFA must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Product Formulation Statements](#).
² Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.
³ Ignore noncreditable grains listed after "contains 2% or less" or in the sublisting for a non-grain ingredient (see ["Noncreditable grains"](#) in this document).
⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (see ["Serving Size"](#) in this document).

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Determining if Commercial Breakfast Cereals are WGR

The examples for sample products 1-5 show how to evaluate commercial RTE and cooked breakfast cereals for compliance with the USDA's preschool WGR criteria for breakfast cereals. The following guidance applies to the ingredients for these products.

- Creditable grains (whole, enriched, bran, and germ) in the product's ingredients statement are listed in highlighted **bold** text and whole grains are in highlighted bold **UPPERCASE** text. For examples of whole and enriched grains, see the CSDE's handouts, *Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP* and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP*.
- Noncreditable grains (such as wheat flour and yellow corn flour) are in pink highlighted ***bold italicized*** text.
 - **Cooked breakfast cereals:** SFAs must include noncreditable grains when reviewing a product's ingredients statement for compliance with the preschool "rule of three" WGR criteria, unless the noncreditable grains are listed after the statement "contains 2% or less" or in the sublisting for a non-grain ingredient. For more information noncreditable grains, see "[Noncreditable grains](#)" in this document.
 - **Fortified RTE breakfast cereals that contain a whole grain as the first ingredient:** SFAs can ignore any noncreditable grains in the product's ingredients statement.

Crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals

The CACFP and preschool meal pattern requirements for breakfast cereals are the same. Menu planners may use the CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets to evaluate grain-based foods for compliance with the preschool crediting, WGR, and serving requirements.

- 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



These worksheets are available in the "[Crediting Worksheets for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Product 1: Spiced instant oatmeal (commercial cooked breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **WHOLE-GRAIN ROLLED OATS**, sugar, salt, cinnamon and other spices, calcium carbonate, guar gum, caramel color, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin A palmitate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, thiamin mononitrate, folic acid.

Part 1: Grain ingredients ^{1,2}

- A. **First ingredient:** Whole-grain rolled oats
- B. **Second grain ingredient:** None
- C. **Third grain ingredient:** None
- D. **Fortification nutrients:** Calcium carbonate, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin A palmitate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, thiamin mononitrate, folic acid.

Part 2: Preschool crediting criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

Creditable: *The first ingredient must be a creditable grain **or** the cereal must be fortified.*

- 1. Is the first ingredient a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1D above)? Yes No
- 3. Is the answer “Yes” for *either* question 1 **or** 2 **OR** is the answer “Yes” for *both* questions 1 **and** 2?
 - Yes: Cereal is creditable if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁵
 - No: Cereal is not creditable

Part 3: Preschool “rule of three” WGR criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

WGR: *The first ingredient must be a whole grain **and** the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be creditable.*

- 1. Is the first ingredient a whole grain (see Part 1A above)?
 - Yes
 - No
- 2. Is the second grain ingredient (if any) a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1B above)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable (no second grain ingredient or can be ignored) ²
- 3. Is the third grain ingredient (if any) a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1C above)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable (no third grain ingredient or can be ignored) ²
- 4. Is the answer “Yes” for question 1 **AND** either “Yes” or “Not applicable” for questions 2 and 3?
 - Yes: Cereal is WGR if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁵
 - No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

² Ignore noncreditable grains in cooked breakfast cereals listed after the statement “contains 2% or less, and ignore grain derivatives (such as wheat gluten and modified food starch) (see “[Noncreditable grains](#)” in this document).

³ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (see “[Sugar Limit](#)” in this document).

⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (see “[Serving Size](#)” in this document).

⁵ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “[Multiple creditable grains](#)” in this document). To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “[Multiple whole grains](#)” in this document).

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Product 2: Farina hot cereal (commercial cooked breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **Wheat farina**, calcium carbonate, ferric orthophosphate (source of iron), niacinamide (vitamin B3), pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), folic acid, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1) riboflavin (vitamin B2).

Part 1: grain ingredients ^{1, 2}

- A. **First ingredient:** Wheat farina (noncreditable grain)
- B. **Second grain ingredient:** None
- C. **Third grain ingredient:** None
- D. **Fortification nutrients:** Calcium carbonate, ferric orthophosphate (source of iron), niacinamide (vitamin B3), pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), folic acid, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1) riboflavin (vitamin B2)

Part 2: Preschool crediting criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

Creditable: *The first ingredient must be a creditable grain **or** the cereal must be fortified.*

- 1. Is the first ingredient a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1D above)? Yes No
- 3. Is the answer “Yes” for *either* question 1 **or** 2 **OR** is the answer “Yes” for *both* questions 1 **and** 2?
 - Yes: Cereal is creditable if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3, 4}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁵ No: Cereal is not creditable

Part 3: Preschool “rule of three” WGR criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

WGR: *The first ingredient must be a whole grain **and** the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be creditable.*

- 1. Is the first ingredient a whole grain (see Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the second grain ingredient (if any) a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1B above)? Yes No Not applicable (no second grain ingredient or can be ignored) ²
- 3. Is the third grain ingredient (if any) a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1C above)? Yes No Not applicable (no third grain ingredient or can be ignored) ²
- 4. Is the answer “Yes” for question 1 **AND** either “Yes” or “Not applicable” for questions 2 and 3?
 - Yes: Cereal is WGR if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3, 4}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁵ No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.
² Ignore noncreditable grains in cooked breakfast cereals listed after the statement “contains 2% or less, and ignore grain derivatives (such as wheat gluten and modified food starch) (see “**Noncreditable grains**” in this document).
³ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (see “**Sugar Limit**” in this document).
⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (see “**Serving Size**” in this document).
⁵ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “**Multiple creditable grains**” in this document). To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “**Multiple whole grains**” in this document).

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Product 3: Whole-grain oat cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)

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.

Part 1: Grain ingredients ^{1,2}
<p>A. First ingredient: Whole-grain oat flour</p> <p>B. Fortification nutrients: Calcium carbonate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid</p>
Part 2: Preschool crediting criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)
<p>Creditable: <i>The first ingredient must be a creditable grain or the cereal must be fortified.</i></p> <p>1. Is the first ingredient a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1A above)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1B above)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Is the answer “Yes” for <i>either</i> question 1 or 2 OR is the answer “Yes” for <i>both</i> questions 1 and 2? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: Cereal is creditable if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4} <input type="checkbox"/> No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Need PFS ⁵ <input type="checkbox"/> No: Cereal is not creditable</p>
Part 3: Preschool WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)
<p>WGR: <i>The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified.</i></p> <p>1. Is the first ingredient a whole grain (see Part 1A above)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1B above)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Is the answer “Yes” for questions 1 and 2? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: Cereal is WGR if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4} <input type="checkbox"/> No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Need PFS ⁵ <input type="checkbox"/> No: Cereal is not WGR</p>
<p>¹ Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.</p> <p>² Ignore noncreditable grains in cooked breakfast cereals listed after the statement “contains 2% or less, and ignore grain derivatives (such as wheat gluten and modified food starch) (see “Noncreditable grains” in this document).</p> <p>³ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (see “Sugar Limit” in this document).</p> <p>⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (see “Serving Size” in this document).</p> <p>⁵ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “Multiple creditable grains” in this document). To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “Multiple whole grains” in this document).</p>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Product 4: Crispy rice cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **Rice**, sugar, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. BHT added to packaging for freshness. Vitamins and Minerals: Iron, vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin E (alpha tocopherol acetate), niacinamide, vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), folic acid, vitamin B12, vitamin D.

Part 1: Grain ingredients ^{1,2}

- A. **First ingredient:** Rice (noncreditable grain)
- B. **Fortification nutrients:** Iron, vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin E (alpha tocopherol acetate), niacinamide, vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), folic acid, vitamin B12, vitamin D

Part 2: Preschool crediting criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

Creditable: *The first ingredient must be a creditable grain **or** the cereal must be fortified.*

1. Is the first ingredient a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1A above)? Yes No
2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1B above)? Yes No
3. Is the answer “Yes” for *either* question 1 **or** 2 **OR** is the answer “Yes” for *both* questions 1 **and** 2?
 - Yes: Cereal is creditable if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁵ No: Cereal is not creditable

Part 3: Preschool WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

WGR: *The first ingredient must be a whole grain **and** the cereal must be fortified.*

1. Is the first ingredient a whole grain (see Part 1A above)? Yes No
2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1B above)? Yes No
3. Is the answer “Yes” for questions 1 and 2?
 - Yes: Cereal is WGR if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁵ No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.
² Ignore noncreditable grains in cooked breakfast cereals listed after the statement “contains 2% or less” (see “**Noncreditable grains**” in this document). Ignore grain derivatives (such as wheat gluten and modified food starch) in cooked breakfast cereals.
³ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (see “**Sugar Limit**” in this document).
⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (see “**Serving Size**” in this document).
⁵ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “**Multiple creditable grains**” in this document). To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “**Multiple whole grains**” in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Product 5: Crunchy wheat cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **WHOLE-GRAIN WHEAT**, sugar, **rice flour, oat fiber**, sunflower oil, dextrose, molasses, baking soda, sea salt.

Part 1: Grain Ingredients ^{1,2}
<p>A. First ingredient: Whole-grain wheat</p> <p>B. Fortification nutrients: None</p>
Part 3: Preschool WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)
<p>Creditable: <i>The first ingredient must be a creditable grain or the cereal must be fortified.</i></p> <p>1. Is the first ingredient a creditable grain ¹ (see Part 1A above)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1B above)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Is the answer “Yes” for <i>either</i> question 1 or 2 OR is the answer “Yes” for <i>both</i> questions 1 and 2? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: Cereal is creditable if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4} <input type="checkbox"/> No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Need PFS ⁵ <input type="checkbox"/> No: Cereal is not creditable</p>
Part 3: Preschool WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)
<p>WGR: <i>The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified.</i></p> <p>1. Is the first ingredient a whole grain (see Part 1A above)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>2. Is the cereal fortified (see Part 1B above)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Is the answer “Yes” for questions 1 and 2? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Cereal is WGR if it meets the preschool sugar limit ^{3,4} <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Need PFS ⁵ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: Cereal is not WGR</p>
<p>¹ Creditable grains for the preschool meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.</p> <p>² Ignore noncreditable grains in cooked breakfast cereals listed after the statement “contains 2% or less” (see “Noncreditable grains” in this document). Ignore grain derivatives (such as wheat gluten and modified food starch) in cooked breakfast cereals.</p> <p>³ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (see “Sugar Limit” in this document).</p> <p>⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (see “Serving Size” in this document).</p> <p>⁵ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “Multiple creditable grains” in this document). To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (see “Multiple whole grains” in this document).</p>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Serving Size

The required amounts for breakfast cereals are in servings through September 30, 2021, and change to ounce equivalent effective October 1, 2021. Table 7 shows the required amounts for RTE and cooked breakfast cereals in the preschool meal patterns. Breakfast cereals must provide the required weight or volume, whichever is less.

Table 7. Serving size for breakfast cereals in the preschool meal patterns					
Type of breakfast cereal		Through September 30, 2021 $\frac{1}{2}$ serving		Effective October 1, 2021 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalent	
		Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4
Group H	Cooked hot	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 13 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 13 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 14 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 14 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry
	RTE flakes or rounds	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup or $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce ¹	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup or $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce ¹	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Group I	RTE puffed	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup or $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce ¹	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup or $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce ¹	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
	RTE granola	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup or $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce ¹	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup or $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce ¹	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup

¹ The serving size is based on weight or volume, whichever is less.



Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Serving the Same Breakfast Cereals to Preschoolers and Grades K-12

The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for preschoolers and grades K-12 have different crediting and WGR criteria. Breakfast cereals that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 cannot credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns unless they meet the preschool sugar limit. If SFAs serve the same breakfast cereals to grades K-12 and preschoolers, these foods must meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 and the preschool sugar limit (see “[Sugar Limit](#)” in this document). The two exceptions to this requirement are when SFAs choose to follow:

- the K-5 meal pattern for preschoolers and grades K-5 who eat in the same service area at the same time; or
- the ASP K-12 meal pattern for preschoolers and grades K-12 who eat in the same service area at the same time.

For more information on the meal pattern requirements for preschoolers and grade K-12 eating together, see section 1 of the CSDE’s guide, [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers](#).

Note: Breakfast cereals that meet the preschool WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. For information on the differences between the grains component for preschoolers and grades K-12, see the CSDE’s handout, [Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs](#).

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/AcceptDocumentationSNP.pdf>

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

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

Approved Food Guide for Connecticut WIC (Connecticut Department of Public Health):

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/WIC/Approved-Food-Guide>

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_bestpractices.pdf

CACFP Training Tools (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-training-tools>

Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP – Handouts in English and Spanish (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-breakfast-cereals-cacfp>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

(through September 30, 2021) (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/GrainCalculationPreschool.pdf>

Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat 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>

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

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

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar – Handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/choose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-sugar>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedGrainsSNP.pdf>

Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrainsSNP.pdf>

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

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

Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP *(effective October 1, 2021)* (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/GrainOzEqSNPpreschool.pdf>

Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP *(through September 30, 2021)* (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/GrainServingsSNPpreschool.pdf>

Grains Component for Preschoolers (CSDE webpage):

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

How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/IdentifyCreditableGrainsSNPpreschool.pdf>

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

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

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

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

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/MPGpreschool.pdf>

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs

(effective October 1, 2021) (USDA):

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

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

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

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/PFS.pdf>

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/ResourcesPreschoolMealPattern.pdf>

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

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

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

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

Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/WGRCriteriaSNPpreschool.pdf>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP



For more information, review the CSDE's guide, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*, and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

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

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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