

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

his guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal patterns for preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP preschool meal patterns. The requirements for the preschool meal patterns are the same as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For information on the preschool meal patterns and crediting foods, refer to the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#) and visit the “Grains Component for Preschoolers” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations ([21 CFR 170.3\(n\)\(4\)](#)) define breakfast cereals as ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola) and instant and regular hot cereals (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). RTE breakfast cereals can be eaten as sold and are typically fortified with vitamins and minerals.

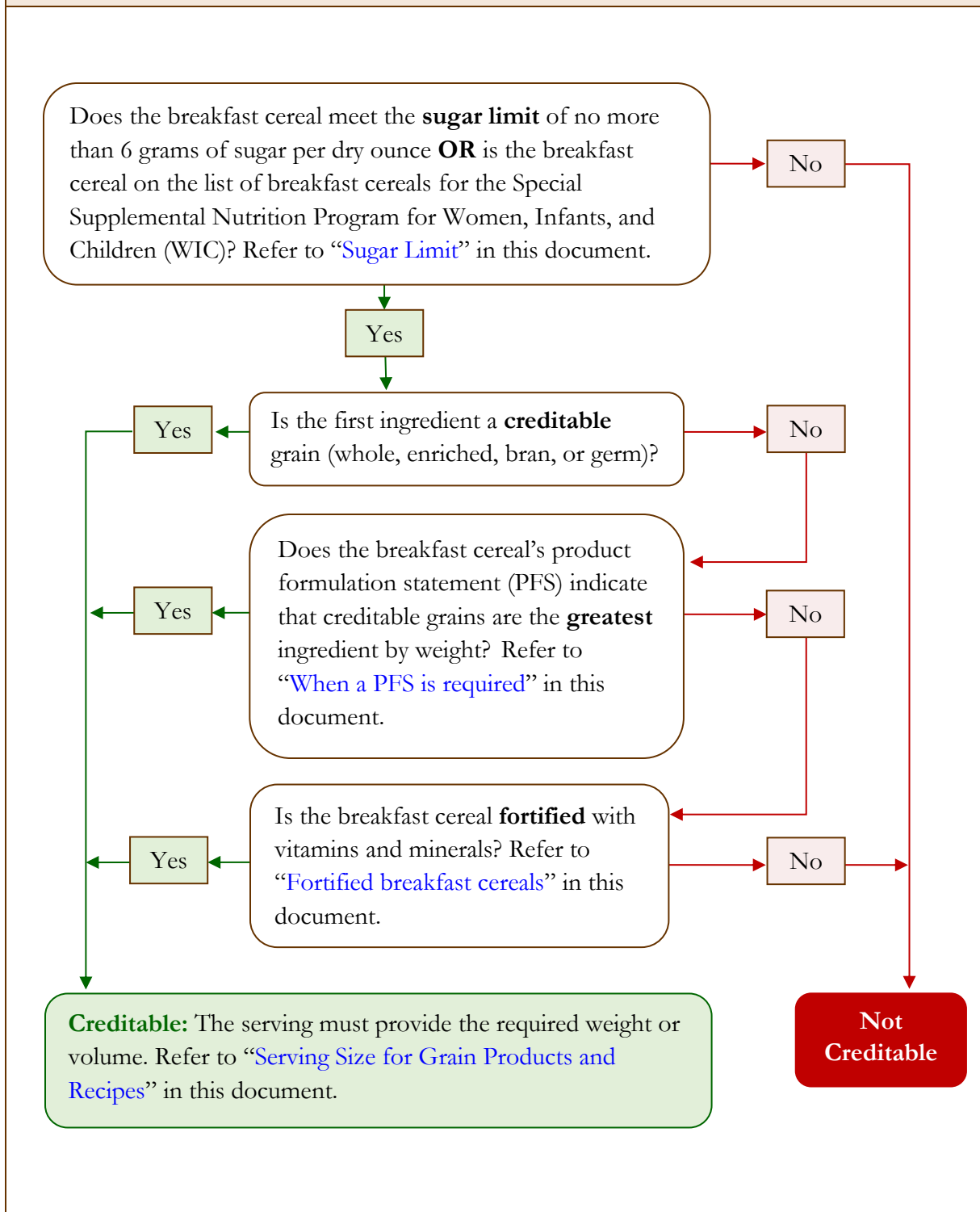
To credit in the preschool meal patterns, breakfast cereals must contain a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) as the first ingredient or be fortified, and cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. Creditable breakfast cereals may be served as the grains component at any meal or snack.

Table 1 summarizes the steps for determining if breakfast cereals credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. The CSDE recommends that 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. How to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the preschool meal patterns



Sugar Limit

RTE and cooked breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). This sugar limit applies 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, including:

- any state’s Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-approved breakfast cereals list;
- the USDA’s sugar limit chart; and
- manual calculations of the grams of sugars per serving (standard and rounding options).

A breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit if it complies with at least one of these methods. A summary of each method is below.

Method 1: WIC breakfast cereals list

A breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit if it is listed on any state WIC Program’s approved breakfast cereals list. WIC-approved whole-grain foods comply with the same WGR criteria as the preschool meal patterns. The 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 to use 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 provides 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* (refer to "[Method 2: USDA's sugar limit chart](#)" in this document).

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 (refer to "[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 | $\frac{3}{4}$ 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 are the ingredients in a grain product or recipe that count toward the grains component, including whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

A breakfast cereal must meet two criteria to credit as the grains component.

1. A creditable grain must be the first ingredient or the breakfast cereals must be fortified.
2. The cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “[Sugar Limit](#)” in this document).

SFAs must check the ingredients statement to determine if breakfast cereals meet these crediting criteria.

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.

This breakfast cereal is 100 percent whole grain and meets the WGR criteria because the first and only grain ingredient (whole grain rolled oats) is a whole grain.

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



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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*.

This puffed rice breakfast cereal is enriched because the ingredients statement lists the five enrichment nutrients.

For information on identifying enriched grains, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [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, 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. A fortified breakfast cereal is not required 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: **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.*

This breakfast cereal is creditable because it is fortified. It is not WGR because milled corn is not a whole grain.

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.*

This fortified breakfast cereal credits as a WGR food because whole-grain wheat is the first ingredient.

If the ingredients statement does not list any vitamins and minerals, the breakfast cereal is not fortified. To credit as the grains component, breakfast cereals that are not fortified must contain a creditable grain 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. For more information, refer to “[Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals](#)” in this document.

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Bran and germ

Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains in all school nutrition programs. 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 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 breakfast cereal is creditable because the first ingredient (wheat bran) is a creditable grain, and the cereal is fortified. It is not WGR because bran is not a whole grain. This breakfast cereal credits as an enriched grain.

Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals

SFAs must be able to document that all breakfast cereals served in reimbursable meals and ASP snacks meet the meal pattern crediting requirements. A PFS from the manufacturer is required if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if it meets the crediting or WGR criteria. For guidance on when a PFS is required and the information it must include, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*.

SFAs must verify the accuracy of the PFS before including the breakfast cereal in reimbursable meals and snacks. Crediting documentation must be maintained on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the breakfast cereal cannot credit as the grains component in the meal patterns for school nutrition programs.

For more information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP*, and the USDA's handouts, *Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs* and *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement*. The steps for how to evaluate a grain product's PFS are available in the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Training on the requirements for PFS forms is available in Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.



Whole-Grain Rich (WGR) Requirement

The preschool meal patterns require at least one serving of WGR grains per day. The USDA's *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For guidance on menu planning considerations for the WGR requirement, refer to the CSDE's guide for the CACFP, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP*.

The WGR criteria for the preschool meal patterns are different from the WGR criteria for the meal patterns for grades K-12. Except for grain-based desserts, grain foods that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 also meet the preschool WGR criteria. However, grain foods that meet the preschool WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Preschool WGR criteria for breakfast cereals

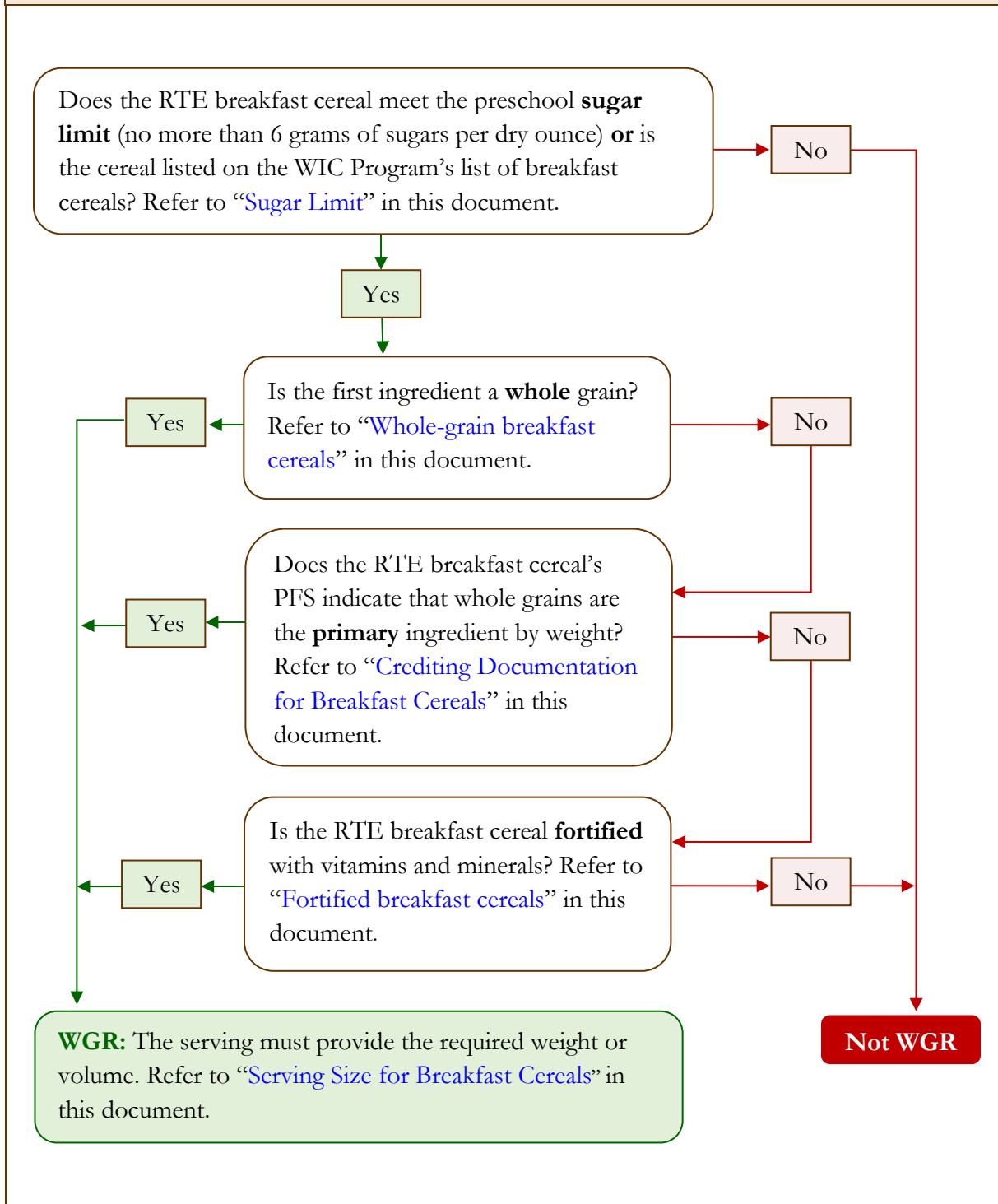
The preschool meal patterns require different WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals in group I (such as puffed cereals, flaked or round cereals, and granola) and cooked breakfast cereals in group H (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). Groups H and I refer to the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*. The required amounts for the grains component listed in Exhibit A are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP* indicates the Exhibit A ounce equivalents that apply to the preschool meal patterns

To be WGR, breakfast cereals must meet the sugar limit (refer to "Sugar Limit" in this document) and comply with the requirements below.

- **WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified. Table 4 summarizes the steps for determining if RTE breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria.
- **WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** Cooked breakfast cereals must comply with the USDA's Rule of Three criteria for WGR foods. The Rule of Three requires that the first ingredient must be a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be whole grain, enriched, bran, or germ. Noncreditable grains (such as yellow corn flour, wheat flour, and soy flour) cannot be one of the first three grain ingredients. For guidance on the Rule of Three, refer to the CSDE's guide for the CACFP, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP*. Table 5 summarizes the steps for determining if cooked breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria.

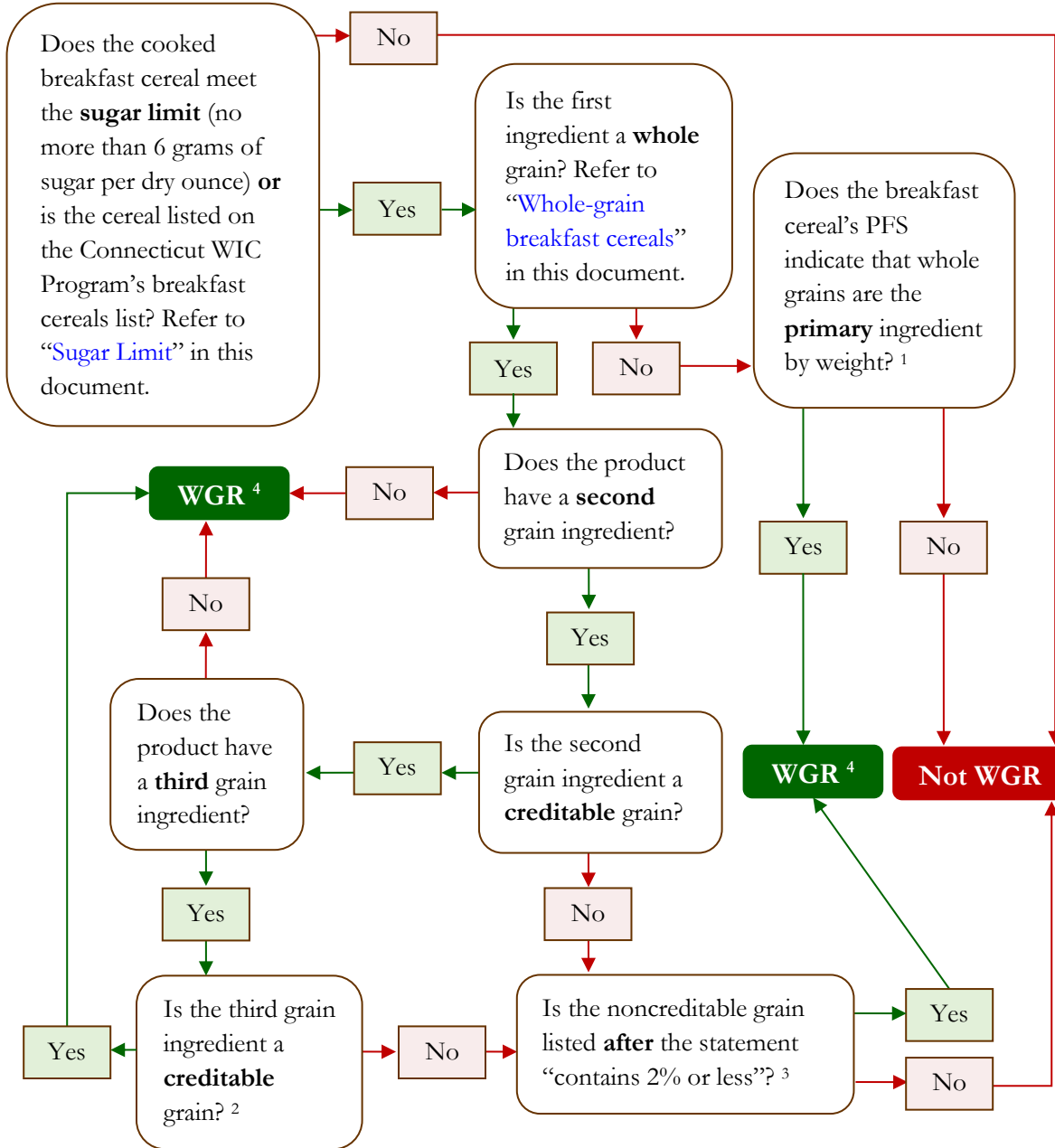
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Table 4. How to identify WGR RTE breakfast cereals (group I) for the preschool meal patterns



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



¹ The SFA must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*).

² Creditable grains 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 (refer to "Noncreditable grains" in this document).

⁴ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (refer to "Serving Size" in this document).

How to Determine if Commercial Breakfast Cereals are WGR

This section contains examples of how to evaluate commercial RTE and cooked breakfast cereals for compliance with the preschool crediting and WGR criteria for breakfast cereals. The information below summarizes the color-coding used to identify the creditable and noncreditable grains in the product's ingredients statement for each example.

- Creditable grains (whole, enriched, bran, and germ) are indicated in yellow highlighted **bold** text. Whole grains are indicated in yellow highlighted bold **UPPERCASE** text. For examples of whole and enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [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 indicated in pink highlighted ***bold italicized*** red text.
 - **Cooked breakfast cereals, e.g., oatmeal:** Menu planners must include noncreditable grains when reviewing a cooked breakfast cereal for compliance with the CACFP Rule of Three WGR criteria, unless they are listed after the statement "contains 2% or less" or in the sublisting for a non-grain ingredient.
 - **RTE breakfast cereals:** Menu planners can ignore any noncreditable grains if a whole grain is the first ingredient and the cereal is fortified.

Crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals

The preschool meal pattern requirements for breakfast cereals are the same as the CACFP. SFAs may use the CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets to evaluate breakfast cereals for compliance with the preschool crediting requirements and WGR criteria.

- 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

- 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 (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the cereal fortified (refer to 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 ^{2, 3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴
 - 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 (refer to Part 1A above)?
 - Yes
 - No
- 2. Is the second grain ingredient (if any) a creditable grain ¹ (refer to 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 (refer to 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 ^{2, 3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴
 - No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

² Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “[Sugar Limit](#)” in this document).

³ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (refer to “[Serving Size](#)” in this document).

⁴ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

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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

- 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 (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the cereal fortified (refer to 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 ^{2, 3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴
 - 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 (refer to Part 1A above)?
 - Yes
 - No
- 2. Is the second grain ingredient (if any) a creditable grain ¹ (refer to 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 (refer to 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 ^{2, 3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴
 - No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

² Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “[Sugar Limit](#)” in this document).

³ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (refer to “[Serving Size](#)” in this document).

⁴ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

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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

- A. **First ingredient:** Whole-grain oat flour
- B. **Fortification nutrients:** Calcium carbonate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid

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 (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
2. Is the cereal fortified (refer to 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 ^{2, 3}
 No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 Yes: Need PFS ⁴ 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 (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
2. Is the cereal fortified (refer to 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 ^{2, 3}
 No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 Yes: Need PFS ⁴ No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

² Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “**Sugar Limit**” in this document).

³ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (refer to “**Serving Size**” in this document).

⁴ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

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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

- 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.*

- Is the first ingredient a creditable grain ¹ (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
- Is the cereal fortified (refer to Part 1B above)? Yes No
- 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 ^{2, 3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴ 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.*

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

- Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.
- Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “[Sugar Limit](#)” in this document).
- The serving must provide the required weight or volume (refer to “[Serving Size](#)” in this document).
- To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

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

- A. **First ingredient:** Whole-grain wheat
- B. **Fortification nutrients:** None

Part 3: Preschool WGR 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 (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the cereal fortified (refer to 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 ^{2,3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one creditable grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴ 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 (refer to Part 1A above)? Yes No
- 2. Is the cereal fortified (refer to 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. ^{2,3}
 - No: Does the cereal contain more than one whole grain?
 - Yes: Need PFS ⁴ No: Cereal is not WGR

¹ Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

² Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “**Sugar Limit**” in this document).

³ The serving must provide the required weight or volume (refer to “**Serving Size**” in this document).

⁴ To credit as the grains component, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. To be WGR, the PFS must document that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Serving Size

The required quantities for breakfast cereals are in ounce equivalents. The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is 1/4 ounce equivalent. Table 8 shows the required ounce equivalents for RTE and cooked breakfast cereals.

| Table 8. Required ounce equivalents for breakfast cereals in the preschool meal patterns | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|--|
| Type of cereal | | 1/2 ounce equivalent | |
| | | Ages 1-2 | Ages 3-4 |
| Group H | RTE flakes or rounds | 1/2 cup | 1/2 cup |
| | RTE puffed | 3/4 cup | 3/4 cup |
| | RTE granola | 1/8 cup | 1/8 cup |
| Group I | Cooked hot | 1/4 cup cooked or 14 grams (1/2 ounce) dry | 1/4 cup cooked or 14 grams (1/2 ounce) dry |

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

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 and modify foods and menus as appropriate. For additional guidance, visit the [“Choking Prevention”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Resources

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

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Accepting_Processed_Product_Documentation_SNP.pdf

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

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

CACFP Training Tools (USDA):

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

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

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

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Calculation_SNP_preschool.pdf

Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFP_Child_Care_Worksheet2_Crediting_RTE_Breakfast_Cereals.xlsx

Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFP_Child_Care_Worksheet3_Crediting_Cooked_Cereals.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 (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):

<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/Credit_Enriched_Grains_SNP.pdf

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

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Whole_Grains_SNP.pdf

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

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

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

Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/identifying-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp>

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

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

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_CACFP.pdf

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

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

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

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

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>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf

Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-wic-food-lists-identify-grains-cacfp>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

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

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/When_Commercial_Grain_Products_Require_PFS_SNP.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP



For more information, refer to the CSDE's *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 at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Cereals_SNP_preschool.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; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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