Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers
in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program

October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019

Revised January 2019

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504
Hartford, CT 06103-1841
Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers
in the National School Lunch Program,
School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program

Connecticut State Department of Education • Revised January 2019

Project Director
Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D.
Nutrition Education Coordinator

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About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program provides information on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal patterns for preschoolers (ages 1-4), which are defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) final rule, Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24348), the final rule corrections, and the USDA’s policies for the CACFP.

This guide applies only to preschool meals served in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and preschool snacks served in the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. For information on the meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, see the CSDE’s Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12. For information on the meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 in the ASP, see the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program Handbook.

This guide is in effect from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019. The CSDE will revise this guide to include the new requirements for grain ounce equivalents, effective October 1, 2019.

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

The contents of this guide are subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance regarding the preschool meal patterns. Please check the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage for the most current version.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Consultant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield County (includes Region 9)</td>
<td>Fionnuala Brown <a href="mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov">fionnuala.brown@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litchfield County (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford County (includes Region 10)</td>
<td>Teri Dandeneau <a href="mailto:teri.dandeneau@ct.gov">teri.dandeneau@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex County (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven County (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolland County (includes Regions 8 and 19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windham County (includes Region 11)</td>
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</table>

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

APP       alternate protein products
ASP       Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP.
CACFP     Child and Adult Care Food Program
CFR       Code of Federal Regulations
C.G.S.    Connecticut General Statutes
CN        Child Nutrition
CSDE      Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG       Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)
FDA       Food and Drug Administration
FNS       Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
HHFKA     Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)
ICN       Institute of Child Nutrition
           (formerly National Food Service Management Institute)
LEA       local educational agency
NSLP      National School Lunch Program
OVS       offer versus serve
PFS       product formulation statement
RCCI      residential child care institution
SBP       School Breakfast Program
SFA       school food authority
SSO       Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP
USDA      United States Department of Agriculture
WGR       whole grain-rich
1 — Preschool Meal Patterns

The updated meal patterns for preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP took effect on October 1, 2017. The preschool meal patterns are the same as the meal patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which are defined by the USDA’s final rule, Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24348), released on April 25, 2016, and the final rule corrections, released on November 1, 2016.

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

The goal of the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs is to improve and maintain children’s health and nutrition while promoting the development of good eating habits. The preschool meal patterns are designed to meet children’s needs for calories and key nutrients. To receive reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children, school food authorities (SFAs) must provide the required food components in the appropriate serving size for each age group.

Overview of Changes

The updated preschool meal patterns include the changes below.

- Flavored milk cannot be served to children ages 1-4.
- The grains/breads component changed to the grains component.
- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR).
- Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component.
- Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce.
- Grain servings are in ounce equivalents, effective October 1, 2019.
- Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week.
- Tofu and soy yogurt credit as the meat/meat alternates component.
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce).
- Vegetables and fruits are two separate components.
Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch.

Juice may fulfill the entire vegetables component or fruits component. However, juice cannot credit as the vegetables component or fruits component at more than one preschool meal or ASP snack per day.

Foods cannot be deep-fat fried on site, i.e., cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat.

Section 3 provides detailed menu planning guidance for the preschool meal patterns.

**Transition Period**

SFAs were required to implement all provisions of the updated preschool meal patterns by October 1, 2017. During fiscal year 2018 (October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018), the USDA allowed a transition period to help SFAs adjust to the updated preschool meal patterns. During this time, state agencies could provide technical assistance in lieu of fiscal action when they observed violations related to the updated preschool meal patterns. For more information, see USDA Memo SP 30-2017 CACFP 13-2017: Transition Period for the Updated Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns and the Updated National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Infant and Preschool Meal Patterns.

Effective October 1, 2019, the transition period is over. USDA Memo SP 01-2019 CACFP 01-2019: Guidance for FY’19: Updated CACFP Meal Patterns and Updated NSLP and SBP Infant and Preschool Meal Patterns summarizes the requirements that state agencies must follow for SFAs that fail to meet the preschool meal patterns. In most cases, state agencies are required to provide training and technical assistance and allow for corrective action before fiscal action is assessed (7 CFR 210.18(l)(2)). However, the USDA indicates that state agencies must continue to take immediate fiscal action if a preschool meal or ASP snack is completely missing one or more of the required food components.

**Age Groups**

The preschool meal patterns consist of two age groups, which include ages 1-2 and ages 3-4. When a 5-year-old is in preschool or a 4-year-old is in kindergarten, SFAs may serve the appropriate meal pattern for that grade. For example, if a 5-year-old is in preschool, the preschool meal patterns apply. If a 4-year-old is in kindergarten, the meal patterns for grades K-5 apply. For information on the meal patterns for grades K-5, visit the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
Serving the same foods to preschoolers and grades K-12

The preschool meal patterns are different from the meal patterns for grades K-12. SFAs must consider the different meal pattern requirements when making menu planning and purchasing decisions for school meals. When SFAs serve the same foods to preschoolers and grades K-12, these foods must comply with whichever meal pattern requirements are stricter. For example, since:

- since the meal patterns for grades K-12 have a stricter WGR requirement than the meal patterns for preschoolers, grain foods served to both groups must comply with the WGR criteria for grades K-12; and
- since the preschool meal patterns have a sugar limit for yogurt and breakfast cereals but the meal patterns for grades K-12 do not, yogurt and breakfast cereals served to both groups must comply with the preschool sugar limits.

For more information on the differences between the meal patterns for preschoolers and grades K-12, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Comparison of ASP Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12*.

Preschoolers and grades K-5 eating together in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO

SFAs that serve meals to preschoolers and grades K-5 in the same service area at the same time may choose to:

- follow the grade-appropriate meal patterns for each age group (i.e., use the preschool meal patterns for ages 1-4 and the K-5 meal pattern for grades K-5); or
- serve the K-5 meal pattern to both age groups.

SFAs must follow the preschool meal patterns when meals are served to preschoolers in a different area or at a different time than K-5 students. The USDA allows the option to serve the K-5 meal pattern to preschoolers only when preschoolers are co-mingled with K-5 students during the meal service. The USDA strongly encourages schools to find ways to serve grade-appropriate meals to preschoolers and grades K-5 to best address their nutritional needs. For more information, see *USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers.*
Preschoolers and grades K-12 eating together in the ASP

SFAs that serve ASP snacks to preschoolers and grades K-12 in the same service area at the same time may choose to:

- follow the grade-appropriate ASP meal patterns for each grade group (i.e., use the preschool ASP meal pattern for ages 1-4 and the K-12 ASP meal pattern for grades K-12); or
- serve the K-12 ASP meal pattern to both grade groups.

SFAs must follow the preschool ASP meal pattern when ASP snacks are served to preschoolers in a different area or at a different time than K-12 students. The USDA allows the option to serve the K-12 ASP meal pattern to preschoolers only when preschoolers are co-mingled with K-12 students during the ASP snack service. The USDA strongly encourages schools to find ways to serve grade-appropriate snacks to preschoolers and grades K-12 to best address their nutritional needs.

Reimbursable Meals

A meal or ASP snack is reimbursable if it meets the preschool meal patterns, and contains the required food components in the minimum serving for each age group. Meals that contain foods in addition to the required food components are also reimbursable. The CSDE encourages SFAs to choose nutrient-dense foods for additional servings. Examples include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat milk products, legumes, and lean meats, fish, poultry.

Some additional foods do not credit toward the preschool meal patterns and cannot be served, or should only be served in moderation. For more information, see “Noncreditable foods” in section 3.

The preschool meal patterns consist of minimum daily servings of food components for each age group. Unlike the meal patterns for grades K-12, the preschool meal patterns do not require weekly servings of the food components or weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards). For more information, see “Nutrition Standards” in this section.

Food Components

A food component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates. Menu items contribute to the food components. A menu item is any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk; and may contribute to one or more food components. For example, a hamburger (meat/meat alternates component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one menu item that contributes to two food components.
Table 1-1 indicates the required servings of each food component in the preschool meal patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1-1. Required servings of the food components in the preschool meal patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three food servings ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of vegetables, fruits, or both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of grains ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ A serving is the amount specified for each age group in the preschool meal patterns.

² Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. For more information, see “Meat/meat alternates at breakfast” in section 3.

³ Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch. If the meal includes two servings of vegetables, they must be two different kinds. For more information, see “Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch” in section 3.

⁴ Snack must include two of the five components.

**Nutrition Standards**

Unlike the meal patterns for grades K-12, the preschool meal patterns do not include weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. However, the preschool meal patterns require nutrition standards for some specific foods, including sugar limits for yogurt and breakfast cereals, and minimum protein requirements for tofu. For more information, see “Yogurt and soy yogurt,” “Crediting Breakfast cereals,” and “Commercial Tofu and tofu products” in section 3.
Offer versus Serve
Offer versus serve (OVS) is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children in grades K-12 to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable meal. The USDA does not allow OVS for preschool meals in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, or for preschool snacks in the ASP.

Buy American
All foods sold in the USDA school nutrition programs must comply with the Buy American Provision under the federal regulations for the NSLP (7 CFR 210.21 (d)) and SBP (7CFR 220.16 (d)). This provision requires that schools and institutions purchase domestically grown and processed foods to the maximum extent possible. SFAs must ensure that all foods purchased using funds from the nonprofit school food service account comply with the Buy American provision, including competitive foods and beverages sold a la carte. For more information, see USDA Memo SP 38-2017: Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the NSLP.

Preschool Meal Patterns
The following pages include the preschool meal patterns for breakfast (table 1-2), lunch (table 1-3), and ASP snack (table 1-4). Handouts of the preschool breakfast and lunch patterns are available on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage. A handout of the preschool ASP meal pattern is available on the CSDE’s ASP webpage. For more information on the preschool ASP meal pattern requirements, see the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program Handbook.
### Table 1-2. Preschool breakfast meal pattern

**October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019**

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

#### Menu planning notes for breakfast

¹ Breakfast must include the minimum serving of all three components. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting processed foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation,* and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP.*

² Flavored milk cannot be served.

³ Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP.*

⁴ Pasteurized full-strength juice can meet the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or ASP snack day, between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP* and *Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.*
### Menu Planning Notes for Breakfast, Continued

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

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

7. At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For the preschool meal patterns, WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grains or contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

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

9. Through September 30, 2019, all grains must meet the applicable weights or volumes in *Grain Serving Sizes for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP* or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

10. Beginning October 1, 2019, the grains component is in ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

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

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

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

14. Beginning October 1, 2019, the serving size for RTE breakfast cereals is in ounce equivalents. The required volume for ages 1-4 (½ ounce equivalent) is ½ cup of flakes or rounds, ⅛ cup of puffed cereal, and ⅛ cup of granola.
### Table 1-3. Preschool lunch meal pattern

**October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food components</th>
<th>Ages 1-2</th>
<th>Ages 3-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk, fluid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1: Unflavored whole milk</td>
<td>4 fluid ounces (½ cup)</td>
<td>6 fluid ounces (¾ cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 2-4: Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk or unflavored fat-free milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meat/Meat Alternates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meat, poultry, or fish</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ½ ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu, soy products, or alternate protein products (APP)</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ½ ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
<td>1 ½ ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg, large</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>¾</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked dry beans or peas</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds</td>
<td>½ ounce = 50%</td>
<td>¾ ounce = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened</td>
<td>4 ounces or ½ cup</td>
<td>6 ounces or ¾ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits</strong></td>
<td>⅛ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
<td>½ slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
<td>½ serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold)</td>
<td>¼ cup or ½ ounce</td>
<td>½ cup or ½ ounce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See next page for important menu planning notes.
Menu planning notes for lunch

1. Lunch must include the minimum serving of all five components. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting processed foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*.

2. Flavored milk cannot be served.

3. A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.

4. APP must meet the requirements in appendix A of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP* and *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP*.

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

6. Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped. At lunch, nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. They must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the total requirement. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP*.

7. Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

8. Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*.

9. Pasteurized full-strength juice can meet the vegetables or fruits component at only one preschool meal or ASP snack per day, between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, and frozen) more often than juice. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP* and *Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*. 

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**Table 1-3. Preschool lunch meal pattern**, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menu planning notes for lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lunch must include the minimum serving of all five components. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) <em>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</em> (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting processed foods, see the CSDE’s handouts, <em>Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation</em>, and <em>Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Flavored milk cannot be served.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. The USDA’s <em>CACFP Best Practices</em> recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. APP must meet the requirements in appendix A of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, <em>Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP</em> and <em>Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <em>Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped. At lunch, nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. They must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the total requirement. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <em>Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <em>Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. The USDA’s <em>CACFP Best Practices</em> recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <em>Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pasteurized full-strength juice can meet the vegetables or fruits component at only one preschool meal or ASP snack per day, between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. The USDA’s <em>CACFP Best Practices</em> recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, and frozen) more often than juice. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, <em>Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP</em> and <em>Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Menu planning notes for lunch, continued

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

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

12 To credit as the grains component, a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ must be the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

13 At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For the preschool meal patterns, WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grains or contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

15 Through September 30, 2019, all grains must meet the applicable weights or volumes in Grain Serving Sizes for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP. Beginning October 1, 2019, the grains component is in ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

16 Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

18 Beginning October 1, 2019, the serving size for RTE breakfast cereals is in ounce equivalents. The required volume for ages 1-4 (½ ounce equivalent) is ½ cup of flakes or rounds, ¼ cup of puffed cereal, and ⅛ cup of granola.
Table 1-4. ASP meal pattern for preschoolers

October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serve any two of the following five components (must be two different components)</th>
<th>Ages 1-2</th>
<th>Ages 3-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk, fluid</strong>&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1: Unflavored whole milk</td>
<td>4 fluid ounces (&lt;1/2 cup)</td>
<td>6 fluid ounces (&lt;1/4 cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 2-4: Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk or unflavored fat-free milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meat/Meat Alternates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meat, poultry, or fish&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu, soy products, or alternate protein products (APP)&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese</td>
<td>1/8 cup</td>
<td>1/8 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg, large</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked dry beans or peas&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
<td>1/2 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2 ounces or 1/4 cup</td>
<td>2 ounces or 1/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong>&lt;sup&gt;9,10&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits</strong>&lt;sup&gt;10,11&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grains</strong>&lt;sup&gt;12,13,14,15&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread</td>
<td>1/2 slice</td>
<td>1/2 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin</td>
<td>1/2 serving</td>
<td>1/2 serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal&lt;sup&gt;16&lt;/sup&gt;, cereal grain&lt;sup&gt;17&lt;/sup&gt;, or pasta</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold)&lt;sup&gt;16,18&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1/4 cup or 1/3 ounce</td>
<td>1/2 cup or 1/2 ounce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

↓ See next page for important menu planning notes ↑
### Menu planning notes for snack

1. Snack must include the minimum serving of two of the five components. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one snack component. Use the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For processed foods, review the product’s Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation,* and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP.*

2. In addition to meeting the ASP meal pattern requirements, ASP snacks in public schools that choose the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes must comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *HFC, CNS, and List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages* webpages.

3. Flavored milk cannot be served.

4. A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.

5. APP must meet the requirements in *appendix A* of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP* and *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP.*

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

7. Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP.*

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

9. Vegetables include fresh, frozen, and canned. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP.*
Table 1-4. ASP meal pattern for preschoolers ¹, continued

Menu planning notes for snack, continued

10 Pasteurized full-strength juice can meet the vegetables or fruits component at only one preschool meal or ASP snack per day, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP and Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

12 To credit as the grains component, a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ must be the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

13 At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For the preschool meal patterns, WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grains or contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

15 Through September 30, 2019, all grains must meet the applicable weights or volumes in Grain Serving Sizes for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP. Beginning October 1, 2019, the grains component is in ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

16 Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

18 Beginning October 1, 2019, the serving size for RTE breakfast cereals is in ounce equivalents. The required volume for ages 1-4 (1/2 ounce equivalent) is ½ cup of flakes or rounds, ¾ cup of puffed cereal, and ⅛ cup of granola.
Overview of Preschool Meal Pattern Requirements

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

Breakfast

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

- The meat/meat alternates component may be substituted for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1/2-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for 1/2 serving of the grains component. For more information, see “Meat/meat alternates at breakfast” in section 3.

- If the menu indicates “juice” or “fruit,” the SFA must indicate the specific varieties of juice and fruit served. This information can be listed on the preschool menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of juice and fruit served in preschool meals and ASP snacks.

- If juice is served at breakfast, it cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at lunch or ASP snack. For more information, see “Juice limit” in section 3.

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

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

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

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

- If the lunch menu lists “salad,” the SFA must provide a specific description of the type of salad on the preschool menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of salads served in preschool meals and ASP snacks. Examples include carrot-raisin salad; garden salad with lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes; and fresh fruit salad with apples, oranges, bananas, and strawberries.

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

Snack

- Snacks must include two of the five components. The serving for each component must be at least the minimum amount in the preschool ASP meal pattern (see table 1-4 in this section). A preschool snack that contains two servings from the same component is not reimbursable. For example, a snack of orange juice (fruits component) and applesauce (fruits component) contains two food items but only one food component, and is not reimbursable. However, a snack of orange juice (fruits component) and carrot sticks (vegetables component) contains two different components and is reimbursable.
• If the snack menu includes a creditable beverage (milk or juice), the other snack component cannot be a beverage. SFAs cannot serve juice when milk is the only other snack component.

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

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

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

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

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

Meal pattern documentation

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

• The SFA must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer’s production formulation statement (PFS) on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial foods served in preschool menus, such as entrees, grains, and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients, e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad.

Note: CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component, but usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that
1 | Preschool Meal Patterns

are part of these products, such as grains, vegetables, and fruits. For more information, see “Child Nutrition (CN) labels” in section 2.

- The SFA must have documentation on file to indicate that all WGR foods were identified using one of the USDA’s six allowable methods for determining compliance with the preschool WGR criteria.

**Note:** The WGR criteria for the preschool meal patterns are different from the WGR criteria for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. Grain foods (excluding grain-based desserts) that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 in the NSLP also meet the preschool WGR criteria, and may be served as WGR foods in preschool meals and ASP snacks. For more information, see “Grain-based desserts” and “WGR requirement” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

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

- The SFA must have documentation on file to indicate that APP meet the requirements in appendix A of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). For more information, see “Alternate protein products” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP.

- The SFA must have documentation on file to indicate that tofu and tofu products contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see “Commercial tofu and tofu products” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP.

- The SFA must have standardized recipes on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods made on site, such as entrees, grains, and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients, e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad. For more information, see “Standardized recipes” in section 2.
The SFA must have a daily production record on file for all preschool meals and ASP snacks. The production record must include all meal components and menu items including all meal choices, food components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods. For more information, see “Production records for breakfast and lunch” and “Production records for snack” in section 2.

Resources for Preschool Meal Patterns

The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on planning meals and snacks to meet the preschool meal patterns. For detailed information on crediting foods in the preschool meal patterns, see the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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

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

• Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

• Healthy Meals Resource System (USDA):
  https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/

• Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents

• Menu Planner for School Meals (USDA):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner

• Menu Planning (USDA webpage):
  http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/menu-planning-0

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

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

• Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children (USDA):

• Team Nutrition Resource Library (USDA):
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library

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

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

SFAs should ensure that all appropriate school food service staff are aware of the documents needed to demonstrate the menu’s compliance with the preschool meal patterns, and understand how to complete and maintain appropriate documentation. Table 2-1 summarizes the required documentation for meal pattern compliance. SFAs must maintain these records on file for the CSDE’s Administrative Review of school nutrition programs.

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

**Menus**

SFAs must maintain menu records that document the service of reimbursable meals to preschoolers. Menus should reflect all food items, and indicate the type of milk served and which grain products are WGR.

For preschool menu ideas, see the CSDE’s sample menus for ages 3-5 in the CACFP.

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

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

Menu forms for breakfast and lunch
The CSDE’s sample preschool menu forms for breakfast and lunch help SFAs plan menus to include the required meal pattern components in the appropriate portion sizes. These forms include:

- 4-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 1-2;
- 4-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 3-4;
- 5-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 1-2;
- 5-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 3-4;
- 7-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 1-2;
- 7-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 3-4;
- 4-day Preschool Lunch Ages 1-2;
- 4-day Preschool Lunch Ages 3-4;
- 5-day Preschool Lunch Ages 1-2;
- 5-day Preschool Lunch Ages 3-4;
- 7-day Preschool Lunch Ages 1-2; and
- 7-day Preschool Lunch Ages 3-4.

The preschool menu forms are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Menu forms for snack
The CSDE’s sample ASP menu forms help menu planners include the required ASP meal pattern components in the appropriate portion sizes. These forms include:

- ASP Menu Form for Ages 1-2;
- ASP Menu Form for Ages 3-4; and
- ASP Sample Menu for Ages 3-4.

The ASP forms are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.
Cycle menus
The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to use cycle menus for preschool meals and snacks. A cycle menu is series of menus planned for a specific period (such as four weeks) with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help SFAs comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time.

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

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

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

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

Production Records for Breakfast and Lunch
The USDA regulations 7 CFR 210.10(a)(3) and 7 CFR 220.8(a)(3) require that SFAs maintain daily production records for school meals for preschoolers and grades K-12. Production records must show how the offered meals contribute to the required food components and food quantities for each meal served to each age group every day. SFAs must keep production records on file for three years plus the current school year.

A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. Table 2-2 indicates what elements production records should include and when food service personnel should complete the information.
Table 2-2. Required elements for production records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete before meal service</th>
<th>Complete after meal service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Name of site</td>
<td>• Temperatures (complete throughout meal service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meal date</td>
<td>• Total amount/quantity of food prepared for each food item or menu item, e.g., number of servings, pounds, cans, and pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meal type (breakfast or lunch)</td>
<td>• Amount of leftover food for each food item or menu item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All planned menu items including all meal choices, food components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods</td>
<td>• Total amount of food served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recipe name and number or product name and code</td>
<td>• Number of reimbursable meals served for each age/age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planned serving size and number of servings for reimbursable meals for each age/age group, and if applicable, nonreimbursable meals (e.g., second meals and adult meals), and a la carte sales</td>
<td>• Number of nonreimbursable meals served, e.g., second meals and adult meals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Food service staff should record temperatures throughout the meal service to ensure that hot foods are held at 140 °F or above and cold foods at held at 41 °F or below.

To avoid potential compliance issues with production records, food service personnel must:

• complete all information (no missing or incomplete information);
• make the information legible;
• use the proper weight or volume measure for each food item, e.g., use cups for fruits and vegetables instead of ounces (see “Volume versus Weight” below);
• enter the number of servings, pounds, cans, or pieces in the column for “total quantity of food used” (not the number of portions prepared);
• separately list each type of milk served;
• list all condiments;
• list portion sizes accurately and ensure that these serving sizes are the same as what is actually being served to students;
• list all items prepared for the meal including daily items and alternate meal choices;
• accurately record the “planned” servings for each age group;
• separately list nonreimbursable adult meals and second student meals from reimbursable student meals;
• add any extra amounts of food needed during the meal service period;
• note if any substitutions are made or leftovers are used; and
• use a production record for each site, including satellite locations.
Menu Records

For more information on production records, review chapter 4 of the USDA’s *Menu Planner for School Meals: School Year 2018-2019*.

**Volume versus weight**

During the Administrative Review of school nutrition programs, the CSDE frequently finds that production records include incorrect information for the volume or weight of a menu item. Production records must reflect the measurements required by the NSLP and SBP preschool meal patterns. For example, the preschool meal patterns require a specific volume (cups) for the fruits component and vegetables component, and specific a volume (tablespoons) for peanut butter. Therefore, production records for preschool menus must list the servings of fruits and vegetables in cups, not weight (ounces), and the servings of peanut butter in tablespoons, not weight (ounces).

Volume is the amount of space an ingredient occupies in a measuring container, and is not the same as weight. Volume measures include teaspoon, tablespoon, fluid ounce, cup, pint, quart and gallon. A specific measure of volume (fluid ounces) does not equal the same measure of weight (ounces). For example, a ½-cup serving of a food (4 fluid ounces) does not weigh 4 ounces. The weight of a volume measure of food varies depending on the density of the food. For example, ½ cup of lettuce weighs less than ½ cup of canned peaches.

**Production record forms for breakfast and lunch**

The CSDE’s sample production records help SFAs provide the information required to comply with the USDA’s regulations for production records. The forms are based on food items and food components, and include:

- Food Components: Preschool Ages 1-4;
- Food Components: Preschool Ages 3-4;
- Food Components: Prekindergarten through Grade 8;
- Food Components: Prekindergarten through Grade 12; and
- Food Items: Preschool Ages 1-4.

The production record forms can be used for breakfast and lunch. They are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Production Records for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**Production record forms for snack**

The USDA regulations require that all schools and institutions participating in the ASP must complete daily menu production records that document the service of reimbursable snacks to preschoolers and grades K-12. Production records must demonstrate how snacks contribute to the required food components for each day of operation.
The CSDE’s sample ASP production record for preschoolers help SFAs provide the information required to comply with the USDA’s regulations for production records. The sample completed production record shows how to complete the form.

- ASP Production Record for Ages 3-4
- Sample Completed ASP Production Record for Ages 3-4

These documents are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

**Other Snack Forms**

SFAs must document snack counts for all schools in the ASP. The CSDE has sample forms that SFAs may use for schools that are site or area eligible, and other sample forms for schools that are not site or area eligible. These forms are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

**Standardized Recipes**

The USDA’s regulations require that SFAs develop and follow standardized recipes. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation; and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment, and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

Standardized recipes have many benefits. They help to ensure:

- consistent food quality;
- predictable yield;
- consistent nutrient content;
- customer satisfaction;
- food cost control;
- efficient purchasing procedures;
- inventory control;
- labor cost control;
- increased employee confidence;
- reduced record keeping; and
- successful completion of the CSDE’s Administrative Review of school nutrition programs.

When SFAs prepare foods on site, standardized recipes must document that a serving provides the amount of each food component credited toward the preschool meal patterns. For example, if the menu planner credits lasagna as 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates
component, ¼ cup of the vegetables component, and ½ serving of the grains component, the SFA’s standardized recipe must document that each serving contains 1 ½ ounces of cooked lean meat and cheese, ¼ cup of tomato sauce, and ¼ cup of whole grain, WGR, or enriched pasta.

Foods made on site include:

- foods that are prepared from scratch using a recipe, such as cornbread, coleslaw, potato salad, soup, lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and casseroles; and
- foods that require some additional processing by adding other ingredients after purchasing. For example, making rice or pasta with butter, sautéing vegetables in oil, adding dressing to salad, assembling a sandwich, adding eggs and oil to a muffin mix, and reconstituting canned soup with milk.

Standardized recipes are not required for foods that do not contain any added ingredients, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, purchased breads and rolls, and commercially prepared entrees and side dishes.

SFAs can standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA recipes. The CSDE’s *Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs* provides a template that SFAs can use when developing standardized recipes. For more information on using standardized recipes, see the resources below and “Determining in-house product yields” in this section.

**Resources for standardized recipes**

The resources below assist SFAs with developing and using standardized recipes.

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers

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

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

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

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

No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: Combine Multiple Servings by Weight (ICN):

No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: How Foods Are Portioned (ICN):

No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: Identifying the Parts of a USDA Quantity Recipe (ICN):

No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: Portioning Matters (ICN):

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

Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Schools (USDA):

Recipes for School Food Service (USDA):
https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/recipes/recipes-school-food-service

Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/StdRecipeSchools.doc
Menu Records

- USDA Recipes for Child Care:
  https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/usda-recipes-for-child-care/

- USDA Standardized Recipes:
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-standardized-recipe

- What’s Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl (USDA):
  https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/

- Why Use Standardized Recipes? Fact Sheet (ICN):

For more information, see the CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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

**Documentation for Commercial Products**

Commercially prepared foods served in preschool meals and ASP snacks must provide the amount of the food components being credited toward the preschool meal patterns. For example, to credit commercially prepared chicken nuggets as the meat/meat alternate and grains component for ages 3-4 at lunch, the manufacturer’s documentation must indicate that one serving of the product contains 1 ½ ounces of cooked chicken and ½ serving of whole grain, WGR, or enriched breading.

To credit commercial products toward the preschool meal patterns, SFAs must obtain:

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

These are the only acceptable records for documenting a commercial product’s contribution to the preschool meal patterns. A product’s Nutrition Facts label, ingredients statement, and packaging do not provide sufficient information to document the preschool meal pattern contribution. Only CN labels provide a guarantee of the product’s contribution to the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs.
SFAs cannot use commercial products without a CN label or PFS to credit toward the preschool meal patterns. For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, see the CSDE’s handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 10-15: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements.

Table 2-3 compares the criteria for a CN labels and PFS forms.

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

**Child Nutrition (CN) Labels**

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

The USDA does not require that manufacturers make CN-labeled products or that SFAs purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the local SFA. If a CN-labeled product is required, the SFA must clearly state this information in their purchasing specifications.

A CN label is a statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements as printed on the label.
CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the USDA's meal patterns. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains, and vegetables components; and CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates and grains components.

The CN label is found on the actual product packaging and will always contain the following information:

- the CN logo, which is a distinct border;
- the meal pattern contribution statement;
- a six-digit product identification number;
- the USDA authorization; and
- the month and year of approval.

The USDA does not allow manufacturers to place the CN label on a fact sheet or any other product information. Acceptable and valid documentation for the CN label includes the original CN label from the product carton, or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton. CN labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible.

The resources below provide additional information on CN labels.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*.

**Product formulation statements**

A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA’s meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. It generally includes a detailed explanation of what the product contains and indicates the amount of each ingredient in the product by weight. The information on a PFS can vary among manufacturers because the USDA does not monitor PFS forms.

To document a product’s crediting information, the PFS must:

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

All creditable ingredients in the PFS must match a description in the FBG. The USDA’s *CN Labeling* website provides sample PFS templates for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. If the PFS does not meet these requirements, the SFA cannot accept it, and the product cannot credit in the preschool meal patterns.

Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims for reimbursable meals. The USDA does not monitor PFS forms for compliance with the product’s actual formulation or stated contribution to the meal pattern requirements. Therefore, SFAs must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable preschools meals and ASP snacks. SFAs should request supporting documentation from manufacturers, verify its accuracy, and maintain this documentation on file for the CSDE’s Administrative Review of school nutrition programs.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Product Formulation Statements*, and the USDA’s handout, *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s PFS*. 
Determining Food Yields

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

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

SFAs should use the FBG to determine how much food to purchase to meet the minimum servings in the USDA meal patterns, and to calculate how school recipes contribute to the preschool meal patterns. For example, menu planners can use the FBG to determine how much raw broccoli provides 50 servings of ½ cup of cooked vegetable or how much uncooked brown rice provides 100 servings of ⅛ cup of cooked rice. This information is essential for documenting compliance with the preschool meal pattern requirements.


Determining in-house product yields

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Select the appropriate measuring utensil for the portion size being served, such as a number 16 scoop/disher or ½-cup measuring spoon. For information on measuring utensils, see the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster.

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

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

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

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

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

For additional assistance with yield studies, contact the CSDE’s school nutrition programs staff.
Nutrition Information

SFAs must obtain nutrition information for all commercially prepared foods used to prepare school meals. If a processed product does not have a Nutrition Facts panel, the SFA is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the manufacturer.

For grades K-12, all foods served as part of reimbursable meals count toward the weekly dietary specifications and are included in the CSDE’s nutrient analysis of school menus, when a nutrient analysis is required as part of the Administrative Review of school nutrition programs. The weekly dietary specifications do not apply to preschool meals. Therefore, preschool meals are not included when the CSDE conducts a nutrient analysis of school meals.

However, SFAs are still responsible for maintaining nutrition information for commercially prepared foods used to prepare preschool meals. SFAs operating the NSLP and SBP must follow the NSLP and SBP regulations. The menu documentation requirements for grades K-12 also apply when a SFA serves preschoolers. Therefore, SFAs must maintain product Nutrition Facts labels, ingredients, and recipes, as required by the USDA’s regulations and policies for the NSLP and SBP.

The USDA considers providing nutrition information for foods served in school meals a component of reasonable meal modifications for children with disabilities. SFAs are responsible for making nutrition information for school meals available to students, families, school nurses, and others as needed. For information on the requirements for meal modifications, see the CSDE’s guide, Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs, and the CSDE’s Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

The USDA encourages SFAs to inform students, parents, and the public about efforts they are making to meet the meal requirements for school meals.

Nutrition Information for USDA Foods

The USDA provides product information sheets for USDA Foods, which are available at https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/nslp-usda-foods-fact-sheets. These product information sheets include the product’s description, crediting and yield information, culinary tips and recipes, food safety information, and a general Nutrition Facts label. However, they do not include a product-specific Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement.
For further processed USDA Foods, the nutrition information and ingredients for USDA direct delivery food items (brown box) may vary based on the vendor who received the bid. If a SFA requires product information for students with food allergies or other dietary needs, the SFA must obtain product-specific information from the manufacturer.

To find the nutrition information for USDA direct delivery food items, check the outside of the case or the inside packaging. If nutrition information is not available, check with the product’s manufacturer. The agreement between the Connecticut FDP and processor requires that processors must provide product nutrition information to SFAs upon request and must make available product nutrition information on their website. For additional assistance, contact the Connecticut FDP.

**Nutrition disclosure**

The USDA’s regulations for the NSLP (210.10 (n)) require that schools must accurately represent foods on lunch and breakfast menus. Menus cannot claim that a food item is beef, pork, poultry (such as chicken or turkey) or seafood (such as fish or tuna) if the food item contains more than 30 percent APP. The names used for these menu items must reflect that they are not 100 percent meat, poultry, or fish. For more information on APP, see “Alternate protein products (APP)” in section 3.
3 — Meal Components

Each food component of the USDA’s preschool meal patterns has specific criteria for determining how foods credit toward reimbursable meals. The menu planning guidance in this section assists SFAs with meeting the requirements for the five food components of the preschool meal patterns, including milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains. For additional guidance on crediting foods, see the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Creditable Foods

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

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

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

- CSDE Operational Memos for the CACFP: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-the-CACFP
- CSDE Operational Memos for School Nutrition Programs: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-School-Nutrition-Programs
- Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents
- USDA CACFP Policy Memos: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/policy
3 | Meal Components

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

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

- USDA School Meals Policy Memos:
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/policy

- USDA School Meals Legislation and Regulations:
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/program-legislation-regulations

Minimum creditable amounts

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some noncreditable foods (such as candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks) cannot be sold in the school nutrition programs due to federal or state requirements. For more information, see the CSDE’s Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools, and the CSDE’s Competitive Foods webpage and Beverage Requirements webpage.

Snack foods sold a la carte (separately from reimbursable preschool meals and ASP snacks) must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) or the USDA’s Smart Snacks nutrition standards. The CNS applies to public school districts that participate in the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC). The USDA’s Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to public school districts that do not participate in the healthy food option of HFC, and to all private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs).

For more information and examples of noncreditable foods for preschoolers, see the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

Water

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act requires that SFAs must make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service, including ASP snacks. However, water does not credit in the preschool meal patterns. Preschool menus cannot offer a choice between water and milk or juice. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.
3 | Meal Components

Milk Component

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

Allowable types of milk

The preschool meal patterns require unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat milk or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 2-4. Flavored milk cannot be served. The USDA’s handout, Serving Milk in the CACFP, summarizes the allowable types of milk for each age group in the preschool meal patterns.

SFAs cannot serve milk that does not comply with the specific fat content of the preschool meal patterns. For example, low-fat milk, fat-free milk, and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to 1-year-olds; and whole milk and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to ages 2-4. However, if a child has a disability that requires milk with a fat content that is different from the preschool meal pattern requirements, the SFA can make the substitution prescribed in the medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs, and the CSDE’s guide, Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs.

State requirements for milk in public schools

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Milk substitutes for children without disabilities**

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

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

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

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

SFAs cannot offer any other beverages as a choice instead of milk, including juice and water. Juice and water are not allowable milk substitutes for children without disabilities. Only fluid milk credits as the milk component in the preschool meal patterns. For more information, see “Water Availability” in section 4.
USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes
SFAs that choose to offer a milk substitute as part of reimbursable meals for children without disabilities must provide products that meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Table 3-1 summarizes these requirements. SFAs cannot offer any nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA’s nutrition standards, such as rice milk, almond milk, and cashew milk.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-1. Nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276 milligrams (mg) or 30% Daily Value (DV) (^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 grams (g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 international units (IU) or 10% DV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 IU or 25% DV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 mg or 6% DV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222 mg or 20% DV (^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349 mg or 10% DV (^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riboflavin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.44 mg or 25% DV (^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 micrograms (mcg) or 20% DV (^1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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

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

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

**Lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk**

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

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

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

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

In addition to meeting the preschool meal patterns, any lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk served as part of reimbursable meals in public schools must meet the sugar limit of the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. *Section 10-221q*. SFAs cannot sell lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that does not meet the state requirements, either as part of reimbursable preschool meals and ASP snacks or a la carte. For more information, see “state requirements for milk in public schools” in this section.
The CSDE’s *List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages* includes lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that meets the federal and state requirements.

**Milk in prepared foods**

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

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

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

**Noncreditable foods in the milk component**

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

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

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

The resources below assist SFAs with crediting foods as the milk component in the preschool meal patterns.

- **Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):**

- **Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA):**

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
Meat/Meat Alternates Component

The preschool meal patterns require a serving of the meat/meat alternates component at lunch. The meat/meat alternates component is not required at breakfast, but may be substituted for the entire grains component up to three times per week. The meat/meat alternates component may be served as one of the two required snack components. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.

Serving size for meat/meat alternates

The NSLP and ASP meal patterns for preschoolers and the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 list the meat/meat alternates component in ounces. The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-12 list the meat/meat alternates component in ounce equivalents. The amount of a food that provides 1 ounce equivalent or 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component is the same.

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

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 1 ounce of natural cheese, e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss or process cheese, e.g., American (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- \(\frac{1}{4}\) cup of cottage cheese (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- 2 ounces of cheese food/spread or cheese substitute;
- \(\frac{1}{4}\) cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) cup of yogurt or soy yogurt (plain or flavored) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (3.83 grams per ounce);
- 2.2 ounces (weight) or \(\frac{1}{4}\) cup (volume) of tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the USDA’s APP requirements.
Amounts in the meat/meat alternates component refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. A serving must contain the appropriate size edible portion of meat/meat alternates before any other ingredients are added. For example, tuna salad for ages 3-4 at lunch must contain 1 ½ ounces of tuna fish before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, celery, and seasonings.

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

**Main dish requirement for lunch**

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

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

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

**Meat/meat alternates at breakfast**

The meat/meat alternates component is not required at breakfast, but SFAs may substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component up to three times per week, regardless of the number of days in the week. For example, a SFA could choose to substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component three times.
during a three-day week or three times during a five-day week.

A ½ ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for ½ serving of the grains component. For example, a SFA could substitute 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, ½ ounce of cheese, ¼ of a large egg, or ¼ cup of yogurt for ½ serving of the grains component. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP*.

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

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

Table 3-2 show examples of binders and extenders.

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

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

² Products can contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s APP requirements. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP*. 
Cheese

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

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

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

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

Legumes as meat/meat alternates

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

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

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

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

**Nuts and seeds**

Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. **Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped.

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

**Nut and seed butters**

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

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

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of a nut or seed butter in one menu item, such as a peanut butter sandwich. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller portion of peanut butter and supplementing with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to provide the full serving.
For example, the preschool lunch meal pattern for ages 3-4 requires 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component (3 tablespoons of peanut butter). The lunch menu could provide the required 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component from 1 ½ tablespoons of peanut butter (¼ ounce of meat/meat alternates) served with ¾ ounce of low-fat cheese (¼ ounce of meat/meat alternates). For more information on crediting nut and seed butters, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP*.

**Yogurt and soy yogurt**

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

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

Yogurt and soy yogurt must meet the preschool sugar limit of no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce). Yogurt and soy yogurt used in smoothies made on site by the SFA must also meet this requirement. The SFA must have documentation on file to indicate that yogurt and soy yogurt served in preschool meals and ASP snacks comply with the sugar limit.

Yogurt and soy yogurt used in smoothies made on site by the SFA credit as the meat/meat alternates component if they contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce).

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

**Note:** Unlike the preschool meal patterns, the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 do not limit the amount of sugars in yogurt and soy yogurt. If SFAs serve the same type of yogurt or soy yogurt to grades K-12 and preschoolers, these foods must comply with the preschool sugar limit for yogurt and soy yogurt. The two exceptions 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; and
• 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, see “Serving the same foods to preschoolers and grades K-12,” “Preschoolers and grades K-5 eating together,” and “Preschoolers and grades K-12 eating together in the ASP” in section 1.

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

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

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

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

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

SFAs should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, see “Noncreditable foods” at the beginning of this section, and the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

Resources for crediting meat/meat alternates

The resources below assist SFAs with crediting foods as the meat/meat alternates component in the preschool meal patterns.

3 | Meal Components

Meat/Meat Alternates

- Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

- Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

- Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

- Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (USDA):

- Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

- Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (USDA):

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
**Vegetables Component**

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

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

Unlike the lunch meal pattern for grades K-12, the preschool lunch meal pattern does not require minimum weekly servings of the five vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends providing at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*.

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

**Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch**

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

**Serving size for vegetables**

The serving size for vegetables is based on volume (cups) except for leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach, which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of leafy greens credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

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

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

The serving size refers to the amount of cooked legumes without any added liquid, such as the sauce in baked beans. For example, if the menu planner credits ¼ cup of baked beans as ⅛ cup of the vegetables component, the serving must contain ¼ cup of beans, not including the sauce. For more information on crediting legumes and guidance on how to calculate the contribution of legumes in a recipe, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP*.

Vegetable mixtures at lunch

Vegetable mixtures can credit toward both the vegetables component and the fruits component if they contain at least ⅛ cup of two different kinds of vegetables. For example, a lunch menu for ages 3-4 includes ¼ cup of broccoli and ¼ cup of cauliflower mixed together. The menu planner can credit the broccoli as the full vegetables component (¼ cup) and use the cauliflower to replace the full fruits component (¼ cup) because it provides the minimum required preschool serving for the fruits component.

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

Vegetable juice

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

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

Soups

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

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

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

For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP.

Pureed vegetables

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

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

Noncreditable foods in the vegetables component

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

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

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

The resources below assist SFAs with crediting foods as the vegetables component in the preschool meal patterns.

- USDA Memo CACFP 25-2016: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
Fruits Component

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

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

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

Serving size for fruits

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

Canned fruit

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

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

Fruit juice

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

**Juice blends**

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

**Frozen juice products**

The meal pattern contribution of frozen fruit juice (such as full-strength frozen juice pops) is based on the fluid volume prior to freezing. SFAs must request this information from the manufacturer. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Product Formulation Statements*.

**Juice limit**

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

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

- if the breakfast menu includes juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch or ASP snack that same day;
- if the lunch menu includes canned fruit in juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast or ASP snack that same day; and
- if the ASP snack menu includes a smoothie made with pureed fruit as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast or lunch that same day.
If the daily preschool menu meets the juice limit, the SFA could choose to offer juice as an extra noncreditable food that does not count toward the preschool meal patterns. However, the USDA encourages SFAs to limit juice in preschool menus to ensure that meals and snacks meet preschoolers’ nutrition needs. Preschoolers might not consume the actual meal components if the menu includes noncreditable foods. In addition, SFAs must consider the cost issues of providing noncreditable foods. The USDA’s CACFP Best Practices recommends serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP and Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

**Fresh fruit**

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

- one 60-count plum, one 2 ⅛-inch diameter peach, and one 150-count petite banana each credit as ⅜ cup of fruit;
- one 100-count and 120-count banana, one 150-count pear, one 80-count peach, one 138-count orange, and one 45-count (2-inch diameter) plum each credit as ½ cup of fruit; and
- one 113-count and 125-count orange each credit as ⅝ cup of fruit.

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit (one piece, whole or cut-up)</th>
<th>Preschool meal pattern contribution (from FBG)</th>
<th>Additional amount for ½ cup $^{1,2}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple, 125-138 count</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricot, medium (1 ⅜-inch diameter)</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana, 150 count, petite</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana, 100-120 count, regular</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clementine, whole, peeled</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit, 27-32 count, large</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi, 33-39 count</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarine, size 88-96 (2 ⅛-inch diameter)</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarine, size 56-64 (2 ¾-inch diameter)</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 88 and 84 (2 ⅛-inch diameter)</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 64 and 60 (2 ½-inch diameter)</td>
<td>⅝ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 80</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 56</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach, size 56</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, 150 count</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, 120 count</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, D’Anjou, Bosc or Bartlett, 100 count</td>
<td>1 ⅛ cups</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum, purple, red, or black, 2 ½-inch diameter</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangerine, 120 count</td>
<td>⅜ cup</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^{1}$ A ½-cup serving of the fruits component is required for ages 3-4 at breakfast and for ages 1-4 at ASP snack (if the snack menu includes fruit as one of the two required snack components).

$^{2}$ At breakfast, the additional amount can be from the same fruit, a different fruit, or a vegetable. At lunch, the additional amount can be from the same fruit or a different fruit, or from vegetables offered as a fruit substitution. The preschool lunch meal pattern allows vegetables to substitute for the fruits component at any lunch.
Pureed fruit
Pureed fruit must be recognizable to credit in the preschool meal patterns. Pureed foods made from one fruit (such as applesauce) are recognizable creditable fruits. Combination foods with pureed (unrecognizable) fruits may contribute to the fruits component if the dish that contains them also provides an adequate amount of recognizable creditable fruit. Pureed fruit credits based on the volume served, not the volume before pureeing.

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

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

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

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

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

Menu planners must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the preschool juice limit. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one preschool meal or ASP snack per day, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. For example, if a smoothie credits as the fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at lunch or ASP snack.
For more information, see “Juice limit” in this section and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

**Noncreditable foods in the fruits component**

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

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

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

Resources for crediting fruits

The resources below assist SFAs with crediting foods as the fruits component in the preschool meal patterns.

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

- Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

- Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

- Start with Half a Cup: Fresh Fruit Portioning Guide for Schools:

- USDA Memo CACFP 25-2016: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
Grains Component

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

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

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

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

Grain-based desserts

Grain-based desserts cannot credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. Examples of grain-based desserts include brownies, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, pie crusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding.

Grain-based desserts do not include sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers), muffins, quick breads, e.g., banana bread and zucchini bread (except for cinnamon streusel), cornbread, pancakes, waffles, French toast, savory scones (such as cheese and herb), and pie crusts in entrees such as quiche, meat pies, and chicken pot pie.

As a best practice, the USDA encourages preschool menus to limit sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers) because of their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends
not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all preschool meals and ASP snacks.
SFAs may choose to serve grain-based desserts as an additional food item that does not credit toward the preschool meal patterns. For example, serving cake or cookies at special celebrations. However, the USDA and CSDE encourage SFAs to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods and beverages, to ensure children’s nutritional needs are met. For more information, see “Noncreditable foods” in this section.

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

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

- Through September 30, 2019, the required preschool grain serving for ages 1-4 is ½ serving. Grain foods must provide the appropriate weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) in the CSDE’s handout, *Grain Serving Sizes for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

- Effective October 1, 2019, the grains component changes to ounce equivalents. The required preschool grain serving for ages 1-4 is ½ ounce equivalent. Grain foods must provide the appropriate weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) in the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

For guidance on how to determine the preschool grain servings for a grain product or recipe, see the CSDE’s handout, *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*. 
Grain crediting worksheets
The CSDE’s CACFP crediting worksheets evaluate grain-based foods for compliance with the CACFP crediting, WGR, and serving size requirements. Since the preschool and CACFP meal pattern requirements are the same, SFAs may use the CSDE’s CACFP crediting worksheets to determine if grain foods comply with the preschool meal patterns. The grain crediting worksheets include:

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

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

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

The preschool crediting requirements are different for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and grain foods made on site by the SFA. These requirements are summarized below. For detailed guidance, see the CSDE’s handout, How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

Note: The crediting criteria for the grains component in the preschool meal patterns are different from the crediting criteria for the grains component in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. Bran, germ, and products that contain only enriched grains credit in the preschool meal patterns and the ASP meal patterns for grades K-12, but do not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. All grains served in school meals for grades K-12 must be WGR.

Grain foods (excluding grain-based desserts) that meet the crediting criteria for grades K-12 also meet the crediting criteria for preschoolers. However, grain foods that meet the crediting criteria for preschoolers might not meet the crediting criteria for grades K-12. If SFAs serve the same grain foods to grades K-12 and preschoolers, these foods must comply with the crediting criteria for grades K-12. For more information on the differences between the meal...
pattern requirements for preschoolers and grades K-12, see the CSDE’s handout, *Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs.*

**Creditig criteria for commercial grain products**

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

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

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

- **Ingredients:** Water, enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, vitamin B1 [thiamin mononitrate], vitamin B2 [riboflavin], folic acid), whole-wheat flour, vegetable oil (soybean, palm, and/or canola oil), egg whites, wheat bran, sugar, contains 2% or less of leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate, monocalcium phosphate), salt, malt flavoring, whey, soy lecithin.

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

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

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Credit criteria for breakfast cereals

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

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

Note: The NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 do not limit the amount of sugars in breakfast cereals. However, the meal patterns for preschoolers require that breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. If SFAs serve the same breakfast cereals to grades K-12 and preschoolers, these foods must comply with the preschool sugar limit for breakfast cereals. The two exceptions 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, and when SFAs choose to follow 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, see “Serving the same foods to preschoolers and grades K-12,” “Preschoolers and grades K-5 eating together,” and “preschoolers and grades K-12 eating together in the ASP” in section 1.
Meal Components

Grains

Crediting criteria for commercial combination foods

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

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

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

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

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

For examples of how to determine if commercial combination foods are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.
Grains

Meal Components

Crediting criteria for grain foods made on site

Grain foods made on site by the SFA credit as the grains component if a creditable grain (or the combined weight of all creditable grains) is the greatest ingredient by weight in the SFA’s standardized recipe. For examples of how to determine if grain foods made on site are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.*

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

Crediting criteria for combination foods made on site

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

Grains

**Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement**

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

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

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

**WGR criteria**

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

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

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

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

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

**Note:** The WGR criteria for the preschool meal patterns are different from the WGR criteria for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. Grain foods (excluding grain-based desserts) that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 also meet the preschool WGR criteria. However, grain foods that meet the preschool WGR criteria might not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. If SFAs serve the same grain foods to grades K-12 and preschoolers, these foods must comply with the WGR criteria for grades K-12. For information on the WGR criteria for grades K-12, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*. 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*.

The simplest method for determining if a grain product meets the preschool WGR criteria is to use grain product that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.
WGR criteria for commercial grain products

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

- **Ingredients:** Whole-wheat flour, sugar, wheat gluten. Contains 2% or less of each of the following: honey, salt, yeast, molasses, diacetyl tartaric acid esters of monodiglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, mono- and diglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.

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

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

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

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

For examples of how to determine if commercial grain products are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.*
Grains

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

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

For examples of how to determine if cooked breakfast cereals are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For examples of how to determine if commercial combination foods are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.*
WGR criteria for grain foods made on site

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

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

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

WGR criteria for combination foods made on site

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

Grains

Required documentation for grains

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

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

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

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

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

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

SFAs must also maintain documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the preschool sugar limit. Documentation should include the products’ Nutrition Facts label and the SFA’s calculation showing that the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. For information on calculating if a breakfast cereal meets the sugar limit, see the CSDE’s handout, *Credititing Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.*
Noncreditable food in the grains component

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

- products that do not contain a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ as the first ingredient (excluding water) (Note: Bran and germ credit in the preschool meal patterns but do not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12);
- noncreditable ingredients such as oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours);
- breakfast cereals that contain more than 6 grams of sugars per ounce; and
- grain-based desserts such as brownies, cookies, cake, coffee cake, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), sweet pie crusts, rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding. For more information, see “Grain-based desserts” in this section.

SFAs should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the grains component. For more information, see “Noncreditable Foods” at the beginning of this section, and the CSDE’s handout, Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.
3 | Meal Components

Grains

Resources for crediting grains

The resources below assist SFAs with crediting foods as the grain component in the preschool meal patterns.

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

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

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

- Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
• Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

• Grain Serving Sizes for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019) (CSDE):

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

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

• USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Q&As:
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers

• USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

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

• Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

For additional crediting resources, visit the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
4 — Meal Service

In addition to the meal pattern requirements, SFAs must comply with USDA’s regulations and policies regarding meal service in the school nutrition programs and Connecticut’s statute regarding lunch periods. This section addresses the meal service requirements for the NSLP and SBP, including water availability, lunch periods, prohibition of gender separation, and family-style meal service.

Water Availability

The HHFKA requires that schools participating in the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and ASP must make plain potable water available to children at no cost during the meal service. The water must be available without restriction in the location where meals are served. Water must also be made available for meals and ASP snacks that are served outside of the cafeteria, such as meals served in a classroom or during in-school suspension.

Schools can implement this requirement in a variety of ways, which include:

- offering water pitchers and cups on tables or in an area that is easily accessible to all children during meals and ASP snacks; and

- providing a water fountain or a faucet that allows students to fill their own bottles or cups with drinking water. The location of the water fountain must be in the foodservice area or immediately adjacent, such as a water fountain that is right outside the door to the foodservice area and accessible to all students during the meal period.

While water must be made available to students during meal service, water is not a meal pattern component and is not part of the reimbursable meal or ASP snack. Students are not required to take water. SFAs cannot promote or offer water or any other beverage as an alternative selection to fluid milk throughout the food service area.

The USDA does not provide separate funding for this provision and schools cannot claim reimbursement for water. However, reasonable costs associated with providing potable water would be an allowable cost to the nonprofit food service account.
Lunch Periods

Lunch periods in Connecticut schools are governed by state and federal regulations. The CSDE’s Circular Letter C-9: Federal and State Requirements for Provision and Timeframe of Daily Lunch Period for Students, summarizes the federal and state requirements.

C.G.S. Section 10-221o mandates that each local and regional board of education requires each school under its jurisdiction to offer all full day students a daily lunch period of not less than 20 minutes.

The USDA’s regulations specify that schools and institutions participating in the NSLP must serve lunches during the period of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. SFAs must submit a written request to the CSDE for a waiver if lunches will be served before or after this period. The district must submit the exemption request for the upcoming school year to the CSDE by July 1 of each school year.

The CSDE evaluates the circumstances of each request to determine whether it meets one of the USDA criteria for an exemption from the specified time frame for lunch. These criteria are based on USDA’s memo, Granting Exemptions to the Lunch Period, and are summarized below.

1. The CSDE may grant reasonable variances from the meal service requirements to accommodate special circumstances encountered in schools operating for traditional students at traditional times. For example, if a school has a legitimate need to extend the lunch service to 2:30 p.m. due to capacity concerns or because of extended school hours, an exception would be considered a special circumstance.

2. The CSDE may grant exemptions from the meal service requirements if the school operates for traditional students but at a nontraditional time. For example, a school may need to provide lunch service from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. to accommodate a work-study program that allows high school students to work in the morning and attend high school classes in the later afternoon or evening. Approval of an exemption for this specific circumstance will only be granted if these alternative programs provide students of high school grade or lower an opportunity to obtain the minimum requirements for graduation at a nontraditional time, and it is not possible to serve lunch at a more traditional time.
The written request for a waiver must be submitted to the CSDE by the superintendent and must include the special circumstances at the school that necessitate a change in the time frame for lunch. The CSDE will grant exemptions only if the school’s schedule meets one of the two USDA criteria specified above. The CSDE will not grant exemptions for routine scheduling choices such as block schedules.

**Prohibition of Gender Separation**

In general, the USDA nondiscrimination laws and policies in 7 CFR Parts 15, 15a, and 15b do not permit SFAs participating in the USDA school nutrition programs to separate children on any protected basis during meal service. Federal law prohibits discrimination based on gender at any educational institution receiving federal assistance. The USDA allows only two exceptions to the prohibition on gender-separated meal service.

**Coeducational schools and school-based sites**

The USDA recognizes religious exemptions granted by the federal Department of Education (ED) without prior express approval. ED guidelines allow school and school-based sites to apply for an exemption when federal law prohibiting gender separation is inconsistent with the institution’s religious tenets. These exemptions apply broadly to operations, including the meal service at a given site, such as a faith-based school. Additionally, ED guidelines specifically allow for the approval of gender-separate instruction at public primary and secondary non-vocational schools that could take a variety of forms. Since the general rule is that gender separation during meal service is prohibited, a coeducational school may not use limited ED approval of gender-separate instruction to justify blanket gender separation during meal service. Limited exemptions in these situations must be approved by the USDA.

**Other institutions and organizations**

State agencies may approve exemptions allowing separation by gender during meal service without express prior approval from the USDA in the following circumstances:

- meal service at religious institutions operating under the dictates of the religion with which they are affiliated;
- meal service at juvenile correctional facilities where combining members of the opposite gender would present a potential safety risk; and
- meal service at facilities that fully separate by gender as part of their normal operations, e.g., gender-separated summer camps.

The local educational agency (LEA) must submit the request in writing to the CSDE. LEAs must specify which reason applies and why separation by gender is necessary. For more
information, on the exemption process, see CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 30-15: Guidance on Prohibition of Separation by Gender during Child Nutrition Program Meal Service. The exemptions listed above are the only acceptable bases for gender separation during meal service in school nutrition programs. Any gender separation not based on the ED or USDA approval processes is strictly prohibited.

Situations that do not clearly fit into any of the exemptions outlined above may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CSDE in direct consultation with the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Regional Office, including the FNS Civil Rights Office and appropriate FNS National Office Child Nutrition Program staff.

**Family-style Meal Service**

Family style is a type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults. Meals served family style to preschoolers must follow the procedures below to ensure compliance and be eligible for reimbursement.

- A sufficient amount of prepared food and the appropriate type of milk must be placed on each table to provide the full-required portions of each of the food components for all children at the table and to accommodate the supervising adults. Milk for ages 2-4 must be unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk. For more information, see “Milk Component” in section 3.

- Children must initially be offered the full-required portion of each meal component. However, since replenishment is immediately available at each table, children may select an initial serving of a food component or food item that is less than the full-required minimum quantity. If children do not take the minimum required serving size of a food component, the meal is still reimbursable. The supervising adult should encourage additional portions and selections to meet the full-required minimum serving size, as appropriate.

- Children are not required to take a minimum quantity of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal, if the preschool meals follow the preschool meal patterns. OVS is not allowed for preschool meals. However, if a SFA chooses to serve the K-5 meal pattern to preschoolers and grades K-5 who eat together in the same service area at the same time, and the SFA also implements OVS, the OVS requirements apply to all children including preschoolers. In this case, all children must take at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components for a reimbursable meal. For more information on serving preschoolers and grades K-5 together, see “Preschoolers and grades K-5 eating together in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO” in section 1.
• During the course of the meal, the supervising adults are responsible for actively encouraging each child to accept service of the full-required portion (minimum daily serving) for each food component of the USDA meal patterns. For example, if a child initially refuses a food component or does not accept the full-required portion, the supervising adults should offer the food component to the child again. However, if children choose not to self-serve or consume the full minimum required serving size of a food component, the meal is still reimbursable.

• Second meals and second servings cannot be claimed for reimbursement. Schools can claim only one reimbursable breakfast and one reimbursable lunch for each child per day.

Family-style meal service must be strictly supervised to ensure that schools serve reimbursable meals and follow adequate daily collection procedures. An adult must be present and monitor the entire process at each table to ensure that children take a reimbursable meal. The adult must track children each day to determine who ate lunch in each meal eligibility category (free, reduced, and paid), without overt identification of the child’s eligibility status.

The CSDE has observed many compliance issues with family-style meal service. Schools must carefully consider whether they can successfully implement family-style meal service so that all meals comply with the USDA requirements for the preschool meal patterns. Due to the high level of supervision required during family-style meal service, many schools do not implement this type of meal service.
Requirement for Written Procedures

Schools that choose to implement family-style meal service for preschoolers must develop written procedures. These procedures must indicate how the SFA will implement family-style meal service and provide assurances that the SFA will:

- prepare and offer the minimum serving for each required component in the preschool meal patterns;
- monitor reimbursable meals by a trained supervising adult at each table;
- claim meals based on a child’s free, reduced, or paid status;
- prevent overt identification during family-style meal service;
- conduct and document adequate training for supervising adults, including how to implement family-style meal service, the preschool meal pattern requirements, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal.

These procedures must be shared with all staff and supervising adults involved in implementing family-style meal service and must be available for audit purposes.

For additional guidance on family-style meal service, see USDA Memo SP 35-2011: *Clarification on the Use of Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service*. SFAs can contact their assigned CSDE school nutrition consultant for technical assistance. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs*. 
5 — Resources

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

CSDE Forms and Handouts

All handouts are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Accepting Processed Product Documentation:

Allowable Milk Substitutions for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs:

Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

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

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

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

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

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

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program:

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP:
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Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP:

Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP:

Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP:

Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP:

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP:

Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP:

Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

Grain Serving Sizes for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019):

How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

Product Formulation Statements:

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP:
Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/WGRCriteriaPreschool.pdf

Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (Effective October 1, 2019):
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/PreschoolOunceq.pdf

Menu forms for breakfast and lunch
All menu forms for breakfast and lunch are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

4-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform4Bkfst12.doc

4-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform4Bkfst34.doc

5-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuformBkfst12.doc

5-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuformBkfst34.doc

7-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform7Bkfst12.doc

7-day Preschool Breakfast Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform7Bkfst34.doc

4-day Preschool Lunch Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform4Lunch12.doc

4-day Preschool Lunch Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform4Lunch34.doc
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5-day Preschool Lunch Ages 1-2:

5-day Preschool Lunch Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuformLunch34.doc

7-day Preschool Lunch Ages 1-2:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform7Lunch12.doc

7-day Preschool Lunch Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Forms/menuform7Lunch34.doc

Menu forms for snack
All preschool menu forms for snack are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program webpage.

ASP Menu Form for Ages 1-2:

ASP Menu Form for Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Forms/ASPmenuform34.doc

ASP Sample Menu for Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Forms/ASPmenuform34.pdf

Production records for breakfast and lunch
All preschool production records for breakfast and lunch are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Production Records for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Food Components: Prekindergarten through Grades 8:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PRcompPK8.doc

Food Components: Prekindergarten through Grade 12:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PRcompPK12.doc
Food Components: Preschool Ages 1-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PRcomp14.doc

Food Components: Preschool Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PRcomp34.doc

Food Items: Prekindergarten through Grades 8:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PRPK8.doc

Food Items: Prekindergarten through Grade 12:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PRPK12.doc

Food Items: Preschool Ages 1-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PR34.doc

Food Items: Preschool Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/PR34.doc

Production records for snack
All preschool production records for snack are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program webpage.

ASP Production Record for Ages 1-2:

ASP Production Record for Ages 3-4:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Forms/ASPpr34.doc

Sample Completed ASP Production Record for Ages 3-4:
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CSDE Guides

*Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs:*

*Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies:*

*Afterschool Snack Program Handbook:*

*Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:*

*Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12:*

*Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals:*

*Smarter Lunchrooms Action Guide:*
CSDE Resource Lists

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

Child Nutrition Programs:

Competitive Foods:

Dietary Guidelines and Nutrition Information:

Food Safety:

Health and Achievement:

Menu Planning and Food Production:

Nutrition Education:

Physical Activity and Physical Education:

Promoting Healthy Weight:

Special Diets:

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

All documents are available on the USDA’s Team Nutrition Meal Pattern Training Tools webpage at https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-meal-pattern-training-tools.

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (English):

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (Spanish):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP (English):

Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP (Spanish):

Methods for Healthy Cooking (English):

Methods for Healthy Cooking (Spanish):

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (English):

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (Spanish):

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (English):

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (Spanish):

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

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

Serving Milk in the CACFP (English):

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

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program

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

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

Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

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

Competitive Foods (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Competitive-Foods

Connecticut General Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

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

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

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage)
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents
Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning

Operational Memos for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-School-Nutrition-Programs

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

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs

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

Procurement for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Procurement-for-School-Nutrition-Programs

Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Production-Records-for-School-Nutrition-Programs

Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs

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

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

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

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

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

Final Rule Corrections: Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 75671):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-110116

FNS Instruction 783-13, Revision 3: Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons: Jewish Schools, Institutions and Sponsors.

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

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):

School Meals Policy Memos (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/policy

School Meals Legislation and Regulations (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/program-legislation-regulations

USDA Memo SP 01-2019 CACFP 01-2019: Guidance for FY19: Updated CACFP Meal Patterns and Updated NSLP and SBP Infant and Preschool Meal Patterns:

USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs.

USDA Memo CACFP 1-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:


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


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


Resources

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

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


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

USDA Memo SP 35-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service:
Glossary

**a la carte sales:** Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs.

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

**Afterschool Snack Program (ASP):** The USDA’s federally assisted snack program implemented through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities, e.g., mentoring/tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, see the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program webpage.

**alternate protein products (APP):** APP are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APP include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APP in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see “Alternate Protein Products” in section 3.

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

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

**Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Products eligible for CN labeling include main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels will also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*, and the USDA’s *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling* webpage.

**Child Nutrition Programs:** The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, see the CSDE’s *Child Nutrition Programs* webpage.

**competitive foods:** Any foods and beverages sold to students anytime on school premises other than meals served through the USDA school meal programs. Competitive food sales include, but are not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores, and fundraisers. For more information, see the CSDE’s *Competitive Foods* webpage and *Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools*.

**creditable food:** A food or beverage that can be counted toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s *Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

**cycle menu:** A series of menus planned for a specific period of time, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help SFAs to increase variety, control food cost, and save time.

**deep-fat frying:** Cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat. The USDA final rule for the CACFP meal patterns (including the meal patterns for preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP) prohibits deep-fat frying foods on site for the CACFP and preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

**Dietary Guidelines for Americans:** A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines* every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education and information programs. For more information, see the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* webpage.
**disability:** A condition in which a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs.*

**edible portion:** The portion of a food that can actually be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

**enriched grains:** Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B₁), riboflavin (B₂), niacin (B₃), folic acid, and iron. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP.* **Note:** Products containing only enriched grains (no whole grains) credit in the preschool meal patterns but do not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12.

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

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

**food components:** The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates. For information on the individual food components, see section 3.

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

**full serving:** The quantity of food that meets the minimum required amount of a specific component in the USDA meal patterns.
**Glossary**

**full-strength fruit or vegetable juice:** An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” **Note:** The preschool meal patterns allow pasteurized full-strength juice to credit as the vegetables or fruits component at only one preschool meal or ASP snack per day, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. For more information, see “Juice limit” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Juice for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, see the CSDE’s *National School Lunch Program* webpage.
natural cheese: Cheese that is produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheeses do not include pasteurized process cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, or pasteurized process cheese products.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward any meal pattern components in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients and products that do not contribute toward the grains component of the preschool meal patterns. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). Note: Bran and germ credit in the preschool meal patterns but do not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP.

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

nutrient-rich foods: See “nutrient-dense foods” in this section.

nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The nutrition requirements for nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk and meet the following nutrients based on a 1-cup serving (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 500 international units (IU) of vitamin A; 100 IU of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12.
**offer versus serve (OVS):** OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children in grades K-12 to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast or lunch. OVS is not allowed for preschool meals in the NSLP or SBP, or snacks in the ASP. For more information, see the CSDE’s *Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

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

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

**potable water:** Water that is safe for human consumption.

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

**preschool meal patterns:** The required food components and minimum serving sizes that SFAs participating in the NSLP and SBP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals served to children ages 1-4. For more information, see section 1.

**product fact sheet:** See “product specification sheet” in this section.

**product formulation statement (PFS):** An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal pattern requirements, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs.* The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The SFA must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Product Formulation Statements* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation.*
product specification sheet: Manufacturer sales literature that provides various information about the company’s products. These materials do not provide the specific crediting information that is required on a product formulation statement, and cannot be used to determine a product’s contribution toward the USDA meal pattern components.

production record: A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare USDA meals. Production records demonstrate how meals contribute to the required food components, food items, or menu items for each day of operation. For more information, see “Production record forms for breakfast and lunch” and “Production record forms for snack” in section 2.

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

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

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

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

school food authority (SFA): The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and that has the legal authority to operate the school meals programs in those schools.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**whole-grain flour**: Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Flour or meal that does not contain all parts of the grain is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour.

**whole grain-rich (WFR)**: For preschool meals in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO and preschool snacks in the ASP, WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grain or contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any other grain ingredients are enriched. The WGR definition for preschool meals and ASP snacks is different from the WGR definition for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO. For more information, see “Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement” in section 3.

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