

# Afterschool Snack Program Handbook

for Sponsors of the  
National School Lunch Program

School Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025)



July 2024

Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs  
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

## Afterschool Snack Program Handbook

Connecticut State Department of Education

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp\\_handbook.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp_handbook.pdf)

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## About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Afterschool Snack Program Handbook* provides comprehensive guidance and resources on operating the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The requirements in this guide apply to all public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the ASP.

The USDA provides additional guidance for implementing the ASP through the policy memos on the USDA's [FNS Documents & Resources](#) webpage. Links to the USDA's regulations and final rules for the Child Nutrition Programs are available in the "[Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs](#)" section of the CSDE's [Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Visit the CSDE's [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage for links to information and guidance on the federal and state requirements for the USDA's school nutrition programs.

The contents of this guide are based on the current USDA regulations and policy as of the date of this publication. This information is subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance for the ASP. Please check the CSDE's [ASP](#) webpage for the most recent version.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA. Product names are used solely for clarification.

## Contact Information for CSDE School Nutrition Programs Staff

The chart below summarizes the Connecticut county assignments for the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. For questions regarding the operation of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, contact the school food authority’s assigned CSDE school nutrition team member.

For questions regarding the ASP, contact Greg King.

County	CSDE staff
<b>Middlesex County</b> (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17) <b>Tolland County</b> (includes Regions 8 and 19)	Jennifer Bove 860-807-2044 <a href="mailto:jennifer.bove@ct.gov">jennifer.bove@ct.gov</a>
<b>Fairfield County</b> (includes Region 9) <b>Litchfield County</b> (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14) School wellness policies	Fionnuala Brown 860-807-2129 <a href="mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov">fionnuala.brown@ct.gov</a>
<b>Hartford County</b> (includes Region 10)	Teri Dandeneau 860-807-2079 <a href="mailto:teri.dandeneau@ct.gov">teri.dandeneau@ct.gov</a>
<b>New Haven County</b> (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)	Greg King 860-713-6804 <a href="mailto:greg.king@ct.gov">greg.king@ct.gov</a>
<b>New London County</b> <b>Windham County</b> (includes Region 11) Claims processing	Susan Alston 860-807-2081 <a href="mailto:susan.alston@ct.gov">susan.alston@ct.gov</a>

For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities](#). Information on the USDA Child Nutrition Programs is available on the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

APPs	alternate protein products
AR	Administrative Review
ASP	Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CN	Child Nutrition
CNP	Child Nutrition Programs
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG	<a href="#"><i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i></a> (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
FR	Federal Register
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
HFC	Healthy Food Certification
HHFKA	Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)
LEA	local educational agency
NSFSA	nonprofit school food service account
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	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WGR	whole grain-rich



## 1 — Overview

The Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) is operated through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Schools must participate in the NSLP to participate in the ASP.

The ASP is operated in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth in local communities. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities such as mentoring or tutoring programs. Afterschool programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards.

The USDA also allows certain extended day programs to participate in the ASP (refer to [“Extended School Days”](#) in section 5).



The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve healthy snacks to children who are participating in afterschool care programs. The reimbursement rate depends on students’ meal eligibility.

- In schools where 50 percent or more of enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, snacks are reimbursed at the free rate for all children.
- In schools where less than 50 percent of enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, snacks are reimbursed by student eligibility status (free, reduced, or paid).

For information on the current USDA funding levels for snacks in the ASP, refer to [“Reimbursement Rates”](#) in section 5.

Section 6 includes resources related to the ASP, including federal and state regulations, policy memoranda, websites, forms, and handouts. For additional information and resources, visit the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

## Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Afterschool Snacks

The CACFP provides reimbursement for snacks (and in some cases meals) to afterschool care programs operated by schools, local government agencies, and private non-profit organizations. To participate in the CACFP Afterschool Snack Program or At-risk Afterschool Meals Program, the site must be located in a school or geographic area where 50 percent or more of the enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. For more information, visit the CSDE's [CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers](#) webpage or contact the CSDE's [CACFP staff](#).

### Criteria for ASP Participation

Any school under a school food authority (SFA) that participates in the NSLP is eligible to operate the ASP. Schools that are approved by the CSDE to operate the ASP must agree to assume full responsibility for complying with all program requirements. To participate in the ASP, the school must meet the preliminary requirements below.

1. The school must be participating in the NSLP.
2. The school must be sponsoring or operating an afterschool care program for children who are ages 18 and younger at the start of the school year. These programs must
  - provide regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment;
  - include educational or enrichment activities such as mentoring/tutoring programs; and
  - meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards.



3. The SFA must complete an annual online application for each site and submit to the CSDE for approval. The application must be approved by the CSDE before the site is eligible to receive federal reimbursements. New sites that start during the school year must have approved applications.

SFAs can use the CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program School Eligibility Checklist](#) to determine if schools meet the criteria for ASP participation.

## Residential Child Care Institutions

Any residential child care institution (RCCI) that participates in the NSLP may also participate in the ASP, if the RCCI operates an afterschool care program with enrichment or education activities that meet the criteria for ASP participation (refer to “[Criteria for ASP Participation](#)” in this section). The ASP requirements for RCCIs and schools are the same.

RCCIs cannot claim reimbursement for snacks served on weekends, holidays, or vacation periods unless the snack is served during an activity that takes place after an education activity that is determined to be an integral part of the curriculum or an actual extension of the local education system. For more information, refer to “[Time Restrictions](#)” in section 5.

RCCIs are reimbursed for snacks served in the ASP to students who are ages 18 and younger at the start of the school year. Unlike the NSLP and SBP regulations for RCCIs, the ASP does **not** allow RCCIs to receive snack reimbursements for children until age 21.

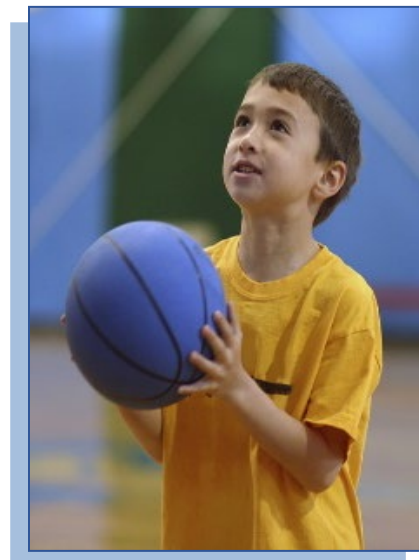
## Student Eligibility

The following students who participate in organized afterschool care programs are eligible to receive snacks through the ASP:

- students ages 18 and younger at the start of the school year;
- individuals, regardless of age, who are determined by the CSDE to be mentally or physically disabled.

Schools have significant flexibility in organizing afterschool programs, and the specific educational or enrichment activities that may be offered. For example, some programs may focus on homework and tutoring, while others offer activities such as drama, chess, and physical activity.

Students who are part of school sports teams and clubs can receive afterschool snacks as part of a broad, overarching educational or enrichment program offered by the school. Afterschool “drop in” programs are also eligible. The ASP does not have an enrollment requirement, so individual student athletes who attend afterschool programs before or after team practices may receive snacks.



Many afterschool programs hire teens to work with children in the program. These teens are also eligible to receive snacks in the ASP.

### Application Process

Schools must meet the criteria for participation to be eligible for the ASP (refer to “[Criteria for ASP Participation](#)” in this section). The SFA should review this handbook to determine if the applicant site is eligible and can comply with all operation requirements and the applicable ASP meal pattern for the grade groups being served (grades K-12 and preschool). For information on determining eligibility, refer to the CSDE’s [Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) School Eligibility Checklist](#).

For each eligible site, the SFA must complete the steps below.

1. Complete the ASP section (C1-C9) of the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Access the CNP System from the CSDE’s [CNP Online System](#) webpage.
2. Request approval from the CSDE’s [ASP coordinator](#).
3. New ASP sponsors only: Email a sample two-week snack menu for grades K-12 and preschool (if applicable), to the CSDE’s [ASP coordinator](#).

The CSDE will review each snack menu for compliance with the applicable ASP meal pattern for the grade groups being served. SFAs will be notified by email if the snack menu is approved or needs corrections. The school cannot be approved for ASP operation until the CSDE receives a compliant snack menu for the grade groups being served.

Applications must be submitted at least two weeks before the start of the school’s snack service. SFAs may apply to participate in the ASP at any time during the school year. SFAs must notify the CSDE’s [ASP coordinator](#) to obtain approval for any new ASP sites.

## Comparison of ASP Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool

The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 and the ASP preschool meal pattern have different requirements. The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 is defined by [7 CFR 210.10 \(o\)\(2\)](#) of the NSLP regulations. The ASP preschool meal pattern (ages 1-5) follows the same requirements as the CACFP meal patterns for children and is defined by [7 CFR 210.10\(o\)\(3\)](#) of the NSLP regulations. Table 1 compares the current ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements for each age group through June 30, 2025.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern requirements. Some menu planning flexibilities take effect with school year 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024). Changes to ASP menus are not required until school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025). For more information, refer to [“Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26”](#) in section 2.

**Table 1. Comparison of ASP meal patterns for preschool and grades K-12 through June 30, 2025**

Requirement	Preschool (ages 1-5)	Grades K-12
Reimbursable snack	Must include two of the five components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Milk, unflavored (age 1: whole milk; ages 2-5: low-fat or fat-free milk)</li> <li>2. Meats/meat alternates</li> <li>3. Vegetables</li> <li>4. Fruits</li> <li>5. Grains (whole grain or enriched)</li> </ol>	Must include two of the four components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Milk (low-fat or fat-free, unflavored or flavored)</li> <li>2. Meats/meat alternates</li> <li>3. Vegetables/fruits</li> <li>4. Grains/breads (whole grain or enriched)</li> </ol>
Flavored milk	Not allowed	Allowed (low fat and fat free)
Vegetables and fruits	Two separate components	One combined component

Requirement	Preschool (ages 1-5)	Grades K-12
Crediting dried fruit	Credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component	Credits as the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables/fruits component
Crediting raw leafy greens, e.g., lettuce, spinach, and kale	Credits as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of raw leafy greens credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component	Credits as the volume served, e.g., 1 cup raw leafy greens credits as 1 cup of the vegetables/fruits component
Juice limit	Credits as the fruits component or vegetables component at no more than one preschool meal or snack per day	None
Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement	At least one serving per day	None
Quantities for grains	Ounce equivalents (oz eq)	Servings
Grain-based desserts	Not allowed	Allowed: Recommended limit of no more than twice per week
Sugars limit for breakfast cereals	No more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce	None
Sugars limit for yogurt	No more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces (3.83 grams per ounce)	None

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE’s [Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12](#). Section 2 provides menu planning guidance on the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. Section 3 provides menu planning guidance on the ASP preschool meal pattern.

## Serving the Same Menu to Preschoolers and Grades K-12

When SFAs serve the same snack menu to both grade groups, foods must comply with the stricter requirements of the preschool meal pattern. For example, the ASP preschool meal pattern requires a limit for sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals but the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 does not. Yogurt and breakfast cereals served to both groups must comply with the preschool sugar limits. Other stricter requirements of the ASP preschool meal pattern include the prohibition of flavored milk and grain-based desserts, and a daily juice limit (refer to [table 1](#)).

### Preschoolers eating with grades K-12 (co-mingling)

“Co-mingling” is the practice of serving meals to a variety of grades in the same service area at the same time, such as preschool and grades K-5 or preschool and grades K-8. This practice typically occurs due to operational constraints within a school, such as limited time and space.

When students are co-mingled in the ASP, SFAs may use the K-12 meal pattern for both grade groups if the snack service meets the following criteria:

- the preschoolers and students from older grade groups (such as K-5, K-8, or K-12) are served snacks together in the same place at the same time;
- it is hard to tell the preschoolers from older students; and
- it would be operationally difficult to serve different foods or different amounts of foods during the combined snack service.

For example, when SFAs serve ASP snack to preschoolers and grades K-5 in the same service area at the same time, SFAs may choose to follow the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 for both groups.

Training on co-mingled meals is available in “Module 2: Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns” of the CSDE’s [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

The USDA recommends using the specific grade-appropriate meal pattern for each grade group whenever possible because this provides the most appropriate foods and portions for each grade group.

### Reasons to avoid co-mingled snack service

The USDA strongly encourages SFAs to find ways to serve grade-appropriate snacks to preschoolers and older students to best address their nutritional needs. There are several reasons why SFAs should avoid using co-mingled snacks whenever possible.

1. Serving preschoolers separately from older students may allow for closer supervision of the younger children, thereby allowing staff to better assist students with food packaging and monitor mealtime behaviors that may increase the risk of choking.
2. Younger children may feel distracted or overwhelmed by older children, which may affect the amount that they eat within the provided time for the snack service.
3. The preschool meal pattern provides the amounts and types of foods at snacks that most younger children need for healthy growth and development.

For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers](#) and the USDA's resource, [Serving School Meals to Preschoolers](#), and visit the "[Preschoolers Eating with Other Grades: Co-mingled Meals](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

The preschool meal patterns provide the amounts and types of foods that most younger children need for healthy growth and development. The USDA strongly encourages SFAs to find ways to serve grade-appropriate snacks to preschoolers and older students to best address their nutritional needs.

### When the preschool ASP meal pattern is required

SFAs must follow the ASP preschool meal pattern when meals 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 meal pattern to preschoolers only when preschoolers are co-mingled with K-12 students during the ASP snack service.



## Minimum Creditable Amounts

Each meal component has a minimum amount that credits toward the ASP meal patterns. Milk must be offered as the full serving, except for milk offered in smoothies (refer to “[Crediting milk in smoothies](#)” in the “Milk Component for Grades K-12” section). The minimum creditable amounts for the other meal components are:

- $\frac{1}{8}$  cup for the vegetables component;
- $\frac{1}{8}$  cup for the fruits component;
- $\frac{1}{4}$  serving for the grains/breads component for grades K-12 or  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce equivalent (oz eq) for the grains component for preschool; and
- $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce for the meats/meat alternates (MMA) component for grades K-12 or  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz eq for the MMA component for preschool.

If a food item provides less than the full ASP meal pattern serving, the snack menu must include the additional amount to credit as the full snack component. For example, the required serving for the vegetables/fruits component grades K-12 is  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup. If a menu item credit as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit, the snack menu must provide an additional  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of fruit to credit as the full meal component.

## Additional Foods

ASP menus may include additional foods or larger servings beyond the minimum requirements. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of additional foods based on the nutrition needs of each age group.

Young children have small appetites and might not consume the nutritious meal components if the snack menu includes additional foods. However, older children might need larger servings to meet their nutritional needs. For example, a snack menu for grades K-12 that contains 1 ounce of cheese (1 ounce of the MMA component) and 1 ounce of whole-grain crackers (one serving of the grains/breads component) meets the minimum meal pattern servings. This snack may be nutritionally adequate for a 6-year-old, but an 18-year-old might need larger servings or an additional food item such as a fruit or vegetable.

When menus include additional foods, the CSDE encourages SFAs to choose nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to the nutrition needs of each age group. Examples include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat milk products, beans, peas, and lentils, and lean meats, fish, or poultry.

Some additional foods do not credit toward the ASP meal patterns and cannot be served or should be served only in moderation (refer to “[Noncreditable Foods](#)” in this section).

## Requirement for Visible Components

The USDA requires that foods must be visible (recognizable) to credit toward the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs. For example, SFAs cannot credit peanut butter in smoothies, pureed tofu in soups, applesauce in muffins, or pureed fruits and vegetables in entrees and other foods.

The intent for this requirement is to ensure that children can easily identify the foods in school menus. The nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs includes the goal of helping children recognize the food groups that contribute to healthy meals and snacks.

The USDA allows some exceptions to this requirement, including yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flour. For more information, refer to [“Crediting bean/pea/lentil flour pasta products as MMA,”](#) [“Crediting pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flours,”](#) and [“Crediting Smoothies.”](#)

In addition, SFAs may credit foods with pureed vegetables that also that contain at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of visible creditable vegetables. For example, a serving of macaroni and cheese that contains  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of diced butternut squash (visible) and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of pureed carrots (not visible) credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of vegetables.



## Noncreditable Foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the meal components required by the ASP meal patterns. Noncreditable foods include foods and beverages in amounts that are too small to credit (i.e., less than the minimum creditable amount required by the preschool meal patterns), such as 1 tablespoon of applesauce or 1/8 ounce of cheese (refer to “[Minimum creditable amounts](#)” in this section).

Noncreditable foods also include foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal components. Some examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. For more examples, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Noncreditable Foods in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#) and [Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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

It is important to note that some noncreditable foods for the ASP preschool meal pattern are creditable foods for the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. Examples include grain-based desserts, and breakfast cereals and yogurt that exceed the preschool sugars limit. Menu planners must consider the different ASP meal pattern requirements when making menu planning and purchasing decisions for each grade group (refer to “[Serving the Same Menu to Preschoolers and Grades K-12](#)” in this section).

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

Snack menus must include the full serving of at least two meal components. For example, a snack menu that includes strawberry gelatin (noncreditable food), whole-grain crackers (grains component), and orange juice (fruits component) contains three food items, but only two components. This snack is reimbursable only if the juice and crackers meet the minimum required serving.

## Additional State Nutrition Standards for ASP Snacks

In addition to meeting the ASP meal patterns, foods and beverages served in ASP menus may have additional restrictions. Beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and ASP snacks in public schools must meet the requirements of the state beverage statute. In addition, the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) or USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply depending on the type of school.

### CNS for Healthy Food Certification in public schools

If the ASP operates in a public school district that chooses the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under [Section 10-215f](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes, foods served in ASP snacks must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS). SFAs must review all commercial products and school recipes to determine CNS compliance.

- Determining compliance of commercial products:** The CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage identifies commercial products that comply with the CNS and commercial beverages that comply with the state beverage statute. It is important to note that this list does not indicate if a commercial product meets the required ASP meal pattern serving. Menu planners must refer to the product's serving size and determine the amount that meets the required serving for the ASP meal pattern.

For grain-based snacks (such as crackers, cookies, granola bars, and cereal bars), menu planners must compare the manufacturer's serving with the minimum serving weight for the grains component of the ASP meal patterns (refer to [Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#) or [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#)), or obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer to document the amount of creditable grains per serving. **Note:** Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP preschool meal pattern.

- For guidance on calculating grains/breads servings for the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#).
- For guidance on calculating grain oz eq for the ASP preschool meal pattern, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#).

For more information on determining if commercial products comply with the CNS, refer to the CSDE's resource, [How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#).

- **Determining compliance of foods made from scratch:** Menu planners must evaluate the recipe's nutrient analysis for compliance with the CNS using the CSDE's Excel worksheets. These worksheets are available in the "How To" section of the CSDE's Connecticut Nutrition Standards webpage. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) and [Guidance on Evaluating School Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#).

For additional information and a list of current HFC districts, visit the CSDE's [HFC](#) and [CNS](#) webpages.

### USDA's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards

Non-HFC public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP must comply with the USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards do not apply to reimbursable snacks served in the ASP. However, Smart Snacks applies to any foods available for sale to students in an ASP that operates during the school day. The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.



## Meal Modifications for Children with Special Dietary Needs

Schools and institutions participating in the ASP must comply with the federal nondiscrimination laws and requirements for meal modifications for children with special dietary needs. These requirements are summarized below. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

### Children with a disability

The USDA requires reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for whose disability restricts their diet, based on a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. "Case-by-case basis" means that the meal modifications are specific to the individual medical condition and dietary needs of each child.

The Connecticut State Department of Public Health defines a state-licensed health care professional as an individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. This includes licensed physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). The CSDE's medical statements and accompanying instructions and guidance are available in the "[Medical Statements for School Nutrition Programs](#)" section of the CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Effective with school year 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the previous references in the regulations from "medical authority" to "state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian" and revises the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs to specify that state licensed healthcare professionals and registered dietitians may write medical statements to request meal modifications for children with disabilities. The final rule requires SFAs to accept medical statements from registered dietitians by July 1, 2025.

### Children without a disability

The USDA allows, but does not require, meal modifications for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Examples of optional modifications include requests related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences, such as parents who prefer that their children eat a gluten-free diet or organic foods because they believe it is healthier.

SFAs may choose to provide meal modifications within the ASP meal patterns on a case-by-case basis for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Some examples include snacks modified only for texture (e.g., chopped, ground, or pureed foods) and snacks that substitute food items from the same component, such as a banana for strawberries (fruits component) or chicken for cheese (MMA component).

SFAs may also choose to provide meal modifications outside the ASP meal patterns on a case-by-case basis for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. To be reimbursable, modified snacks outside the ASP meal patterns require a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

### Offer versus Serve Does Not Apply

The USDA does not allow offer versus serve (OVS) in the ASP. To be claimed as a reimbursable snack, each snack must include at least two meal components and children must take the full serving of both meal components. The quantity of each meal component must meet the minimum serving size requirements for the appropriate age group (grades K-12 or preschool) in the ASP meal pattern.

### Water Availability

Schools and institutions participating in the ASP must make plain potable water available without restriction to children at no charge during the snack service. This means that children can freely access the water in the location where the snacks are served. For example, if the SFA meets the water requirement with a water fountain that is in or immediately adjacent to the snack service area, children must be allowed to leave their tables to access the water fountain during the snack service.

While water must be made available to students during the snack service, water is not a meal component and is not part of the reimbursable snack. Students are not required to take water.

### Examples of how to offer water

SFAs may implement the water requirement in a variety of ways. Some examples are listed below.

- Offer water pitchers and cups on tables or in an area that is easily accessible to all students during ASP snacks.
- Provide a water fountain or a faucet that allows unrestricted access for students to fill their own bottles or cups with drinking water. This option must comply with the requirements below.
  1. The location of the water fountain or faucet must be in the snack service area or immediately adjacent. An example is a water fountain that is right outside the door to the snack service area and accessible to all students during the snack period.
  2. The water fountain or faucet must be operational.
  3. Staff members who supervise students in the ASP must allow students to leave their tables to access the water fountain or faucet during the snack service, and should be trained on this requirement. Children do not have unrestricted access to water if their requests to get a drink of water are denied.
- Offer bottled water. When SFAs choose to offer bottled water, it must be provided at no cost to students.

### Considerations for offering water

There are some important considerations to keep in mind when offering water to students during the snack service.

- While water must be made available to students during the snack service, water is not a meal component and is not part of reimbursable ASP snacks.
- Students are not required to take water.
- If the snack menu includes juice or milk as one of the two required meal components at snack, SFAs cannot offer water as a choice instead of juice or milk.
- The CSDE recommends serving water when the snack menu does not include milk or juice.



- Preschoolers: Caregivers should not serve young children too much water before and during mealtimes and snacks. Excess water may reduce the amount of food and milk that children consume.

### Allowable costs for offering water

The USDA does not provide any separate funding or reimbursement for the water requirement and SFAs cannot claim reimbursement for water. However, SFAs may use funds from the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) to cover the allowable costs of providing potable water to students. An allowable cost is one that's considered reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the school nutrition programs. Some examples of possible allowable costs associated with providing potable water to students are listed below:

- Purchasing pitchers or cups that would be filled with water from the faucet or provided to students to fill with water from the faucet.
- Purchasing a 5-gallon dispenser for water. This cost would be allowable if the SFA has determined that this method of providing water is cost efficient and practical.
- Covering the cost of testing tap water and water fountains that will be used by students. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that all schools routinely test drinking water for lead and perform regular maintenance to ensure that drinking water is safe.

The determination of whether these costs are allowable for an individual SFA depends on their specific circumstances. Costs related to the purchase of potable water for consumption by students must always be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the school nutrition programs.

An allowable cost for one SFA might not be an allowable cost for another. For guidance on how to determine allowable costs for the NSFSA, refer to the "General Criteria for Allowable Costs" section (page 13) of the USDA's manual, *Indirect Costs: Guidance for State Agencies & School Food Authorities*.

### Resources for offering water

The websites and resources below address the requirement for offering water to students during the meal service.

- Indirect Costs: Guidance for State Agencies & School Food Authorities (USDA): <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP60-2016a.pdf>
- USDA Memo SP 28-2011: Water Availability During NSLP Meal Service: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/water-availability-during-nslp-meal-service>

- USDA Memo SP 39-2019: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Program:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/clarification-milk-and-water-requirements-school-meal-program>
- USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>
- What's in a Meal Module 14: Water Availability During Meal Service (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

For additional guidance and resources, visit the “[Water Availability During Meal Service](#)” section of the CSDE’s Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the water requirement is available in “Module 14: Water Availability During Meal Service” of the CSDE’s training program, *What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.



## 2 — Snack Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 is defined by the NSLP regulations ([7 CFR 210.10 \(o\)](#)). SFAs must offer snacks that meet the required meal components and servings in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 (refer to table 2). Menu planning notes for each meal component are available in the online version of the [ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#).

### Meal Components

A meal component is one of the food groups that comprise reimbursable meals and snacks. The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 consists of four meal components:

- Fluid milk (low-fat or fat-free, unflavored or flavored);
- meats/meat alternates;
- vegetables/fruits; and
- grains/breads.

### Required Quantity

Each meal component has a minimum quantity. The minimum required quantities are the same for all grades. SFAs may need to serve larger portion sizes to meet the nutritional needs of older children.

### Reimbursable Snacks

A snack is reimbursable if it contains the minimum quantity of at least two meal components. Snacks may include any two of the four meal components, but they must be two different meal components. For example, a snack that consists of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of carrot sticks and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of sliced apples is not reimbursable because both food items are from the vegetables/fruits component.

Snack menus and production records must document the service of reimbursable snacks to children (refer to “[Snack Menus](#)” in section 5).

Table 2. ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 through June 30, 2025

Snack meal components: Serve any two of the four components (Must be two different components)	Minimum quantities for grades K-12
<b>Milk, fluid 4</b> Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored	8 fluid ounces (1 cup)
<b>Meats/meat alternates (MMA), ounces</b>	<b>1 ounce =</b>
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs); or tempeh	1 ounce
Surimi	3 ounces
Tofu	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)
Cottage cheese	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Egg, large	½
Beans, peas, and lentils	¼ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	2 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1 ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 ounces (½ cup)
<b>Vegetables/fruits, cups</b>	¾ cup
<b>Grains/breads, servings</b> Refer to <a href="#">Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12</a> for the specific serving weights of different grain products.	<b>1 serving =</b>
Whole grain or enriched bread	1 slice
Whole grain or enriched bread products, e.g., cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins	1 serving
Whole grain, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold)	¾ cup or 1 ounce
Whole grain, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	½ cup
Whole grain or enriched savory crackers and sweet crackers, e.g., animal crackers and graham crackers	1 serving

## Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. Reimbursable snacks must include two of the five meal components (milk, vegetables, fruits, MMA, and grains). The final rule also changes all regulatory references in 7 CFR 210 from “meal supplements” to “afterschool snacks.” The changes for each meal component are summarized below.

### Milk component

- Flavored milk cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.
- Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

### Vegetables component and fruits component

- The vegetables/fruits component changes to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component). Reimbursable snacks must include two of the five meal components, which may include one serving of the fruits component and one serving of the vegetable component.
- Raw leafy greens (such as lettuce and spinach) credit as half the volume served, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of raw leafy greens credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component.
- Dried fruits (such as raisins, dried apricots, and dried mixed fruit) credit as twice the volume served, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of dried fruit credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the fruits component.
- The NSLP weekly juice limit applies to ASP snacks. Juice cannot exceed half of the fruits and vegetables offered during the week. For example, if the snack menu offers 1 cup of fruits and vegetables during the week, vegetables, juice cannot exceed  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.

### MMA component

- The serving size for MMA changes from ounces to oz eq. The quantity of meat or meat alternate that credits as 1 ounce or 1 oz eq is the same.
- Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

### Grains component

- The grains/breads component changes to the grains component and the required quantities change from grains/breads servings to grains oz eq.
- The NSLP and SBP weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement applies. At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at snack must be WGR, based on oz eq of offered grains. The NSLP WGR criteria are used to identify WGR grains for ASP snacks.
- Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- Grain-based desserts cannot credit.

For more information on meal pattern changes of the final rule, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the "Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

### Menu Planning Considerations for Grades K-12

The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 allows a variety of choices within each meal component. The CSDE encourages menu planners to choose nutrient-dense foods that reflect the principles of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). SFAs can improve the nutritional quality of ASP snack menus for grades K-12 by:

- including a variety of healthy foods;
- offering a different snack menu each day;
- increasing the frequency of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains;
- limiting juice;
- limiting grain-based desserts; and
- limiting foods with added sugars and solid fats.

Avoid serving the same combination of meal components each day. For example, snack menus that offer juice and the grains/breads component every day (such as apple juice and graham crackers or orange juice and a granola bar) are not a best practice. Menu planners should include a variety of healthy foods in the weekly snack menu.

The CSDE encourages SFAs to use cycle menus to plan snacks that meet these guidelines. For more information and specific guidance, refer to "[Planning Healthy Snacks](#)" in section 4 and "[Snack Menus](#)" in section 5.

## Menu Planning Resources

The resources below provide guidance for SFAs on planning snack menus to meet the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

- Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal\\_pattern\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Grades K-12:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu\\_form\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_grades_k-12.docx)
- Afterschool Snack Program Sample Menu for Grades K-12:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample\\_menu\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains\\_breads\\_calculation\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_calculation_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison\\_preschool\\_grades\\_k-12\\_asp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf)
- Crediting Foods in the ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents/#CreditingFoodsGradesK12>
- Crediting Summary Charts for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/crediting\\_summary\\_charts\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/crediting_summary_charts_asp_grades_k-12.pdf).
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>
- Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains\\_breads\\_servings\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_servings_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

- How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how\\_to\\_use\\_grains\\_breads\\_servings\\_chart\\_asp\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_grains_breads_servings_chart_asp_k-12.pdf)
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning>
- Menu Planning for the ASP (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#MenuPlanning>
- Noncreditable Foods in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/noncreditable\\_foods\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/noncreditable_foods_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes>
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_menu\\_planning.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf)
- Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs>
- Standardized Recipes (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#StandardizedRecipes>
- Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming\\_Meal\\_Pattern\\_Changes](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming_Meal_Pattern_Changes)
- When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when\\_commercial\\_grain\\_products\\_require\\_pfs\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf)

For more resources refer to the CSDE’s [Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and [Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs](#).



**Milk Component**

## Meal Components for Grades K-12

The guidance below assists SFAs with planning snack menus to meet the ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements for grades K-12 for school year 2024-25 (through June 30, 2025). For information on the required meal pattern documentation, refer to section 4. For more guidance and resources, refer to the crediting handouts available in the “[Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

### Milk Component for Grades K-12

Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements, and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

#### Allowable types of milk

Allowable types of milk for grades K-12 include low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored. SFAs may serve any of the following types of low-fat and fat-free milk:

- lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk;
- acidified milk;
- cultured milk;
- cultured buttermilk; and
- Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.

SFAs cannot serve milk that does not meet the required fat content. For example, whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk do not credit in reimbursable ASP snacks.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a sugars limit for flavored milk. Flavored milk cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. Flavored milk sold as a competitive food (separately from reimbursable meals and snacks) in middle and high schools cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

## Milk Component

### Required serving

The minimum serving of milk for grades K-12 is 8 fluid ounces (1 cup).

### Additional state milk requirements for public schools

In addition to the ASP meal pattern requirements, milk and nondairy milk substitutes available for sale to students in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals and ASP snacks) must comply with the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221q. The CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage includes milk and nondairy milk substitutes products that comply with the federal and state requirements. For more informant on the state beverage requirements, refer to the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

### Crediting restrictions

Snack menus cannot include milk when juice is the only other snack component. Only fluid milk credits as the milk component. Milk does not credit when cooked in cereals, puddings, cream sauces, or other foods, such as quiche and macaroni and cheese.

### Milk variety not required

A variety of milk is not required. SFAs may serve one type of allowable milk to all children (refer to "[Allowable types of milk](#)").

### Nondairy milk substitutes

SFAs may choose to serve nondairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk) to children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Nondairy milk substitutes require a written request from the parent or guardian that identifies the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet.

Nondairy milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements.

- For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalent (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces.
- For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces.

## Milk Component

The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements.

For public schools, nondairy milk substitutes must also comply with the state beverage requirements. The state beverage statute requires that nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugar per ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

### Crediting milk in smoothies

Low-fat milk or fat-free milk used as an ingredient in smoothies credits as the milk component. The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup. To credit as one of the two required meal components at snack, the smoothie must contain the full 1-cup serving of milk. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

### Noncreditable milk

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the milk component include reduced fat (2%) milk, unflavored or flavored; whole milk, unflavored or flavored; 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); milk that is cooked or baked in foods such as cereals, puddings, and cream sauces; nutrition supplement beverages (e.g., Abbott's Pediasure); and powdered milk beverages (e.g., Nestle's NIDO); and for public schools only, milk and nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the state beverage requirements of [Connecticut General Statute Section 10-221q](#). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

## Milk Component

**Milk component change for school year 2025-26**

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, establishes a new sugars limit for flavored milk. Flavored milk cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

**Resources for the milk component**

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting the milk component in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

- Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/milk\\_substitutes\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_snp.pdf)
- Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/creditingcomparison\\_milk\\_requirements\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/creditingcomparison_milk_requirements_snp.pdf)
- CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/memos/om2019/om06-19.pdf>
- Food Buying Guide Section 5: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Milk Component (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section5\\_Milk.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section5_Milk.pdf)
- Food Buying Guide Section 5: Yield Table for Milk (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section5\\_MilkYieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section5_MilkYieldTable.pdf)
- Milk Component (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#MilkK12>
- USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010 and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-milk-substitution-children-medical-or-special-dietary-needs-non-disability>

**Milk Component**

- USDA Memo SP 39-2019: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Program:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/clarification-milk-and-water-requirements-school-meal-program>
- USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Milk Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

Milk Component



**Meats/Meat Alternates Component****Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component for Grades K-12**

Meats include cooked lean meat, poultry, and fish. Meat alternates are foods that provide a similar protein content to meat, such as alternate protein products (APPs), cheese, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, nuts and seeds and their butters, yogurt, soy yogurt, tofu, and tempeh.

**Required serving**

The minimum serving for grades K-12 is 1 ounce of the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Meat without added liquids, binders, and extenders credits based on the serving weight, e.g., 1 ounce of meat credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component.

Meat products with added liquids, binders, and extenders (such as water, broth, modified food starch, carrageenan, and soy flour) credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula, as documented by the manufacturer's PFS. For more information, refer to "[Crediting commercial products with binders, extenders, and liquids](#)" in this section and "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the serving size for MMA from ounces to ounce equivalents (oz eq). The quantity that credits as 1 ounce or 1 oz eq is the same.

**Crediting alternate protein products (APPs)**

APPs must meet the requirements in [appendix A](#) of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). SFAs must obtain documentation from the manufacturer indicating that the product meets the APP criteria. Acceptable documentation includes a Child Nutrition (CN) label or a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements. For more information, refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4 and the USDA's resource, [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

**Meats/Meat Alternates Component****Crediting cheeses**

A 1-ounce serving of natural cheese (e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss) or process cheese (e.g., American) credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. A ¼-cup serving of cottage or ricotta cheese, or a 2-ounce serving of cheese food, cheese spread, or cheese substitute, credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. 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." Imitation cheese and cheese products do not credit.

SFAs must maintain appropriate crediting documentation for menu items that contain cheese as an ingredient, such as pizza, lasagna, or macaroni and cheese. This documentation must indicate the meal pattern contribution per serving (refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4).

**Crediting commercial MMA products**

SFAs must ensure that commercial products (such as dried meat sticks, pizza, chicken nuggets, and cheese ravioli) provide the required amount of each meal component being credited. For example, to credit a commercial pizza as 1 ounce of the MMA component and 1 serving of the grains/breads component, the product's CN label or manufacturer's PFS must indicate that the serving contains at least 1 ounce of cheese and at least 0.9 ounce (25 grams) of whole-grain or enriched crust. For more information, refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4, and the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting commercial products with binders, extenders, and liquids**

Products with added liquids (such as water and broth) and binders or extenders (such as modified food starch, carrageenan, and soy flour) credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula, not the serving weight. These products cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS stating the amount of the MMA component per serving. For example, the product below requires a CN label or PFS to determine crediting information because it contains binders and extenders.

Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water*, *modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.



**Meats/Meat Alternates Component**

For more information, refer to “[Deli meats](#)” in this section and “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4. For more examples of binders and extenders, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting deli meats**

SFAs must obtain a CN label or PFS to document the MMA contribution of deli meats. Many deli meats do not credit based on serving weight because they contain added binders, extenders, and liquids. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component. For more information, refer to “[Crediting commercial products with binders, extenders, and liquids](#)” in this section, “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4, and the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting dried meat, poultry, and seafood products**

Jerky, dried meat sticks, and similar dried meat products require a CN label or manufacturer’s PFS to document the MMA contribution. SFAs must evaluate the product’s PFS to ensure that it complies with the USDA’s three crediting principles for dried meat products: 1) The creditable meat ingredient listed on the product’s PFS must match or have a similar description to the ingredient listed in the product’s ingredients statement; 2) the creditable meat ingredient listed on the product’s PFS must have a similar description to a food item in the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG); and 3) the creditable amount cannot exceed the finished weight of the product (i.e., the cooked weight ready for serving). For more information, refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4.

Fat content must be 30 percent or less for ground beef or ground pork to credit in the Child Nutrition Programs. Products that do not indicate the fat percentage do not credit. The requirements for crediting dried meat are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). Additional guidance is available in the USDA’s webinar, [Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products](#).

**Crediting eggs**

Only whole eggs are creditable. Half of a large egg credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. Liquid egg substitutes are not whole eggs and are not creditable. Egg whites do not credit if they are served without the yolks.

### Meats/Meat Alternates Component

SFAs must maintain appropriate crediting documentation for menu items that contain eggs as an ingredient, such as quiche, scrambled eggs, frittatas, breakfast sandwiches, pre-cooked egg patties, and scrambled egg breakfast burritos. This documentation must indicate the meal pattern contribution per serving (refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4).

#### Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as MMA

Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same snack. Examples of beans, peas, and lentils include black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), edamame (soybeans), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soybeans, split peas, and white beans.

A ¼-cup serving of beans/peas/lentils credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. The serving refers to the cooked amount without any added liquid, such as the sauce in baked beans. For example, to credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component, a ¼-cup serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. The serving must contain ¼ cup of beans before any added liquid. For more information, refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” and “[Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch](#)” in section 4, and the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs](#). For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as the vegetable/fruits component, refer to “[Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables](#)” in section 2.

Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils (such as roasted soybeans or roasted chickpeas) credit as the MMA component the same as nuts and seeds. A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried beans, peas, or lentils credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component.

#### Crediting bean/pea/lentil flour pasta products as MMA

Pasta products made of 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flours (such as chickpea flour or lentil flour) credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same snack. A ½-cup serving of cooked bean/pea/lentil flour pasta credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. These crediting requirements are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). For information on crediting bean/pea/lentil flour pasta as a vegetable, refer to “[Crediting pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flours](#)” in section 2.

**Meats/Meat Alternates Component****Crediting 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 must meet the FDA's standard 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). Two tablespoons ( $\frac{1}{8}$  cup) of a nut/seed butter credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. This crediting is the same for all types of nut and seed butters, e.g., smooth, crunchy, and natural. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting nuts and seeds**

Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. A 1-ounce serving of nuts and seeds credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. Acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts are not creditable. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting surimi seafood**

Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi seafood credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. SFAs must obtain a CN label or PFS to credit surimi seafood differently (refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4). The requirements for crediting surimi are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019 and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). For additional guidance, refer to the USDA's webinar, [Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi](#).

**Crediting tempeh**

Tempeh is a fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If the tempeh product contains other ingredients, SFAs must obtain a CN label or PFS to determine crediting information (refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4). The requirements for crediting tempeh are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). Additional guidance on crediting tempeh is available in the USDA's webinar, [Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi](#).

**Meats/Meat Alternates Component****Crediting tofu**

Commercial tofu and tofu products must be easily recognizable as meat substitutes, such as a tofu burger or tofu sausage. A commercial product that contains at least 5 grams of protein in a 2.2-ounce serving by weight ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup volume equivalent) credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting yogurt**

Yogurt includes commercial plain yogurt, flavored yogurt, yogurt with added fruit (either blended or on the bottom), and soy yogurt. The required serving for yogurt is based on volume (cups) or weight (ounces) and is the same for all types, flavors, and fat contents. A  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving (volume) or 4 ounces (weight) credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component.

Yogurt may credit as the MMA component when used as an ingredient in a smoothie. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

To increase nutrient variety, SFAs should not serve yogurt when milk is the only other meal component.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a sugars limit for yogurt. Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Noncreditable MMA**

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the MMA component include bacon; commercial canned soups, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice; commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS; cream cheese; drinkable yogurt; egg whites; frozen yogurt; imitation cheese; sour cream; and tofu that contains less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2-ounce serving by weight ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup volume equivalent) or that is not easily recognizable as a meat substitute. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource,

**Meats/Meat Alternates Component***Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12.***Resources for the MMA component**

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting\\_processed\\_product\\_documentation\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_snp.pdf)
- Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/reviewer\\_checklist.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf)
- Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_beans\\_peas\\_lentils\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_commercial\\_mma\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_commercial_mma_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_deli\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_deli_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_nuts\\_seeds\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_nuts_seeds_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_tofu\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_tofu_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Yogurt in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_yogurt\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_yogurt_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Food Buying Guide Section 1: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Meats/Meat Alternates Component (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section1\\_MeatsAndMeatAlternates.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section1_MeatsAndMeatAlternates.pdf)
- Food Buying Guide Section 1: Yield Table for Meats/Meat Alternates (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section1\\_MeatsAndMeatAlternatesYieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section1_MeatsAndMeatAlternatesYieldTable.pdf)

### Meats/Meat Alternates Component

- Meats/Meat Alternates Component (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#MMAK12>
- Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app>
- Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/app\\_requirements\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/app_requirements_snp.pdf)
- Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerePFStipsheet.pdf>
- USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-shelf-stable-dried-and-semi-dried-meat-poultry-and-seafood-products-child-nutrition>
- USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019 and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs>
- USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tempeh-child-nutrition-programs>
- USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>
- USDA Memo SP 53-2016 and CACFP 21-2016: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs and the CACFP:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp>
- USDA Webinar: Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/moving-forward-update-food-crediting-dried-meat-products>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Meats/Meat Alternates Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

### Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12

Vegetables and fruits are one meal component in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. Creditable vegetables include fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. Creditable fruits include fresh, frozen, dried, and canned fruits (packed in water, full-strength juice, or light syrup), and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice.

Reimbursable snacks for grades K-12 cannot include only one serving of vegetable (such as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of carrot sticks) and one serving of fruit (such as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of sliced apples) because both food items are from the same component.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the vegetables/fruits component to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component).

Reimbursable snacks must include two of the five meal components, which may include one serving of the fruits component and one serving of the vegetable component.

### Serving size

The required serving of fruits or vegetables for grades K-12 is  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup. All vegetables and fruits credit based on the served volume (cups), according to the yields in the FBG (refer to “[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#)” in section 4). SFAs must obtain a PFS (or CN label, if available) to document the crediting of processed commercial combination foods that contain vegetables and fruits, such as vegetable egg rolls, hummus, and fruit-filled turnovers (refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4).

SFAs may choose to serve more than one vegetable or fruit to meet the full vegetables/fruits component if each serving provides at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup (the minimum creditable amount). Examples of menu items that provide the full  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving include:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of oranges;
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of carrots;
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of blueberries and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of strawberries;
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of broccoli and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of red peppers;
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of dried fruit;

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

- ½ cup of salad greens and ¼ cup of tomatoes;
- ¾ cup of mixed vegetables, e.g., peas and carrots;
- ¾ cup of mixed fruits, e.g., fruit salad;
- ¾ cup of mixed vegetables and fruits, e.g., carrot-raisin salad; and
- ¼ cup of carrots, ¼ cup of oranges, and ¼ cup of strawberries.

When the snack menu provides ¾ cup of the vegetables/fruits component from more than one vegetable or fruit, children must take all vegetables and fruits to count as one of the two required meal components at snack. OVS is not allowed in the ASP (refer to “[Offer versus Serve Does Not Apply](#)” in section 1).

**Determining servings for fresh vegetables and fruits**

The FBG provides food yields and crediting information for common types and customary sizes of vegetables and fruits; indicates how many servings a specific quantity of vegetable or fruit will provide and helps menu planners determine how recipes and purchased foods contribute to the vegetables/fruits component.

Table 3 shows examples of the meal pattern contribution of fresh vegetables and fruits listed in the FBG. The count pack is the number of whole fruits that fit into a case. The smaller the count, the larger the size of the fruit. For additional guidance, refer to the portion control charts for vegetables and fruits in the “[Vegetables Component](#)” and [Fruits Component](#)” sections of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Table 3. Meal pattern contribution of fresh vegetables and fruits**

Food	FBG crediting information	Required amount for ¾ cup
Broccoli	1 medium spear = about ¼ cup	3 medium spears
Carrot sticks	3 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch) = ¼ cup	9 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch)
Celery sticks	3 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch) = ¼ cup	9 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch)
Cucumber sticks, pared or unpared	3 sticks (4 inches by ¾ inch) = ¼ cup	9 sticks (4 inches by ¾ inch)
Radishes	7 small radishes = ¼ cup	21 small radishes



## Vegetables/Fruits Component

Food	FBG crediting information	Required amount for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Tomato slices, medium (2 $\frac{1}{8}$ to 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter)	5 slices ( $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick) = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	15 slices ( $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick)
Tomato slices, large (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter)	4 slices ( $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick) = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	12 slices ( $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick)
Tomatoes, cherry	3 whole cherry tomatoes = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 5 half cherry tomatoes = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	9 whole cherry tomatoes 15 half cherry tomatoes
Apples, 125-138 count	1 apple = 1 cup $\frac{1}{4}$ apple = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ apple
Apples, 100 count	1 apple = 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups $\frac{1}{5}$ apple = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{5}$ apple
Banana, 150 count (petite) or 100-120 count	1 banana = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup $\frac{1}{2}$ banana = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ bananas
Grapes, seedless, large	7 grapes = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 14 grape halves = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	21 grapes 42 grape halves
Orange, 138 count (Arizona or California)	$\frac{1}{2}$ orange = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 1 orange = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oranges
Orange, 125 count (Florida or Texas)	$\frac{1}{2}$ orange = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 1 orange = $\frac{5}{8}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oranges
Orange, 113 count (Arizona or California)	$\frac{1}{2}$ orange = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 1 orange = $\frac{5}{8}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oranges
Pear, 150 count	$\frac{1}{2}$ pear = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 1 pear = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pears
Pear, 120 count	$\frac{1}{2}$ pear = $\frac{3}{8}$ cup 1 pear = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1 pear
Pear, 100 count (D'Anjou or Bosc or Bartlett)	1 pear = 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups $\frac{1}{2}$ pear = $\frac{5}{8}$ cup	$\frac{2}{3}$ pear

**Vegetables/Fruits Component****Crediting canned fruits**

A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup. For example,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of canned peaches with juice credits as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component but  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of canned peaches with light syrup does not. To credit canned peaches in light syrup as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the serving must contain  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of peaches, not including the syrup.

**Crediting canned vegetables**

A serving of canned vegetables must be drained. For example, to credit as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component, a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of canned corn cannot include the water in which it is packed, and a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. The serving must contain  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of vegetables before any added liquid.

**Crediting coconut**

Fresh, frozen, and dried coconut credit as the vegetables/fruits component based on the served volume (cups). Coconut water labeled as 100 percent juice credits as juice. Coconut is high in calories and saturated fat, and should be limited in ASP menus. Coconut flour, coconut oil, and coconut milk do not credit. The requirements for crediting coconut are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting dried fruits**

Dried fruits (such as raisins, apricots, cherries, cranberries, blueberries, mixed fruit, and coconut) credit based on the served volume (cups), e.g.,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of dried fruit credits as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component. Serving this large amount of dried fruit may be unreasonable, especially for younger children. The CSDE recommends serving a smaller portion of dried fruit and supplementing it with another fruit or vegetable to meet the full  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving. Choose dried fruit without added sweeteners, including sugars and nonnutritive sweeteners, e.g., aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of raisins credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the fruits component.

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

### Crediting dried vegetables

Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit when rehydrated. The FBG lists yields for some dehydrated vegetables, such as pinto beans, refried beans, onions, bell peppers, potatoes, seaweed, and sweet potatoes.

Dried vegetables not listed in the FBG require a PFS that provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume. Menu planners should check the accuracy of the PFS before including foods with dehydrated vegetables in reimbursable snacks (refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4).

Dried vegetables used for seasonings (such as dried onion and dried parsley) do not credit.

### Crediting leafy greens

Examples of leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce such as iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix. Raw leafy and cooked leafy greens (such as cooked spinach and roasted kale) credit based on the served volume, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooked or raw vegetables credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of lettuce credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component.

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

**Crediting fresh fruits**

The crediting contribution of one piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut up) varies depending on the type and size, and ranges from  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups. For example, the FBG indicates that:

- one 60-count plum, one 88-count peach, and one clementine each credit as  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup of fruit;
- one 100-120-count banana, one 150-count pear, one 80-count peach, one 138-count orange, and one 45-count plum each credit as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit;
- one 113-count or 125-count orange credits as  $\frac{5}{8}$  cup of fruit; and
- one size 56-64 nectarine, one size 56 peach, and one 120-count pear each credit as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of fruit.

One piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut-up) must provide at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (based on the yield in the FBG) to credit as the full vegetables/fruits component for grades K-12 at snack.

Many types of whole fresh fruits credit as less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup. If a piece of fruit credits as less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup, the snack menu must include additional fruits or vegetables to provide the full serving for grades K-12.



## Vegetables/Fruits Component

For example, a snack menu that offers one 113-count orange (credits as  $\frac{5}{8}$  cup of fruit) must include an additional  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of a fruit or vegetable to credit as the full vegetables/fruits component. Students must take both fruit/vegetable items to count as the vegetables/fruits component because OVS is not allowed in the ASP (refer to “[Offer versus Serve Does Not Apply](#)” in section 1). Alternatively, the snack menu could include the full serving of two other meal components and offer the 113-count orange as an “extra” food.

Table 4 lists the additional amount of different types of fresh fruits needed to provide  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component, based on the crediting information in the FBG. The additional amount can be from the same fruit, a different fruit, or a vegetable.

**Table 4. Additional amount of fresh fruit for  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving**

Fruit (one piece, whole or cut up)	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount needed for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Apple, 125-138 count	1 cup	0
Apricot, medium ( $1\frac{3}{8}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Banana, 150 count, petite	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Banana, 100-120 count, regular	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Clementine, whole, peeled	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup
Grapefruit, 27-32 count, large	1 cup	0
Kiwi, 33-39 count	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Nectarine, size 88-96 ( $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Nectarine, size 56-64 ( $2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0
Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Peach, size 88 and 84 ( $2\frac{1}{8}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

Fruit (one piece, whole or cut up)	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount needed for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Peach, size 64 and 60 ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Peach, size 80	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Peach, size 56	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0
Peach, size 56	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0
Pear, 150 count	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Pear, 120 count	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0
Pear, D'Anjou, Bosc or Bartlett, 100 count	$1\frac{1}{4}$ cups	0
Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Plum, purple, red, or black, $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup
Tangerine, 120 count	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup

**Crediting frozen fruits**

Frozen fruits credit based on the volume served. For some frozen fruits (such as frozen sliced strawberries and frozen apricots), the serving includes the thawed liquid. For other frozen fruits (such as frozen berry blends, frozen sweet cherries, and frozen mangoes), the serving is for the thawed, drained fruit. Check the FBG for the specific serving and crediting requirements for different types of frozen fruits.

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

### Crediting fruits in grain-based desserts

Fruits in grain-based desserts (such as fruit crisp and fruit turnovers) credit based on the amount of fruit in the serving, excluding the grain portion (such as crisp topping and piecrust). For example, a fruit turnover that contains  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of apples credits as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component (refer to “[Crediting vegetables and fruits with added ingredients](#)” in this section). SFAs must maintain crediting documentation for each product and recipe (refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” and “[Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch](#)” in section 4).

The large amount of a grain-based dessert needed to provide  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of fruit might be unreasonable, especially for younger children.

### Crediting fruits in yogurt

Fruits in commercial yogurt products (blended, mixed, or on top) do not credit as the vegetables/fruits component. Menu planners may credit fruit offered as a separate component, such as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of blueberries in a yogurt-fruit parfait. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

### Crediting hominy as a vegetable

Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). Hominy is available dried and in a fully cooked canned form.

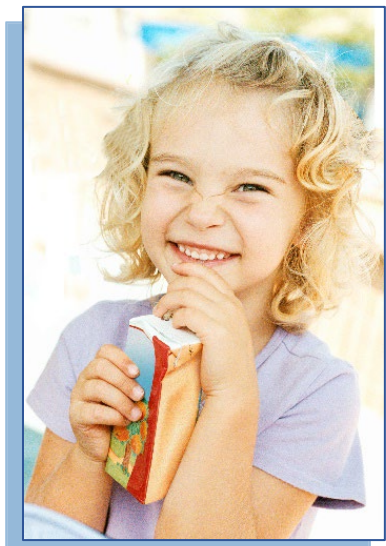
A  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of drained canned hominy credits as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component. For information on crediting dried hominy as the grains/breads component, refer to “[Crediting hominy as a grain](#)” in section 2.

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

**Crediting juice**

Juice must be pasteurized full-strength (100 percent) fruit juice, vegetable juice, or combination; and may be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. 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.” The statements “natural” and “organic” do not indicate that a juice is full strength.

- **Crediting restriction for juice:** Juice cannot be served when milk is the only other snack component. This restriction also includes frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies. For example, a snack that includes milk and a strawberry smoothie is not reimbursable because pureed fruits in smoothies credit as juice.
- **Frozen fruit juice:** 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 a PFS from the manufacturer to document the product’s contribution toward the vegetables/fruits component (refer to [“Documentation for Commercial Products”](#) in section 4).



The USDA recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice. Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables, which contain fiber, fewer calories, and more nutrients.

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, applies the NSLP weekly juice limit to the ASP snack meal pattern for grades K-12. Juice cannot exceed half of the fruits and vegetables offered at snack during the week.



## Vegetables/Fruits Component

### Crediting beans, peas, and lentil as vegetables

Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the vegetables component or the MMA component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same snack. The serving size refers to the amount of cooked beans/peas/lentils without other ingredients. For example, a serving of baked beans must provide  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of baked beans before added ingredients such as sauce and pork fat.

Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils (such as roasted soybeans and roasted chickpeas) credit based on the volume served, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs](#). For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as the MMA component, refer to "[Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as MMA](#)" in section 2.

### Crediting pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flours

A  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flours (such as cauliflower flour or lentil flour) credits as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component. If the pasta product also contains non-vegetable ingredients, SFAs must obtain a PFS stating the amount of vegetable flours per serving (refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 4). The requirements for crediting pasta products made of vegetable flours are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). For information on crediting bean/pea/lentil flour pasta as the MMA component, refer to "[Crediting bean/pea/lentil flour pasta products as MMA](#)" in section 2.

### Crediting smoothies

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. To credit smoothies made from scratch, SFAs must have a standardized recipe that documents the meal pattern contribution per serving. Commercial smoothies must have a PFS (or CN label, if available, for smoothies that contain yogurt) stating the meal pattern contribution per serving. For more information, refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" and "[Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch](#)" in section 4 and the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Vegetables/Fruits Component****Crediting soups**

Vegetable soups made from scratch credit based on the amount of vegetables contained in one serving of the recipe. SFAs must document this information with a standardized recipe based on the yields in the FBG. For more information, refer to “[Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch](#)” and “[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#)” in section 4.

Creditable commercial vegetable soups include:

- lentil, pea, and bean;
- minestrone;
- tomato;
- tomato with other basic components such as rice;
- vegetable (contains only vegetables); and
- vegetable with other basic components such as meat or poultry.

The FBG indicates that a 1-cup serving of a commercial bean/pea/lentil soup credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of vegetables, and a 1-cup serving of other allowable commercial vegetable soups credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables. The serving refers to the amount of cooked soup, e.g., heated canned or frozen ready-to-serve soup, reconstituted dried soup, and reconstituted condensed soup.

The serving of commercial soup required to credit as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups for bean/pea/lentil soups and 3 cups for vegetable soups. This large serving might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Soups in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**Crediting vegetables and fruits with added ingredients**

Vegetables and fruits that are part of other foods (such as vegetable egg rolls, hummus, breaded onion rings, and fruit-filled turnovers), or that contain added ingredients (such as baked beans with sauce and pork fat; coleslaw and potato salad made with mayonnaise and seasonings; carrot-raisin salad made with yogurt; fruit crisp and cobbler with grain-based topping; and mashed potatoes made with butter and seasonings), require appropriate documentation to credit as the vegetables/fruits component.

## Vegetables/Fruits Component

Only the vegetable or fruit portion credits toward the vegetables/fruits component. The examples below illustrate this requirement.

- To credit a commercial chickpea hummus as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component, the product's CN label or PFS must indicate that the serving contains  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of chickpeas.
- To credit a potato salad recipe as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the standardized recipe must indicate that the serving contains  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of potatoes, excluding added ingredients such as mayonnaise and seasonings.

SFAs must maintain crediting documentation for all commercial products and foods made from scratch (refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" and "[Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch](#)" in section 4).

### Noncreditable fruits

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the fruits component include fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups, fruit leathers, fruit wrinkles, fruit twists, 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. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

### Noncreditable vegetables

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables component include 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. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

### Vegetables/fruits component change for school year 2025-26

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the vegetables/fruits component to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component). Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. Juice cannot exceed half of the fruits and vegetables offered at snack during the week.

### Vegetables/Fruits Component

#### Resources for the vegetables/fruits component

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the vegetables component in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

- Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_beans\\_peas\\_lentils\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Juice in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_juice\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_juice_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Crediting Smoothies in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_smoothies\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_smoothies_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Crediting Soups in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_soups\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_soups_snp.pdf)
- Food Buying Guide Section 2: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Vegetables Component (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section2\\_Vegetables.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section2_Vegetables.pdf)
- Food Buying Guide Section 2: Yield Table for Vegetables (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section2\\_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section2_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf)
- USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>
- USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>
- Webinar: Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in the Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetable-noodles-and-coconut-child-nutrition-programs>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Vegetables/Fruits Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

## Grains/Breads Component

### Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12

To credit as the grains/breads component, grain items must be made from grains that are whole-grain flour, whole-grain meal, corn masa, masa harina, hominy, enriched flour, enriched meal, bran, germ, or be an enriched product, such as enriched bread or a fortified cereal.

The grains/breads component includes a wide 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; ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals; 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; pasta products, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous; and grain-based desserts such as granola bars, cereal bars, cookies, and cake.

### Required serving

The required quantities for the grains/breads component are in servings. When the grains/breads component is offered as one of the two required meal components at snack, the minimum required amount is 1 serving. One serving is slightly less than 1 oz eq. SFAs may choose to use oz eq instead of servings to provide consistency with NSLP and SBP meals (refer to [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#)).

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the grains/breads component to the grains component and the required quantities change from grains/breads servings to grains oz eq.

## Grains/Breads Component

The USDA allows two methods for determining the grains/breads servings of a creditable grain product or standardized recipe. These methods are summarized below. For detailed guidance on both methods, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#).

- **Method 1 (USDA's Exhibit A Chart)** uses the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (Exhibit A) to determine the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where grain food belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the SFA knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving.

The Exhibit A grain quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's resource, [Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#), lists the Exhibit A grains/breads servings that apply to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 through June 30, 2025.

- **Method 2 (creditable grains)** determines the grains/breads servings for creditable commercial grain products and standardized recipes by calculating the total weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. The grams of creditable grains are obtained from the commercial product's PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the SFA's standardized recipe. To credit as 1 serving of the grains/breads component, foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 14.75 grams of creditable grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 25 grams of creditable grains.

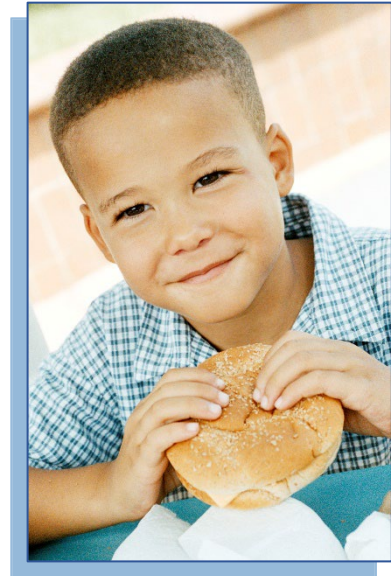
There are some situations when SFAs must use method 2 to determine if a commercial product meets the crediting criteria for grain menu items, and a PFS is required. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Foods made from scratch must have a standardized recipe that lists the weight of each creditable grain ingredient. If the recipe lists grain ingredients only by volume (e.g., cups and quarts), the SFA must calculate the equivalent weight (grams) for each grain ingredient.

**Grains/Breads Component****Grain crediting tools**

The tools below help menu planners determine the meal pattern contribution of creditable grain products and standardized recipes.

- **USDA’s Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** This [online tool](#) of the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) determines the grains/breads servings or oz eq of commercial grain products. Additional guidance is available in the USDA’s webinars, *Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue* and *How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool*.
- **USDA’s Recipe Analysis Workbook:** The FBG’s online [Recipe Analysis Workbook](#) allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the recipe’s meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA’s FBG website.
- **CSDE’s Resource on How to Use the Exhibit A Grain Charts:** The CSDE’s resource, *How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12*, reviews the steps for using the Exhibit A quantities to determine the meal pattern contribution of three types of commercial products and standardized recipes. These include grain menu items in groups A-G that contain multiple small pieces per serving (e.g., crackers, hard pretzels, and animal crackers), multiple large pieces per serving (e.g., pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles), and one piece per serving (e.g., muffins, bagels, and rolls).



For more information, visit the “[Serving Size for Grains/Breads](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

### Grains/Breads Component

#### Creditable grains

Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. Products that are 100 percent whole grain, such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice, are more nutritious choices and should be served most often. For more information on creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

The grains/breads component of the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 does not have a WGR requirement. The CSDE encourages SFAs to serve WGR foods (including 100 percent whole grains) most often. For more information, refer to “[Menu Planning Considerations for Grades K-12](#)” in section 2 and the CSDE's resources, [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), applies the NSLP and SBP weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement to the ASP snack meal pattern snack. At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at snack must be WGR, based on oz eq of offered grains. The NSLP WGR criteria are used to identify WGR grains for ASP snacks.





## Grains/Breads Component

### Crediting breakfast cereals

Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified.

- The minimum serving of RTE breakfast cereals for grades K-12 is  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup or 1 ounce, whichever is less.
- The minimum serving of cooked breakfast cereals for grades K-12 is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked or 25 grams dry.

Whole-grain, low-sugar cereals are more nutritious choices and should be served most often. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a sugars limit for breakfast cereals. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

### Crediting corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal

Corn ingredients credit as the grains component if they are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. Nixtamalization is a process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process results in a product with a similar nutritional content to whole-grain corn.

Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Masa harina is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Ingredients labeled as hominy, corn masa, or masa harina are nixtamalized, and therefore credit as whole grains. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

### Crediting grain-based desserts

Most grain-based desserts are high in fat, added sugars, and sodium. For more nutritious snacks, the CSDE recommends limiting grain-based desserts to no more than twice per week. For example, a snack menu that offers graham crackers on Monday and granola bars on Thursday should not include any other grain-based desserts that week.

### Grains/Breads Component

The CSDE's resource, [Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#), identifies allowable grain-based desserts in red. Examples of grain-based desserts include sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers), cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. Grain-based desserts cannot credit in ASP snacks.

#### Crediting hominy as a grain

Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). Dried, milled hominy (such as grits) credits as a whole grain. A ½-cup serving of cooked (or 25 grams of dry) hominy grits credits as 1 serving of the grains/breads component. For information on crediting hominy as a vegetable, refer to [“Crediting hominy as a vegetable”](#) in the “Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12” section.

#### Crediting popcorn

Popcorn is a whole-grain food and a good source of fiber. Three cups (1 ounce) of plain popped popcorn credits as 1 serving of the grains/breads component. The minimum creditable amount is ¾ cup (¼ serving).

Depending on children's ages, it may be more appropriate to serve a smaller amount of popcorn with another creditable grain. For example, a snack menu could provide 1 serving of the grains/bread component from a mix of ¾ cup of popcorn (¼ serving of the grains/breads component) and ½ ounce of pretzels (¾ serving of the grains/breads component).

SFAs must maintain crediting documentation for foods that contain popcorn an ingredient, such as a popcorn snack mix (refer to [“Documentation for Commercial Products”](#) in section 4). The requirements for crediting popcorn are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 9-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

## Grains/Breads Component

### Noncreditable grains/breads

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the grains/breads component include bread and grain products and recipes that are not whole grain or enriched (e.g., bromated flour, durum flour, white flour, and wheat flour); breakfast cereals (RTE and cooked) that are not whole grain, enriched, or fortified; and legume and vegetable flours, e.g., tapioca, potato, legume, bean, soy, and other vegetable flours. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#).

### Resources for the grains/breads component

The resources below assist menu planners with meeting the required grains/breads servings for the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

- Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12(CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains\\_breads\\_calculation\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_calculation_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison\\_grain\\_crediting\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison_grain_crediting_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_cereals\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_cereals_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_enriched\\_grains\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_enriched_grains_snp.pdf)
- Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_whole\\_grains\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_snp.pdf)
- Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):  
<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index>
- Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>
- Food Buying Guide Section 4: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Grains Component (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section4\\_Grains.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section4_Grains.pdf)

### Grains/Breads Component

- Food Buying Guide Section 4: Yield Table for Grains (USDA):  
[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section4\\_GrainsYieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section4_GrainsYieldTable.pdf)
- Grains/Breads Component (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents/#GrainsBreadsK12>
- Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains\\_breads\\_servings\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_servings_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)
- How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how\\_to\\_use\\_grains\\_breads\\_servings\\_chart\\_asp\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_grains_breads_servings_chart_asp_k-12.pdf)
- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Grains-Breads\\_Servings\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains-Breads_Servings_Fillable_508.pdf)
- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks – Completed Sample (USDA):  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Example\\_Grains-Breads\\_Servings.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Example_Grains-Breads_Servings.pdf)
- Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA’s Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool>
- USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>
- USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

**Grains/Breads Component**

- When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when\\_commercial\\_grain\\_products\\_require\\_pfs\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf)

For additional crediting guidance for the grains/breads component, visit the “[Grains/Breads Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

Grains/Breads Component



## 3 — ASP Preschool Meal Pattern

The ASP preschool meal pattern for ages 1-5 is defined by [7 CFR 210.10\(o\)\(3\)](#) and has different requirements from the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. The preschool meal patterns are the same as the CACFP meal patterns for children. SFAs must offer snacks that meet the required meal components and servings in the ASP preschool meal pattern (refer to table 5). Menu planning notes for each meal component are available in the online version of the [ASP Preschool Meal Pattern](#).

### Age Groups

The ASP preschool meal pattern includes two age groups, ages 1-2 and ages 3-5. 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. If a 5-year-old is in preschool, the preschool meal pattern applies. If a 4-year-old is in kindergarten, the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 applies.

### Meal Components

A meal component is one of the food groups that comprise reimbursable meals and snacks. The ASP preschool meal pattern consists of five meal components:

- fluid milk;
- meats/meat alternates;
- vegetables
- fruits; and
- grains.

### Required Quantity

Each meal component has a minimum quantity. The minimum required quantities are the same for all both age groups.

### Reimbursable Snacks

A snack is reimbursable if it contains the minimum quantity of at least two meal components. Snacks may include any two of the five meal components, but they must be two different meal components. Snack menus and production records must document the service of reimbursable snacks to children (refer to “[Snack Menus](#)” in section 5).

Table 5. ASP preschool meal pattern through June 30, 2025

Snack meal components <i>Serve any two of the five meal components</i>	Minimum for ages 1-2	Minimum for ages 3-5
<b>Milk, fluid</b> Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored Ages 2-5: Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)
<b>Meats/meat alternates (MMA), ounce equivalents (oz eq)</b>	<b>½ oz eq =</b>	<b>½ oz eq =</b>
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs); or tempeh	½ ounce	½ ounce
Surimi	2 ounces	2 ounces
Tofu	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)
Cottage cheese	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	1 ounce (⅛ cup)
Egg, large	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils	⅛ cup	⅛ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	½ ounce	½ ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)
<b>Vegetables, cup</b>	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Fruits, cups</b>	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Grains, oz eq</b>	<b>½ oz eq =</b>	<b>½ oz eq =</b>
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz e	½ oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold):		
Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup



## Preschool Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the product-based limits for yogurt and breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars.

- Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

For more information on the final rule, visit the “[Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Crediting Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns

Guidance on the preschool meal components and crediting requirements are not included in this handbook because the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* provides comprehensive guidance on these requirements. Additional crediting guidance and resources are available in the “[Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Choking Prevention for Young Children

Children younger than age 4 are at the highest risk of choking. SFAs should consider children’s ages and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer in preschool snack menus. Avoid foods that are choking hazards (such as small marble-sized, sticky, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole) and prepare foods so they are easy for young children to chew and swallow (such as changing the shape, size, and texture of foods). For additional guidance, refer to the USDA’s resource, *Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes*, and visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Menu Planning Resources

The resources below provide guidance for SFAs on planning snacks to meet the ASP preschool meal pattern.

- Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Preschoolers (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal\\_pattern\\_asp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf)
- Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Ages 1-2 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu\\_form\\_asp\\_ages\\_1-2.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_ages_1-2.docx)

- Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Ages 3-5 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu\\_form\\_asp\\_ages\\_3-5.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_ages_3-5.docx)
- Afterschool Snack Program Sample Menu for Ages 3-5 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample\\_menu\\_asp\\_ages\\_3-5.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_ages_3-5.pdf)
- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain\\_calculation\\_snp\\_oz\\_eq\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp_oz_eq_preschool.pdf)
- Choking Prevention (CSDE’s Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs/documents#ChokingPrevention>
- Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison\\_preschool\\_grades\\_k-12\\_asp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf)
- Crediting Commercial Processed Products (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#CommercialProducts>
- Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources>
- Crediting Foods Made from Scratch (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#ScratchFoods>
- Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting\\_summary\\_charts\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp_preschool.pdf)
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>
- Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/grain\\_oz\\_eq\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/grain_oz_eq_snp_preschool.pdf)

- How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how\\_to\\_use\\_ounce\\_equivalents\\_chart.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_ounce_equivalents_chart.pdf)
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning>
- Menu Planning for the ASP (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#MenuPlanning>
- Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu\\_planning\\_guide\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu_planning_guide_preschool.pdf)
- Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable\\_foods\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp_preschool.pdf)
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes>
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_menu\\_planning.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf)
- Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources\\_preschool\\_meal\\_patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf)
- Serving School Meals to Preschoolers (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers>
- Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs>
- Standardized Recipe Form for the School Nutrition Programs:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/standardized\\_recipe\\_form\\_schools.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_schools.docx)
- Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming\\_Meal\\_Pattern\\_Changes](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming_Meal_Pattern_Changes)

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

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when\\_commercial\\_grain\\_products\\_require\\_pfs\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf)

For more resources, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Resources for School Meals* and *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*.



## 4 — Menu Planning

SFAs must maintain crediting documentation to indicate that commercial products and foods made from scratch meet the ASP meal pattern requirements. Foods without appropriate crediting documentation cannot credit in the ASP.

### Documentation for Commercial Products

Commercial products that are processed or contain added ingredients (such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and cheese ravioli) require documentation stating the amount of each meal component per serving. Acceptable documentation includes a CN label or PFS.

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that provide at least ½ ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the MMA component for the USDA’s meal patterns. They typically indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products.

For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#); the USDA’s document, [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#). Additional resources are available in the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

### Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch

SFAs must have standardized recipes that document the crediting information per serving. For example, a snack menu for grades K-12 credits macaroni and cheese as 1 ounce of the MMA component and 1 serving of the grains/breads component. The SFA’s standardized recipe must indicate that each serving contains 1 ounce of cheese and ½ cup of WGR or enriched pasta. For more information, visit the “Crediting Foods Made from Scratch” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage or [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

### Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

Foods and ingredients credit toward the USDA's meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs based on the yields in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). The FBG provides food yields and crediting information for common types and customary sizes of milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains; indicates how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide; and helps menu planners determine how recipes and purchased foods contribute to the meal components.

### Planning Healthy Snacks

The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to develop snack menus that reflect the principles of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and include a variety of nutrient-dense foods. Nutrient-dense foods provide naturally occurring vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that contribute to health; and contain little or no solid fats, added sugars, refined starches, or sodium. Examples include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, 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).

Menu planners play an important role in determining the nutritional quality of ASP menus by including more nutritious choices. Some examples include offering fresh fruits and vegetables instead of 100 juice and offering 100 percent whole grains instead of enriched grains. Planning snack menus to include a variety of nutrient-dense foods provides the best nutrition for children.

### Best practices for healthy snack menus

Menu planners can provide healthy snacks for children by following the practices below.

- Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats each week. Balance the number of meal components served at snack each week. Serve each meal component at least two or three times each week.
- Serve a different fruit or vegetable each day of the week and include a serving of each vegetable subgroup each week (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#)).
- Serve WGR foods instead of enriched grains and serve 100 percent whole grains most often. For information on identifying whole grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#). For menu planning and recipe ideas, visit the "Recipes" section of the CSDE's [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- Serve a different MMA at least three days per week. The USDA recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils; limiting processed meats to no more than one serving per week; and serving only natural low-fat or reduced fat-cheeses.
- Serve beans, peas, and lentils at least once per week. For menu planning and recipe ideas, refer to “Beans, peas, and lentils” in the CSDE’s [Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the “Recipes” section of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Replace juice with whole fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried). If snack menus include juice, serve only citrus juices and blends, e.g., orange juice, pineapple juice, and grapefruit juice.
- Try new foods and recipes. For menu planning and recipe ideas, refer to the CSDE’s [Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the “Recipes” section of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The USDA’s [CACFP best practices](#) provide recommendations to further improve the nutritional quality of preschool snacks by increasing vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; and reducing added sugars and saturated fats. These recommendations are also beneficial for grades K-12.



Tables 6 through 10 provide sample menu ideas for each meal component. For preschool menus, consider children’s ages and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer. Some foods may be choking hazards for young children (refer to “[Choking Prevention for Young Children](#)” in section 3).

For guidance and resources on menu planning, refer to “Menu Planning Resources” in sections 2 and 3, and the CSDE’s [Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), [Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns](#) and [Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs](#). For more snack ideas, refer to the “Healthy Snacks” section of the CSDE’s [Resource List for Dietary Guidance and Nutrition Information](#).

Resources that provide ideas for snack menus are available in the “[Snack Menu Ideas](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

**Table 6. Snack menu ideas for the milk component**

Ages 1-5: ½ cup	Grades K-12: 1 cup
Milk must meet the specific requirements for each grade group.	
<p><b>Age 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole milk, unflavored</li> <li>• Whole lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk, unflavored</li> </ul> <p><b>Ages 2-5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fat-free milk, unflavored</li> <li>• Lactose-free or lactose-reduced fat-free milk, unflavored</li> <li>• Low-fat (1%) milk, unflavored</li> <li>• Lactose-free or lactose-reduced low-fat milk, unflavored</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grades K-12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored</li> <li>• Lactose-free or lactose-reduced fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored</li> <li>• Low-fat (1%) milk, unflavored or flavored</li> <li>• Lactose-free or lactose-reduced low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored</li> </ul>



Table 7. Snack menu ideas for the MMA component

Ages 1-5: ½ oz eq	Grades K-12: 1 ounce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meat, fish, and poultry, e.g., beef, chicken, ham, pork, tuna, and turkey</li> <li>• Cheese (natural reduced-fat or low-fat recommended), e.g., cheddar, cottage, part-skim mozzarella cheese stick, and Swiss, such as cheese sticks, cheese cubes, and sliced cheese</li> <li>• Cottage cheese</li> <li>• Eggs, e.g., hard-boiled and egg salad</li> <li>• Beans, peas, and lentils (e.g., black beans, chickpeas (garbanzos), edamame, hummus, kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, refried beans, split peas, white beans, split peas), such as hummus, refried beans, roasted or marinated chickpeas, and lentil salad</li> <li>• Tofu, soy products, and alternate protein products (APP)</li> <li>• Nuts and seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts</li> <li>• Nut and seed butters, e.g., almond butter, almonds, cashew butter, cashews, peanut butter, peanuts, pumpkin seeds, soy nut butter, soy nuts, sunflower seed butter, sunflower seeds, and tahini</li> <li>• Yogurt (low-fat) or soy yogurt <sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yogurt smoothies made with pureed fruits and vegetables <sup>1, 2</sup></li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> For the ASP preschool meal pattern, yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce through June 30, 2025 (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Yogurt in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). Effective July 1, 2025, the ASP meal patterns for both grade groups (preschool and grades K-12) require that yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

<sup>2</sup> Yogurt in smoothies credits as the MMA component (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Smoothies in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)).

Table 8. Snack menu ideas for the vegetables component

Ages 1-5: ½ cup	Grades K-12: ¾ cup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh or frozen vegetables, e.g., acorn squash, asparagus, avocado, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, butternut squash, cabbage (green and red), carrots, cassava, cauliflower, celery, chard, chayote, Chinese cabbage, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, jicama, kale, lettuce (arugula, Boston, Bibb, green, red, romaine), mushrooms, okra, peas (green), peppers (green, orange, red), potatoes, radishes, snap peas, snow peas, spaghetti squash, spinach, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnip, yellow squash, and zucchini squash</li> <li>• 100 percent vegetable juice, e.g., tomato juice, mixed vegetables <sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Canned vegetables, e.g., corn, green beans, and chickpeas <sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Coleslaw</li> <li>• Salsa (100 percent vegetables), e.g., vegetable or mango</li> <li>• Salads, e.g., garden salad, mixed greens, carrot-raisin salad, and three-bean salad <sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Smoothies made with pureed vegetables <sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Vegetable soup <sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Juice (including fruit and vegetable smoothies) cannot be served when milk is the only other snack component. For the preschool meal patterns, juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day.

<sup>2</sup> Read labels for sodium content and choose varieties lowest in sodium.

<sup>3</sup> For the ASP preschool meal pattern, raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served. Effective July 1, 2025, this crediting also applies to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

<sup>4</sup> Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to “[Crediting smoothies](#)” in section 2) and count toward the juice limit.

<sup>5</sup> The large serving of commercial vegetable soup required to credit as a full serving of vegetables might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. Soups made from scratch credit based on the amount of vegetables per serving, which must be documented by a standardized recipe (refer to “[Crediting soups](#)” in section 2).

**Table 9. Snack menu ideas for the fruits component**

Ages 1-5: ½ cup	Grades K-12: ¾ cup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh or frozen fruit, e.g., apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, blueberries, cantaloupe, cherries, grapes (red and green), honeydew melon, kiwis, mangos, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, raspberries, strawberries, and watermelon</li> <li>• 100 percent fruit juice, e.g., apple cider, orange, grape, and pineapple <sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Canned fruit in juice or water, e.g., applesauce, apricots, peaches, pears, and pineapple tidbits <sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Fruit salad (mixed fruits)</li> <li>• Dried fruits, e.g., raisins, apple chips, apricots, and prunes <sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Dried fruits and nuts trail mix</li> <li>• Smoothies made with pureed fruits <sup>4</sup></li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Juice (including fruit and vegetable smoothies) cannot be served when milk is the only other snack component. For the preschool meal patterns, juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> For the ASP preschool meal pattern, dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. Effective July 1, 2025, this crediting also applies to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

<sup>4</sup> Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to "[Crediting smoothies](#)" in section 2) and count toward the juice limit.

Table 10. Snack menu ideas for the grains component

Ages 1-5: ½ oz eq <sup>1</sup>	Grades K-12: 1 serving <sup>1</sup>
<p>Grains must be WGR or enriched. Serve 100 percent whole grains most often. Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns, except for sweet crackers like animal crackers and graham crackers. Effective July 1, 2025, grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal crackers (grain-based dessert) <sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Bagels</li> <li>• Biscuits</li> <li>• Bread</li> <li>• Breadsticks</li> <li>• Breakfast cereal <sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Brown rice</li> <li>• Cereal bars (grain-based dessert)</li> <li>• Cinnamon toast</li> <li>• Cooked grain salads, e.g., bulgur, couscous, quinoa, and tabouleh</li> <li>• Crackers</li> <li>• Dry cereal mix <sup>3</sup></li> <li>• English muffin</li> <li>• French bread</li> <li>• French toast sticks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graham crackers (grain-based dessert) <sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Granola bars (grain-based dessert)</li> <li>• Macaroni</li> <li>• Melba toast</li> <li>• Muffins, e.g., corn, blueberry</li> <li>• Noodles</li> <li>• Oatmeal</li> <li>• Oyster crackers</li> <li>• Pancakes</li> <li>• Pasta</li> <li>• Pita bread</li> <li>• Pizza crust</li> <li>• Pretzels (hard or soft)</li> <li>• Rice cakes</li> <li>• Rolls</li> <li>• Soft tortillas</li> <li>• Toast</li> <li>• Tortilla chips</li> <li>• Waffles</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the appropriate grain chart for the required quantities ([Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#) or [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#)).

<sup>2</sup> The USDA encourages preschool menus to limit sweet crackers due to their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all preschool meals and ASP snacks. For more information, visit the USDA's webpage, [Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP](#).

<sup>3</sup> For the preschool meal pattern through June 30, 2025, breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). Effective July 1, 2025, the ASP meal patterns for both grade groups (preschool and grades K-12) require that breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

## 5 — Program Requirements

In addition to meeting the meal pattern requirements, the ASP must comply with all operation requirements indicated below.

### Time Restrictions

An afterschool care program sponsored by a school under the NSLP can be reimbursed only for snacks served after school on a regular school day. Programs operating on weekends or during school vacations cannot be reimbursed for ASP snacks. During the summer, snacks are not reimbursable unless the afterschool program takes place after summer school for academic credit.

### Extended School Days

Snacks can be served in schools operating expanded learning times that are longer than the traditional school day. A school operating longer than the traditional school day may be eligible for reimbursement if it operates a school day that is at least one hour longer than the minimum number of school-day hours required for the comparable grade levels by the local educational agency (LEA) in which the school is located.

When requesting approval for snacks in these programs, LEAs must submit information to the CSDE's [ASP coordinator](#) on the length of their school day and the length of the school day of comparable schools. The CSDE will use this information to determine eligibility for ASP participation. For more information, refer to [CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 15-11: Eligibility of Expanded Learning Time Programs for Afterschool Snack Service in the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#).

### Operation Dates

The SFA must notify the CSDE's [ASP coordinator](#) of any changes to the beginning and ending dates of the ASP operation.

### Food Safety

Afterschool care program facilities must meet state and local health and safety standards. SFAs must include the ASP in the district's Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) food safety plan. Temperatures for "Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food (TCS)," formerly known as potentially hazardous foods (PHFs), should be recorded on the ASP daily production record or documented elsewhere. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

### Snack Charges

Snacks must be served free or at a reduced price to all children who are determined by the SFA to be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the USDA regulations (7 CFR 245).

- The snack price for reduced-eligible children cannot exceed 15 cents.
- The SFA establishes the snack price charged to paying children.
- USDA regulations do not permit the food service program budget to cover the cost of snacks served to adults. A minimum payment to cover costs should be paid by the adult, or the school/organization responsible for the programming.

The ASP must comply with each of these charge criteria for snacks.



## Snack Menus

SFAs must maintain menu records that document the service of reimbursable snacks to students. The CSDE recommends developing a cycle menu for ASP snacks. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a specific period (usually at least 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. For guidance on cycle menus, refer to [Chapter 3: Menu Development](#) in the USDA's *Menu Planner for School Meals*.

### CSDE sample menu forms

The CSDE's sample ASP menu forms help menu planners include the required meal components in the appropriate portions.

- ASP Menu Form for Ages 1-2
- ASP Menu Form for Ages 3-5
- ASP Menu Form for Grades K-12

These forms are available in the "[Menu Planning for the ASP](#)" section of the CSDE's [ASP](#) webpage.

### CSDE sample menus

The CSDE's sample 10-week snack menus provide menu ideas for grades K-12 and preschool.

- ASP Sample Menu for Ages 3-5
- ASP Sample Menu for Grades K-12

These documents are available in the "[Menu Planning for the ASP](#)" section of the CSDE's [ASP](#) webpage.

### Production Records

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 students. A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare ASP snacks. Production records must demonstrate how snacks contribute to the required meal components for each day of operation. For guidance on production records, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs](#).

### CSDE sample production records

The CSDE's sample production record forms for grades K-12 and preschool assist SFAs with providing the required information.

- ASP Production Record for Ages 1-2
- ASP Production Record for Ages 3-5 – Completed Sample
- ASP Production Record for Ages 3-5
- ASP Production Record for Grades K-12 – Completed Sample:
- ASP Production Record for Grades K-12

These forms are available in the “[Production Records for the ASP](#)” section of the CSDE's [ASP](#) webpage.





## Counting and Claiming

The ASP must maintain a record of the number of snacks served to students each day. Afterschool care programs must maintain a roster or sign-in sheet to determine which children are present on any given day and use this information as an edit check prior to submission of monthly claims for reimbursement.

The ASP cannot claim snacks based on student attendance. Reimbursement is based on the actual number of snacks served to students each day.

The procedures for counting and claiming snacks depend on whether the school is site eligible or area eligible. In site/area eligible schools, 50 percent or more of enrolled children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. These percentages are calculated annually by the CSDE based on October data from the previous school year. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Area Eligibility for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



### Counting and Claiming for Site/Area Eligible Schools

Site eligible and area eligible schools cannot charge children for snacks. While not all children are individually eligible, the majority of children attending that school or living in that area qualify for free meals. Staff may take snack counts by counting the snacks served each day and recording this number on the appropriate form.

The CSDE attendance and snack count forms listed below can be used by schools that are not site/area eligible.

- ASP Daily Snack Count Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools
- ASP Daily Snack Count Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools
- ASP Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools
- ASP Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools
- ASP Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Site/Area Eligible Schools

These forms are available in the “[Snack Count Forms for Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage.

SFAs may claim only one snack per child per day. Prior to submitting the monthly claim, the SFA must check the daily snack counts with the daily attendance records. This provides an edit check to prevent overclaiming of snacks.

### External ASP sites

The ASP can be operated at an external site (e.g., Boys & Girls Club) if the program is operated by a SFA participating in the NSLP and the school where the children are enrolled is area eligible. External sites must meet the criteria below.

- The external site must be sponsored by or operated by a school district.
- The external site must be located in a jurisdiction where at least one school participates in the NSLP.
- The participants (students) at the external site must be enrolled at the area eligible school affiliated with the external ASP site.
- Snacks served at the external site to children who are not enrolled at the area eligible school cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- The SFA will claim the snacks under the sponsoring school.

## Counting and Claiming for Schools that are Not Site/Area Eligible

Schools that are not site/area eligible can choose to implement a pricing program or, if the program has other funding sources, offer all snacks free of charge (non-pricing program).

### Pricing program

The ASP charges a snack fee to students based on their eligibility status. Free-eligible students cannot be charged. The maximum charge allowed for reduced-eligible students is 15 cents. Full-paying students are charged full price, which is determined by the SFA.

Schools and institutions must record the snack counts for each day by individual student using a roster-style or similar system. The school site must total and claim snacks each month by category, i.e., free, reduced, and paid. ASP staff must ensure that there is no overt identification of students receiving free or reduced-price snacks. The USDA defines overt identification as any action that may result in a child being recognized as certified for, or potentially eligible to receive, free or reduced-price meals, free or reduced-price snacks, or free milk.

Schools and institutions must institute a collection procedure that collects no more than 15 cents from children eligible for reduced-price snacks and an established local price for full-paying students. For more information on the requirements for collection procedures, visit the CSDE's [Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

At the SFA's discretion, participating schools and institutions that are not operating the [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#) may offer snacks at no cost to students who would otherwise qualify for reduced-price benefits. The expenditures associated with covering the reduced-price student payments may be funded from the nonprofit food service account. Schools electing to take advantage of this flexibility continue to receive federal reimbursement based on snacks claimed for students in the reduced-price category. Only paid students will be charged for snacks. SFAs are permitted to implement this option selectively in the ASP serving sites they operate.

### Non-pricing program

The ASP offers snacks free of charge to all students. The school must still take meal counts based on individual student eligibility. This option is allowed only if the program has other funding sources. The difference between the cost of providing the snack and the reimbursement received must be covered by the school general fund, the organization sponsoring the afterschool care program, a parent organization, or other community group. The nonprofit NSFSA) cannot absorb this cost.

SFAs have two options for counting and claiming snacks in a non-pricing program.

1. Use a roster and claim by eligibility category. With this option, no student is charged for a snack, but the school takes counts using a roster and claims snacks based on free, reduced, and paid categories.
2. Claim all snacks in the paid category. With this option, the school takes the counts using the same method as site or area eligible programs, but all snacks are claimed at the “paid” rate regardless of the student’s individual eligibility status.

The CSDE attendance and snack count forms listed below can be used by schools that are not site/area eligible.

- ASP Daily Attendance and Snack Count Record for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible
- ASP Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible

These forms are available in the [“Snack Count Forms for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible”](#) section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

### Reimbursement Rates

Funding for the ASP is determined by area eligibility or the income eligibility of the children enrolled in the afterschool program. All snacks served at site/area eligible afterschool sites are eligible for the free rate of reimbursement. Afterschool sites that do not qualify as site/area eligible receive reimbursement based on the income eligibility categories of participating children.

The USDA releases the reimbursement rates for free, reduced, and paid meals in the Child Nutrition Programs in July of each year. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Reimbursement Rates for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Claims Submission

The SFA must submit online monthly snack reimbursement claims with the NSLP claim. After submitting the claim, the SFA must maintain the claim documentation on file. This includes daily snack counts and daily attendance records. For schools that are not site/area eligible, the daily snack counts must be recorded by student eligibility category.

Prior to submitting the monthly claim, the SFA must check the daily snack counts with the daily attendance records as an edit check to prevent overclaiming of snacks. Snack reimbursement is limited to one snack per child per day.

## Monitoring

The SFA must review each ASP a minimum of two times each year. The reviews must assess each site's compliance with the appropriate USDA meal pattern (i.e., ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 or ASP preschool meal pattern) and counting and claiming procedures.

- **First review:** The SFA must complete the first review within the first four weeks of ASP program operation each school year.
- **Second review:** The SFA must complete a second review sometime during the remainder of the time that the ASP is in operation.

The SFA must keep signed and dated copies of the completed on-site monitoring forms on file, including detailed findings and corrective action. If problems are found during the reviews, the SFA must assign corrective action and conduct at least one follow-up review to ensure that corrective action has been implemented.

The CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program Onsite Monitoring Form](#) is available under "Monitoring" in the ["Forms for the ASP"](#) section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

## Recordkeeping

The SFA must maintain all records pertaining to ASP operations, as indicated below.

- **Dated daily menus** must reflect the meal components served to students (refer to ["Snack Menus"](#) in this section).
- **Daily production records** must document the foods served, the portion sizes used, and the number of snacks prepared and served to students. Production records are required to document the snack menu's compliance with the ASP meal pattern requirements (refer to ["Production Records"](#) in this section).

- **Daily snack counts** must document the number of snacks served to students each day. Each ASP site must record this information daily.

- **Site/area eligible schools:** Site/area eligible schools must use one of the two options below

**Option 1:** Use all three forms below for the applicable grade group (grades K-12 or preschool).

1. **Snack count**

- Grades K-12: [ASP Daily Snack Count Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)
- Preschool: [ASP Daily Snack Count Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)

2. **Production record**

- Grades K-12: [ASP Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)
- Preschool: [ASP Production Record for Ages 3-5](#) or [ASP Production Record for Ages 1-2](#) (as applicable)

3. **Monthly attendance and snack count**

- Grades K-12: [ASP Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)
- Preschool: [ASP Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)

**Option 2:** Use both forms below for the applicable grade group (grades K-12 or preschool).

1. **Snack count and production record**

- Grades K-12: [ASP Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)
- Preschool: [ASP Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)

2. **Monthly attendance and snack count:** [ASP Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)

These forms are available in the “[Snack Count Forms for Site/Area Eligible Schools](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage. For more information, refer to “[Site/area eligible schools](#)” under “Counting and Claiming” in this section.

- **Schools that are not site/area eligible:** Schools that are not site/area eligible must record the daily snack counts by student eligibility category. These schools must complete both forms below.
  1. CSDE’s [ASP Daily Attendance and Snack Count Record for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible](#)
  2. CSDE’s [ASP Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible](#)

For more information, refer to “[Schools that are not site/area eligible](#)” under “Counting and Claiming” in this section.

- **Attendance rosters** must document the children in attendance at each site each day. These records may be kept by the afterschool care program staff or may be developed specifically for the ASP. Attendance rosters are used as an edit check to determine that the SFA is not claiming more snacks than the number of students in attendance on any day. Site/area eligible schools can use total attendance. Schools that are not site/area eligible must record the snack counts for each day by individual student.
- **Household applications** for meal benefits or other eligibility documentation (if not area or site eligible) must be on file for each student.
- **On-site monitoring forms** must document the afterschool care program’s compliance with the ASP meal pattern and counting and claiming procedures. The CSDE’s [ASP Onsite Monitoring Form](#) is available on the CSDE’s [ASP](#) webpage (refer to “[Monitoring](#)” in this section).

The USDA regulations require that SFAs must make all accounts and records pertaining to its school food service available upon request to the CSDE and USDA for audit or review. The SFA must maintain all ASP accounts and records, including approved and denied free and reduced-price applications, for a period of three years after the date of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which they pertain. If audit findings have not been resolved, the records must be retained beyond the three-year period, as long as required for resolution of the issues raised by the audit.

### Civil Rights

SFAs must display the USDA's "And Justice for All" poster in all areas where snacks are served. To obtain copies of this poster, please contact the CSDE [school nutrition staff](#).

SFAs must ensure that they meet civil rights requirements according to 7 CFR 210.23(b) of the [NSLP regulations](#). SFAs must provide civil rights training each year for all ASP staff. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Civil Rights for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The USDA nondiscrimination statement must be included on materials related to the ASP. SFAs are not required to include the USDA nondiscrimination statement on snack menus.

### USDA nondiscrimination statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## Staff Responsibilities

The afterschool care program must have at least one school or SFA employee who understands the USDA rules and regulations for ASP operations. This individual is responsible for training everyone who is involved with any aspect of operating the ASP and conducting the required ASP monitoring reviews (refer to “[Monitoring](#)” in this section).

The food service and afterschool care staff share responsibility for compliance with the food safety plan and the district HACCP requirements (refer to “[Food Safety](#)” in this section).

### Role of food service staff

School food service personnel are typically responsible for providing the ASP snack and completing and maintaining production records. However, they are not required to stay late to serve snacks or take meal counts. The food service manager may be responsible for conducting the monitoring visits and completing the monthly claim for reimbursement.

### Role of afterschool care staff

The afterschool care program staff members are typically responsible for serving the snacks, keeping the attendance roster, and counting and recording the number of snacks served. The afterschool care program staff must be trained by the SFA to ensure compliance with the USDA regulations and policies governing the ASP.





## 6 — Resources

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

### Comparison Charts

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison\\_preschool\\_grades\\_k-12\\_asp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf)

Comparison of Lunch and Breakfast Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/comparison\\_preschool\\_grades\\_k-12\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_snp.pdf)

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison\\_grain\\_crediting\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison_grain_crediting_snp.pdf)

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison\\_milk\\_requirements\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison_milk_requirements_snp.pdf)

### Connecticut Nutrition Standards

CNS Worksheets (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/connecticut-nutrition-standards/how-to#CNSWorksheets>

Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluating\\_recipes\\_cns\\_compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluating_recipes_cns_compliance.pdf)

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification>

How to Evaluate Commercial Food Products for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluate\\_commercial\\_food\\_products\\_cns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluate_commercial_food_products_cns.pdf)

How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluate\\_scratch\\_foods\\_cns\\_compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluate_scratch_foods_cns_compliance.pdf)

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/list-of-acceptable-foods-and-beverages>

Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/cns/connecticut\\_nutrition\\_standards\\_summary.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/cns/connecticut_nutrition_standards_summary.pdf)

## **Crediting Foods in the ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12**

Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program

Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains\\_breads\\_calculation\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_calculation_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#creditingfoodsgradesk12>

Crediting Summary Charts for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/crediting\\_summary\\_charts\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/crediting_summary_charts_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program

(“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#GrainsBreadsK12>

Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains\\_breads\\_servings\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_servings_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program

(“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#mmmak12>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#MilkK12>

Noncreditable Foods in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/noncreditable\\_foods\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/noncreditable_foods_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program  
 (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program webpage):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents  
 #VegetablesFruitsK12](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents/#VegetablesFruitsK12)

### **Crediting Foods in the ASP Preschool Meal Pattern**

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain\\_calculation\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp_preschool.pdf)

Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/  
 related-resources](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources)

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Fruits Component (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Fruits>

Grains Component (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Grains>

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/grain\\_oz\\_eq\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/grain_oz_eq_snp_preschool.pdf)

Meats/Meat Alternates Component (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#MMA>

Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu\\_planning\\_guide\\_  
 preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu_planning_guide_preschool.pdf)

Milk Component (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Milk>

Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable\\_foods\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp_preschool.pdf)

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources\\_preschool\\_meal\\_patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf)

Serving School Meals to Preschoolers (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers>

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs>

Vegetables Component (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/Sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Vegetables>

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

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

## **CSDE Guides**

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/swp/action\\_guide.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/swp/action_guide.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp\\_handbook.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp_handbook.pdf)

Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/guide\\_meal\\_modifications\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/guide_meal_modifications_snp.pdf)

Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu\\_planning\\_guide\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu_planning_guide_preschool.pdf)

Menu Planning Guide for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guide-for-school-meals>

### CSDE Resource Lists

Resource List for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_child\\_nutrition\\_programs.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_child_nutrition_programs.pdf)

Resource List for Competitive Foods (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_competitive\\_foods.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_competitive_foods.pdf)

Resource List for Dietary Guidance and Nutrition Information (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_dietary\\_guidance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_dietary_guidance.pdf)

Resource List for Food Safety in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_food\\_safety.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_food_safety.pdf)

Resource List for Health and Achievement (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_achievement.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_achievement.pdf)

Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_menu\\_planning.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf)

Resource List for Nutrition Education (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_nutrition\\_education.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_nutrition_education.pdf)

Resource List for Obesity Data and Preventions (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_obesity.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_obesity.pdf)

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources\\_preschool\\_meal\\_patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf)

Resource List for Physical Activity and Physical Education (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_physical\\_activity.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_physical_activity.pdf)

Resource List for Special Diets in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_special\\_diets.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_special_diets.pdf)

Resource List for Wellness Policies for Schools and Child Care (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_wellness\\_policy.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_wellness_policy.pdf)

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources\\_preschool\\_meal\\_patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf)

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal\\_pattern/resources\\_school\\_meal\\_patterns\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal_pattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.pdf).

## **Meal Patterns**

Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal\\_pattern\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Preschool Meal Pattern (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal\\_pattern\\_asp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Sample Menu for Ages 3-5 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample\\_menu\\_asp\\_ages\\_3-5.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_ages_3-5.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Sample Menu for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample\\_menu\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Meal Patterns for the ASP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program#MealPatternsASP>

## **Menu Planning Forms**

Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Ages 1-2 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu\\_form\\_asp\\_ages1-2.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_ages1-2.docx)

Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Ages 3-5 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu\\_form\\_asp\\_ages\\_3-5.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_ages_3-5.docx)

Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu\\_form\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_grades_k-12.docx)

Menu Planning for the ASP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#menuplanning>

## **Snack Count Forms and Production Records**

Afterschool Snack Program Daily Attendance and Snack Count Record for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily\\_attendance\\_count\\_record\\_asp\\_not\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily_attendance_count_record_asp_not_site_area_eligible.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily\\_count\\_production\\_record\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily_count_production_record_asp_grades_k-12_site_area_eligible.pdf)



Afterschool Snack Program Daily Snack Count and Production Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily\\_count\\_production\\_record\\_asp\\_preschool\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily_count_production_record_asp_preschool_site_area_eligible.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Daily Snack Count Record for Grades K-12 in Site/Area Eligible Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily\\_count\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily_count_asp_grades_k-12_site_area_eligible.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Daily Snack Count Record for Preschoolers in Site/Area Eligible Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily\\_count\\_asp\\_preschool\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily_count_asp_preschool_site_area_eligible.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Schools that are not Site/Area Eligible (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily\\_attendance\\_count\\_record\\_asp\\_not\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/daily_attendance_count_record_asp_not_site_area_eligible.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Monthly Attendance and Snack Count Record for Site/Area Eligible Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/monthly\\_attendance\\_count\\_asp\\_site\\_area\\_eligible.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/monthly_attendance_count_asp_site_area_eligible.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Ages 1-2 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production\\_record\\_asp\\_ages\\_1-2.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_ages_1-2.docx)

Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Ages 3-5 – Completed Sample (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production\\_record\\_asp\\_ages\\_3-5\\_sample.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_ages_3-5_sample.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Ages 3-5 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production\\_record\\_asp\\_ages\\_3-5.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_ages_3-5.docx)

Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Grades K-12 – Completed Sample (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production\\_record\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12\\_sample.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_grades_k-12_sample.pdf)

Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production\\_record\\_asp\\_grades\\_k-12.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_grades_k-12.docx)

Production Records for Preschoolers (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#ProductionRecordsPreschoolers>

Production Records for the ASP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#ProductionRecordsASP>

## USDA Regulations and Policy

Final Rule (81 FR 24347): Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (April 25, 2016):

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

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>

National School Lunch Program Regulations (7 CFR 210).

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4c211a738d6109939c6054a6286ac109&mc=true&node=pt7.4.210&rgn=div5s>

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):

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

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions\\_Answers\\_Connecticut\\_Statutes\\_School\\_Foods\\_Beverages.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions_Answers_Connecticut_Statutes_School_Foods_Beverages.pdf)

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/questions-and-answers-updated-meal-pattern-requirements-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

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 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Questions and Answers

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

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp>

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/procuring-local-meat-poultry-game-and-eggs-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 04-2011 and CACFP 01-2011: Eligibility of Expanded Learning Time Programs for Afterschool Snack Service in the NSLP and the CACFP:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/eligibility-expanded-learning-time-programs-afterschool-snack-service-nslp-and-cacfp>

USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Effective July 1, 2022:  
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USDA Memo SP 11-2015 (v2), CACFP 10-2105 and 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 11-2015 (v2), CACFP10-2015 and SFSP13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation>

USDA Memo SP 11-2015 v2, CACFP 10-2015 and 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 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/memos/om2018/sp19-2018s.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-shelf-stable-dried-and-semi-dried-meat-poultry-and-seafood-products-child-nutrition>

USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019 and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tempeh-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 27-2015, CACFP 09-2015 and SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and>

USDA Memo SP 28-2011: Water Availability during National School Lunch Program Meal Service:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/water-availability-during-nslp-meal-service>

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

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

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

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>

USDA Memo SP 53-2016 and CACFP 21-2016: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs and the CACFP:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp>

## Websites

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program>

Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-care-nutrition-and-physical-activity-policies>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/child-nutrition-cn-labeling-program>

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-nutrition-programs>

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

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs/documents#ChokingPrevention>

Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/competitive-foods>

Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-to-preschool>

Farm to School (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Farm-to-School>

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):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs>

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>

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 School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-school-nutrition-programs>

Put Local on Your Tray (University of Connecticut):

<https://putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu/>

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>

## Glossary

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

**Administrative Review (AR):** 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 or tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage.

**alternate protein products (APPs):** APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APPs in Child Nutrition Programs (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#)).

**area eligible schools:** Schools that have 50 percent or more of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and that are used to determine if other sites located in the attendance area of an area eligible school are eligible. Percentages are calculated annually by the CSDE based on October data from the previous school year. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Area Eligibility for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**artificial sweeteners:** A category of nonnutritive sweeteners used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. The six artificial sweeteners approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include 1) acesulfame potassium (Ace-K) (e.g., Sweet One®, Sunett®, and Sweet & Safe®); 2) advantame; 3) aspartame (e.g., Nutrasweet®, Equal®, and Sugar Twin®); 4) neotame (e.g., Newtame®); 5) saccharin (e.g., Sweet and Low®, Sweet Twin®, and Necta Sweet); and 6) sucralose (Splenda®). These nonnutritive sweeteners are calorie-free except for aspartame, which is very low in calories. For more information, refer to "nonnutritive sweeteners" in this section.

**beans, peas, and lentils (pulses):** The dried edible seeds of legumes (such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas) that are one of the five vegetable subgroups recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow beans, peas, and lentils to credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component.

**bran:** The seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Examples include oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran. Bran credits the same as enriched grains.

**cereal grains:** The seeds that come from grasses. Cereal grains can be whole grain (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rolled wheat, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and wheat berries) or enriched, such as cornmeal, corn grits, and farina.

**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, visit the USDA's [CACFP](#) webpage and the CSDE's [CACFP](#) webpage.

**Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the USDA's meal patterns, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that contribute to the MMA 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. The CN label will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit 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, visit the CSDE's [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**combination foods:** Foods that contain more than one meal component such as pizza, burritos, and a smoothie made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains



pasta (grains component) and cheese (MMA component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza or a burrito) or are not intended to be separated (such as hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

**competitive foods:** All foods and beverages available for sale to students on school premises separately from reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks in the Child Nutrition Programs.

**Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS):** State nutrition standards developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education per Section 10-215e of the Connecticut General Statutes. These standards address the nutritional content of all foods available for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals. They focus on limiting fat, saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars, moderating portion sizes, and increasing consumption of nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, and beans, peas, and lentils. All schools in any district that chooses to comply with the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes must follow the CNS for all sources of food sales to students, including school cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and any other sources. The CNS also applies to all foods served in the ASP. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.

**corn masa:** Dough made from masa harina that is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Corn masa is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to “nixtamalization” in this section.

**cornmeal:** Meal made from ground, dried corn.

**creditable food:** A food or beverage that counts toward the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs.

**cycle menu:** A series of menus planned for a specific period of time, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help schools comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time.

**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, visit 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, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meal Modifications in the 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 (B<sub>1</sub>), riboflavin (B<sub>2</sub>), niacin (B<sub>3</sub>), folic acid, and iron. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**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, refer to “enriched grains” in this section.

**Exhibit A chart:** The USDA’s [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) chart indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for a grain food to provide either 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) or 1 serving of the grains component. This chart may be used for commercial grain products, and standardized recipes that indicate the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. The required amounts for the grains component are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs. Oz eq apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 (refer to [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#)) and the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns (refer to [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#)). Servings apply to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 (refer to [Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#)).

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. The grains/breads component changes to the grains component and the required quantities change from grains/breads servings to grains oz eq. For more information, refer to “[Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26](#)” in section 2.

**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, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).

**food item:** A specific food offered within the meal components that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA’s school nutrition programs. A food item may contain one or more meal components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, macaroni and cheese is one food item that provides two components (grains and MMA) and a 2-ounce whole grain bagel is one food item that provides 2 oz eq of grains.

**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.

**fruits component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. For more information, refer to “full-strength fruit or vegetable juice” in this section, [“Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12”](#) in section 2, and the [“Fruits Component”](#) section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**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 meal or ASP snack per day. For more information, refer to [“Crediting juice”](#) in section 3 and the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. Juice cannot exceed half of the fruits and vegetables offered during the week. For more information, refer to [“Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26”](#) in section 2.

**germ:** The vitamin-rich sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel. Germ credits the same as enriched grains.

**grain-based desserts:** Desserts made primarily of grains, such as brownies, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, piecrusts 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, orange cranberry, and chocolate chip), sweet croissants (e.g., chocolate or almond filled), sweet rice puddings (e.g., cinnamon and vanilla), sweet bread puddings (e.g., made with cinnamon, fruits, chocolate, or icing), and sweet pita chips (e.g., cinnamon sugar). Sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers) are not grain-based desserts. **Note:** Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children and grain-based desserts do not credit. For more information, refer to "[Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26](#)" in section 2.

**grains component:** The meal component of the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. To credit as the grains component, grain foods must be whole grain-rich or enriched. Breakfast cereals must be whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified. For more information, refer to the "[Grains Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**grains/breads component:** The meal component of the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 and SFSP meal pattern that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. To credit as the grains/breads component, grain foods must be made from creditable grains (whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ). Breakfast cereals must be made from creditable grains or be fortified. For more information, refer to “[Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12](#)” in section 2.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. The grains/breads component changes to the grains component. For more information, refer to “[Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26](#)” in section 2.

**Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP):** A preventative food safety program to control food safety hazards during all aspects of food service operations. HACCP reduces the risk of foodborne hazards by focusing on each step of the food preparation process from receiving to service. For more information, visit the CSDE’s “[Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point \(HACCP\)](#)” section of the CSDE’s Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

**Healthy Food Certification (HFC):** A state statute (Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes) that requires each board of education or governing authority for all public schools participating in the NSLP to certify annually to the CSDE whether they will follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for all foods available for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals. Districts that choose to implement the CNS receive additional funding per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches (paid, free, and reduced) served in the district in the prior school year. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpage.

**hominy:** A traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin.

**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.

**lactose:** The naturally occurring sugar found in milk. Lactose contains glucose and galactose. For more information, refer to “simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

**lean meat and poultry:** Defined by the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) as meat and poultry that contains less than 10 grams of fat, no more than 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 grams and per labeled serving size, based on the USDA’s definitions for food label use. Examples include 95% lean cooked ground beef, beef top round steak or roast, beef tenderloin, pork top loin chop or roast, pork tenderloin, ham or turkey deli slices, skinless chicken breast, and skinless turkey breast.

**legumes:** A type of plant that includes pods, e.g., soybeans, peanuts, fresh peas, fresh beans, and pulses (beans, peas, and lentils). For more information, refer to “beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)” and “pulses” in this section.

**local educational agency (LEA):** A public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools. The term also includes any other public or private nonprofit institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a public or private nonprofit elementary school or secondary school, including residential child care institutions, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and educational service agencies and consortia of those agencies, as well as the state educational agency in a state or territory in which the state educational agency is the sole educational agency for all public or private nonprofit schools.

**masa harina:** Corn flour used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Masa harina is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to “Crediting corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal” in sections 2 and 3.

**meal pattern:** The required meal components and minimum serving sizes that schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. For more information, refer to sections 2 and 3.

**meal:** A grain made by coarsely grinding corn, oats, wheat, or other grains. Whole grain, enriched, or fortified meal credits toward the grains component of the USDA’s meal patterns.

**meal components:** The four food groups in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 (milk, vegetables/fruits, grains/breads, and MMA) and the five food groups in the ASP preschool meal pattern (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA). For more information, refer to sections 2 and 3.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. The meal pattern includes five food groups because the vegetables/fruits component changes to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component). For more information, refer to [“Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26”](#) in section 2.

**meat alternates:** Foods that provide similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products (APPs), cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), tofu and other soy products, tempeh, and yogurt. For more information, refer to [“Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12”](#) in section 2 and the [“Meats/Meat Alternates Component”](#) section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**meats/meat alternates (MMA) component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, and nuts and seeds. For more information, refer to [“Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12”](#) in section 2 and visit the [“Meats/Meat Alternates Component”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**medical statement:** A document that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate dietary accommodations for children with special dietary needs and is signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. The USDA requires that the medical statement to request meal modifications must include: 1) information about the child’s physical or mental impairment that is sufficient to allow the SFA to understand how it restricts the child’s diet; 2) an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child’s disability; and 3) if appropriate, the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit 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, visit 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 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.

**nixtamalization:** A process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients and results in a product with nutrition content similar to whole-grain corn. Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Nixtamalized corn credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to “[Corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal](#)” in section 2.

**noncreditable foods:** Foods and beverages that do not count toward the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods include foods and beverages in amounts that are too small to credit and foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal components. For more information, refer to “[Noncreditable Foods](#)” in section 1 and the CSDE’s resources, [Noncreditable Foods in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#) and [Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).



**noncreditable grains** (*preschool meal patterns only*): Grain ingredients in grain products that are not whole grain, enriched, bran, or germ. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For a list of noncreditable grains for the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#). **Note:** This definition applies only to the preschool meal patterns. The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 does not have a WGR requirement and does not require a limit for noncreditable grains.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), applies the NSLP and SBP weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. The NSLP WGR criteria (which require limits for noncreditable grains) are used to identify WGR grains for ASP snacks. For more information, refer to [“Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26”](#) in section 2.

**nonnutritive sweeteners:** Ingredients without calories that are hundreds of times sweeter than sugars and that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners include the six FDA-approved artificial sweeteners (acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), advantame, aspartame, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose) and three plant-based sweeteners (stevia, monk fruit, and thaumatin) that are [Generally Recognized as Safe \(GRAS\)](#) by the FDA. For more information on nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to [“Additional Information about High-Intensity Sweeteners Permitted for Use in Food in the United States”](#) on the FDA’s webpage.

**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.

**nutritive sweeteners:** Sugars and sweeteners that contain calories and are used to sweeten foods and beverages. Examples include brown rice syrup, brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, corn syrup solids, dextrin, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, maple syrup, nectars (e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar), raw sugar, sorghum syrup, sucrose, and syrup. For more information, refer to “added sugars” and “simple carbohydrates (sugars)” 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; 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalents (RAE) of vitamin A; 2.5 mcg 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. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).

**offer versus serve (OVS):** 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 in the ASP. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**ounce equivalent (oz eq):** A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and MMA component of the NSLP and the SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and the grains component and MMA component of the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns. The amount of a grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. One oz eq of the MMA component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. One oz eq of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as pretzels, breadsticks, 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, refer to the CSDE's [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#). **Note:** The grains/breads component of the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 requires servings instead of oz eq. The MMA component of the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 requires ounces instead of oz eq.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. The grains/breads component changes to the grains component and the required quantities change from grains/breads servings to grains oz eq. The required quantities for the MMA component change from ounces to oz eq. For more information, refer to "[Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26](#)" in section 2.

**overt identification:** Any action that may result in a child being recognized as certified for, or potentially eligible to receive, free or reduced-price meals, free or reduced-price snacks, or free milk.

**point-of-service meal count:** The point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable snack has been served to an eligible child.

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

**preschool meal patterns:** The required meal components and minimum servings that SFAs participating in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals served to children ages 1-5. For more information, refer to [section 1](#).

**primary grain ingredient:** The first listed grain ingredient in the product’s ingredients statement.

**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’s 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. SFAs must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals and ASP snacks. For more information, refer to “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 4 and the CSDE’s resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*.

**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 components.

**production record:** A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare school meals. Production records must demonstrate how meals contribute to the required food components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. In addition, these records must provide sufficient documentation to determine how school meals contribute to meeting the weekly dietary specifications. The USDA’s regulations require that all schools in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP must complete daily menu production records for all meals. For more information, refer to “[Production Records](#)” in section 5.

**pulses:** The edible dry seeds from legumes, such as beans, peas, and lentils. For more information, refer to “beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)” and “legumes” in this section.

**recognizable food item:** A food that is visible in the offered meal or snack and allows students to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtimes. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the ASP meal patterns. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flours.

**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, refer to “enriched grains” in this section.

**registered dietitian (RD) or registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN):** The Commission on Dietetic Registration defines a RD and RDN as someone who has completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited or approved by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND); completed an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program at a health-care facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies; passed a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); and completed continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration. For more information, visit the AND's [What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist](#) website and the CDR's [Registered Dietitian \(RD\) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist \(RDN\) Certification](#) website.

**reimbursable snacks:** Snacks that meet the requirements of the USDA regulations for the NSLP. A snack is reimbursable if it contains the minimum quantity of at least two meal components.

**residential child care institution (RCCI):** RCCIs include but are not limited to homes for the mentally, emotionally or physically impaired, and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities for chronically ill children; and juvenile detention centers. A long-term care facility is a hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

**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, visit 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.

**school nutrition programs:** The USDA's school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. For more information, visit the CSDE's [School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP:** The USDA’s federally assisted summer feeding program that combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP, and serves meals free of charge to children ages 18 and younger from low-income areas. School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply to the CSDE to participate in the SSO. SSO meals follow the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For more information, visit the [Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP](#) webpage.

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

**site eligible schools:** Schools that have 50 percent or more of enrolled children eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Percentages are calculated annually by the CSDE based on October data from the previous school year. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Area Eligibility for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Smart Snacks nutrition standards:** The USDA’s nutrition standards for competitive foods available for sale to students on school campus during the school day in public schools, private schools and RCCIs participating in the NSLP and SBP. The Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and any other sources of food and beverage sales. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. Smart Snacks does not apply to reimbursable snacks in the ASP. For more information, refer to “competitive foods” in this section and visit the CSDE’s [Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.

**standard of identity:** The mandatory government requirements that determine what a food product (like whole-wheat bread) must contain or may contain to be marketed under a certain name in interstate commerce. These standards protect consumers by ensuring that a label accurately reflects what is inside. For example, mayonnaise is not an imitation spread, and ice cream is not a similar, but different, frozen dessert. The USDA develops standards for meat and poultry products. The FDA develops standards for other food products. For more information, visit the FDA’s [Standards of Identity for Food](#) webpage.

**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, refer to “[Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch](#)” in section 4 and visit the “[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**state-licensed health care professional:** An individual 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 (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**sugar alcohols (polyols):** A type of carbohydrate used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Sugar alcohols are incompletely absorbed and metabolized by the body, and contribute fewer calories than most sugars. They also perform other functions such as adding bulk and texture to foods. Common sugar alcohols include sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, maltitol syrup, lactitol, erythritol, isomalt, and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH). Products with sugar alcohols are often labeled “sugar free.” Large amounts of sugar alcohols may cause bloating, gas, or diarrhea. For more information, refer to “nonnutritive sweeteners” in this section.

**surimi:** Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 ounce (ASP meal pattern for grades K-12) or 1 oz eq (ASP preschool meal pattern) of the MMA component.

**tempeh:** A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 ounce (ASP meal pattern for grades K-12) or 1 oz eq (ASP preschool meal pattern) of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs.

**USDA Foods:** Foods that are available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE Food Distribution Program. For more information, visit the USDA’s [Food Distribution Program](#) webpage and the CSDE’s [Food Distribution Program](#) webpage.

**vegetable subgroups:** The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables food group that are recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The subgroups include dark green, red/ orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. The ASP meal patterns do not require vegetable subgroups.

**vegetables component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. For more information, refer to “full-strength fruit or vegetable juice” in this section, “[Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12](#)” in section 2, and the “[Vegetables Component](#)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs 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.” This 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, or 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, and sodium.

**whole grain-rich (WGR)** (preschool meal patterns only): Foods that contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients are enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#). **Note:** The WGR definition for the preschool NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns is different from the WGR definition for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 does not have a WGR requirement.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), applies the NSLP and SBP weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at snack must be WGR, based on oz eq of offered grains. The NSLP WGR criteria are used to identify WGR grains for ASP snacks. For more information, refer to “[Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26](#)” in section 2.

**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).

**whole-wheat bread:** Bread that contains the whole grain, including the fiber-rich bran and germ. Whole-wheat flour will be listed as the first ingredient.







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