

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook

for Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program

School Year 2026-27 (July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027)



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**Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
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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. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp_handbook.pdf.

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

For questions regarding the ASP, contact Greg King. For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and ASP, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. The CSDE's resource, [County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs](#), indicates each Connecticut county's assigned CSDE school nutrition team member who provides technical assistance for the USDA school nutrition programs.

For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities](#).



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	Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (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 4).

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 4.

Section 5 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 may 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 4.

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 age or 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 System](#) webpage.
2. Request approval from the CSDE’s [ASP coordinator](#).
3. 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 age or 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.

ASP Meal Patterns

The ASP requires different meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool (ages 1-5).

- The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 is defined by [7 CFR 210.10 \(o\)\(2\)](#) of the NSLP regulations. Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligned the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern for children.
- The ASP preschool meal pattern (ages 1-5) follows the same requirements as the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. It is defined by [7 CFR 210.10\(o\)\(3\)](#) of the NSLP regulations and the updates required by the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

In addition, effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, [Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs](#), changes the ASP meal pattern requirements for fluid milk for ages 2 and older.

The ASP meal patterns are available in the “[Meal Patterns and Crediting](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage. Section 2 provides information on the ASP meal patterns.

Additional State and Federal Requirements for ASP Snacks

In addition to meeting the ASP meal patterns, foods and beverages served in afterschool snack menus may have additional restrictions depending on the type of school and when the ASP operates. The [Connecticut Nutrition Standards \(CNS\)](#) apply to all public schools that choose the healthy food option of [Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\)](#). Beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and ASP snacks in all public schools must meet the requirements of the state beverage statute. The USDA’s [Smart Snacks nutrition standards](#) apply if the ASP starts before the end of the school day or sells additional foods to students separately from reimbursable snacks before the end of the school day. The Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies restrict selling and giving certain foods and beverages to students and address the accrual of income from sales that occur during the operation of any Child Nutrition Programs. These requirements are summarized below.

CNS for Healthy Food Certification (HFC) in public schools

Foods served in ASP snacks must comply with the CNS if the ASP operates in a public school district that chooses the healthy food option of HFC under [Section 10-215f](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). SFAs must review all commercial products and standardized recipes

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

Determining if commercial products comply with CNS

SFAs must ensure that all commercial products served in the ASP comply with the CNS. The CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage identifies commercial products that comply with the CNS. However, this list does not indicate if a commercial product meets the crediting or serving size requirements for the ASP meal patterns. Menu planners must review all commercial products to ensure they meet the ASP meal pattern requirements.

For grain-based snacks like crackers and pretzels, menu planners must compare the manufacturer's serving with the required weight for 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) or obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer to document the amount of creditable grains per serving. For information on the required weights for 1 oz eq, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](#). For guidance on calculating a grain product's oz eq contribution, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs](#).

For more information on determining if commercial products comply with the CNS, refer to the CSDE's resources, [How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#), and visit the "[Commercial Products](#)" section in the "Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage.

Determining if foods made from scratch comply with CNS

Menu planners must evaluate each standardized recipe's nutrition information per serving for compliance with the CNS using the CSDE's Excel worksheets. These worksheets are available under "[CNS Worksheets](#)" in the "Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance" 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](#), and visit the "[Foods Made from Scratch](#)" section in the "Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage,

State beverage statute for public schools

All beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks in public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. [Section 10-221q](#). A la carte beverages available for sale to students in public schools during the school day must also comply with the USDA Smart Snacks beverage standards. The

CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage identifies commercial beverages that comply with the state beverage statute and Smart Snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Beverages for Connecticut Public Schools](#), and visit the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

USDA's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards

Non-HFC public schools, private schools, and RCCIs must comply with the USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards for foods and beverages. Smart Snacks apply only if the ASP starts before the end of the school day or sells additional foods and beverages to students separately from reimbursable snacks before the end of the school day. The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day. For example, if school ends at 3:00 p.m., Smart Snacks applies to all foods and beverages sold to students through 3:30 p.m. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-215b-1: Competitive foods

[Section 10-215b-1](#) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies prohibits selling and giving candy, coffee, tea, and soft drinks to students on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any Child Nutrition Programs. Depending on the type of school and when Child Nutrition Programs operate, the CNS, state beverage statute, and Smart Snacks beverage standards may supersede Section 10-215b-1 or Section 10-215b-1 may supersede the CNS, state beverage statute, and Smart Snacks beverage standards. These requirements are summarized below for HFC public schools, non-HFC public schools, and private schools and RCCIs.

HFC public schools

The HFC statute and state beverage statute supersede the period specified in Section 10-215b-1 because the CNS and state beverage requirements apply at all times. Candy does not comply with the CNS and coffee, tea, and soft drinks do not comply with the state beverage statute. These foods and beverages can never be sold in the ASP or from any other sources on school premises, except for events that meet the exemption criteria of the state HFC statute and the state beverage statute. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools](#).

In addition, Section 10-215b-1 prohibits candy, coffee, tea, and soft drinks from being given to students on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of the ASP.

- **Example:** The ASP operates from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Candy, coffee, tea, and soft drinks cannot be sold or given to students in the ASP or anywhere else on school premises from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Non-HFC public schools

The USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards prohibit candy sales to students on school premises during the school day. In addition, Section 10-215b-1 prohibits candy from being sold or given to students on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of the ASP.

- **Example:** The ASP operates from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Candy cannot be sold or given to students in the ASP or anywhere else on school premises from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The state beverage statute supersedes the period specified in Section 10-215b-1 because it applies at all times. Coffee, tea, and soft drinks do not comply with the state beverage statute and can never be sold in the ASP or from any other sources on school premises, except for events that meet the exemption criteria of the state beverage statute. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools](#).

In addition, coffee, tea, and soft drinks cannot be given to students on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of the ASP.

- **Example:** The ASP operates from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Candy, coffee, tea, and soft drinks cannot be sold or given to students in the ASP or anywhere else on school premises from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Private schools and RCCIs

The USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards prohibit candy sales to students on school premises during the school day. In addition, Section 10-215b-1 prohibits candy from being sold or given to students on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of the ASP.

- **Example:** The ASP operates from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Candy cannot be sold or given to students in the ASP or anywhere else on school premises from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Smart Snacks beverage standards for elementary and middle schools are different from high schools.

- **Elementary and middle schools:** Smart Snacks prohibit sales of coffee, tea, and soft drinks to elementary and middle school students during the school day. In addition, Section 10-215b-1 prohibits coffee, tea, and soft drinks from being sold or given to students on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of the ASP.
- **High schools:** Smart Snacks allow low-calorie and no-calorie beverages (such as coffee, tea, and diet or low-calorie soft drinks) that meet the calorie and portion limits to be sold to high school students during the school day. However, Section 10-215b-1 of state regulations supersedes Smart Snacks because it prohibits selling and giving coffee, tea, and soft drinks to students from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any Child Nutrition Programs, including the ASP.
 - **Example:** The ASP operates from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Coffee, tea, and soft drinks cannot be sold or given to high school students in the ASP or anywhere else on school premises from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Coffee, tea, and soft drinks that comply with the Smart Snacks calorie limit could be sold or given to high school students outside of the period specified by Section 10-215b-1 of state regulations. However, the CSDE encourages schools to promote consistent health messages to students by eliminating coffee, tea, and soft drinks on school premises.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#), and visit the CSDE's [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-215b-23: Accrual of income

[Section 10-215b-23](#) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires that the gross income from all foods and beverages sold to students anywhere on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any Child Nutrition Programs must accrue to the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA). The NSFSA is the restricted revenue account used only for the operation or improvement of the nonprofit school food service.

- **Example:** The ASP site operates from 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. the NSFSA must receive the income from all foods and beverages sold to students anywhere on school premises from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Operational Memorandum No. 1-18: Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods in School](#), and [Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#).

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.

Modifications for disability reasons

The USDA requires reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children 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](#)" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage..

Modifications for non-disability reasons

The USDA allows, but does not require, meal modifications for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Examples of optional non-disability 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 meal component, such as a banana for strawberries (fruits component) or chicken for cheese (meats/meat alternates 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 for non-disability reasons that are outside the ASP meal patterns require a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

Water Availability During Snack Service

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 the snack service area, or immediately adjacent, 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

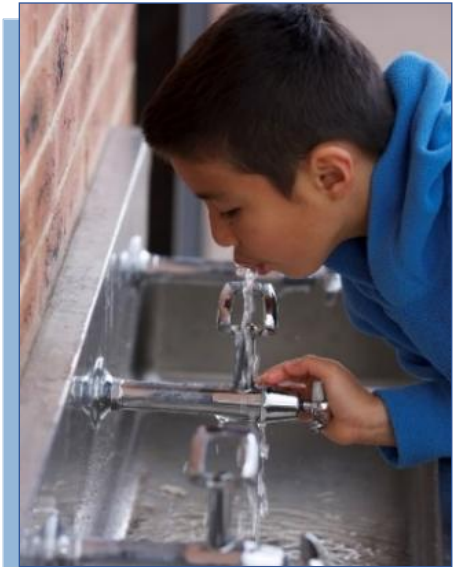
SFAs may implement the water requirement in a variety of ways. Some examples are listed below.

- 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, 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.
- For 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.



SFAs must ensure that water offered during the snack service meets all requirements.

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.

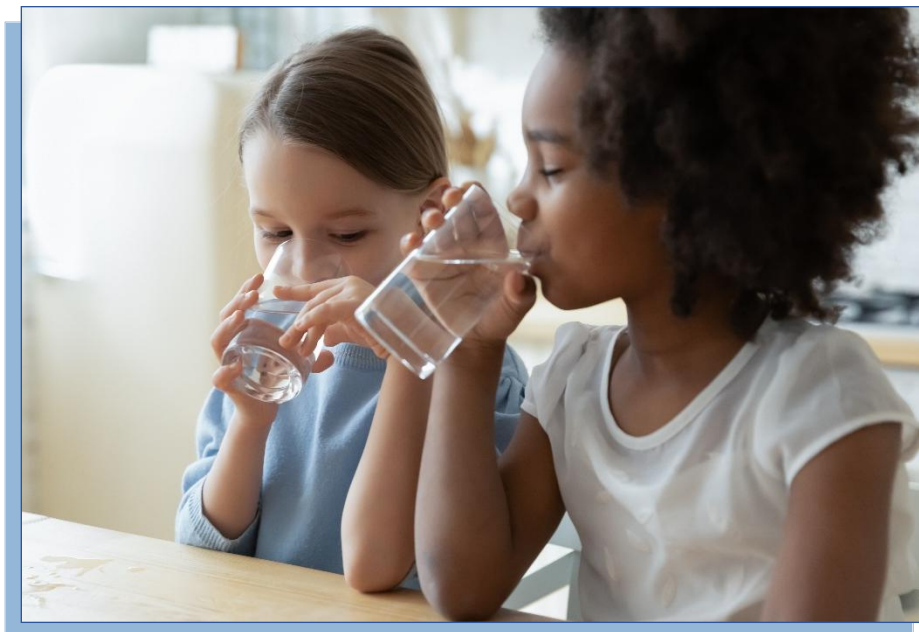
An allowable cost is one that's considered reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the school nutrition programs. Some examples of possible allowable costs associated with providing potable water to students are listed below:

- 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 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](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP60-2016a.pdf) (USDA):
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP60-2016a.pdf>
- [USDA Memo SP 28-2011 Revised: Water Availability During NSLP Meal Service](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/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/cn/clarification-milk-and-water-requirements-school-meal-program):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/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/cn/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>
- [Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/water-availability-for-the-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage)
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/water-availability-for-the-school-nutrition-programs>
- [Water Safety](https://www.fns.usda.gov/fs/water-safety) (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fs/water-safety>
- [What's in a Meal Module 16: Water Availability During Meal Service](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module16) (CSDE's Training Program,
What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module16>

For additional guidance and resources, visit the CSDE's [Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Training on the water requirement is available in [Module 16: Water Availability During Meal Service](#) of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

2 — Snack Meal Pattern

SFAs must offer snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements for each age or grade group served in the afterschool program. Table 1 shows the required ASP meal pattern servings of each meal component for grades K-12 and preschool.

Meal Components

A meal component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals and snacks. The meal components for the ASP meal patterns consist of fluid milk, meats/meat alternates (MMA), vegetables, fruits, and grains.

Required Quantity

The ASP meal patterns require a minimum serving for each meal component. The ASP preschool meal pattern requires the same servings for the 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.

The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 requires the same servings for all grades. SFAs may need to serve larger portion sizes to meet the nutritional needs of older children. For more information refer to [“Additional Foods”](#) in this section.

The ASP meal patterns are available in the [“Meal Patterns and Crediting”](#) section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

Reimbursable Snacks

A snack is reimbursable if it contains the minimum serving of at least two different meal components. Children must take the full serving of both meal components for a reimbursable snack.

Only one of the two meal components may be a creditable beverage. For example, a reimbursable snack cannot include milk and juice as the only two meal components.

Snack menus and production records must document the service of reimbursable snacks to children (refer to [“Production Records”](#) and [“Snack Menus”](#) in section 4).

Table 1. ASP Meal Pattern for Preschool and Grades K-12

Serve any 2 meal components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Grades K-12
Milk, fluid	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	8 fluid ounces (1 cup)
MMA, ounce equivalents (oz eq)	½ oz eq =	½ oz eq =	1 oz eq =
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs); or tempeh	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce
Surimi	2 ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces
Tofu	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)
Cottage cheese	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Egg, large	½	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)
Vegetables, cup	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Fruits, cups	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Grains, oz eq	½ oz eq =	½ oz eq =	1 oz eq =
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	1 oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup	1¼ cups
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup

Minimum Creditable Amounts

Each meal component has a minimum amount that credits toward the ASP meal patterns. The minimum creditable amounts are $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for the vegetables component and fruits component, and $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq for the grains component and MMA component.

Milk must be offered as the full serving, except for milk offered in smoothies. The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

If a food item provides less than the required meal pattern serving, the snack menu must include another food item to provide the full meal component. For example, the required serving of the fruits component is $\frac{3}{4}$ cup for grades K-12. 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 fruits 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 oz eq of MMA) and 1 ounce of whole-grain crackers (1 oz eq of grains) 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 snack 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, or applesauce in muffins.

The USDA's 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 exceptions for 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 the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

In addition, SFAs may credit foods with pureed vegetables if they also 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 the vegetables component.

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 $\frac{1}{8}$ 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 resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Allowable noncreditable foods

SFAs may serve certain 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.

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 that include allowable noncreditable foods must also 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 meal components. This snack is reimbursable only if the juice and crackers meet the minimum required serving.

Prohibited noncreditable foods

Federal and state laws prohibit schools from offering certain noncreditable foods, such as candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks. Before offering any noncreditable foods and beverages to students in the ASP, SFAs must make sure they comply with the applicable federal and state laws. For more information, refer to “[Additional State and Federal Requirements for ASP Snacks](#)” in section 1.

Offer versus Serve Does Not Apply

The USDA does not allow offer versus serve (OVS) in the ASP. OVS applies only to breakfast and lunch for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.

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.

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

Some requirements of the ASP meal patterns are the same for all age and grade groups, while others are different. Table 2 provides an overview of the ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements for grades K-12 and preschool. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool](#).

Table 2. Comparison of ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool

Requirement	Grades K-12	Preschool (ages 1-5)
Reimbursable snack	Must include the minimum serving of two of the five meal components (milk, meats/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, grains).	Same
Allowable types of milk	Low-fat or fat free milk, unflavored or flavored.	Ages 1: Whole milk, unflavored. Ages 2-5: Low-fat or fat free milk, unflavored.
Flavored milk	No more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces for flavored milk served in afterschool snacks. No more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces for flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools.	Not allowed
Nondairy milk substitutes for non-disability reasons	Must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes and require a written request from the parent or guardian.	Same

Requirement	Grades K-12	Preschool (ages 1-5)
Crediting dried fruits, e.g., raisins, dried apricots, and mixed dried fruits	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.	Same
Crediting raw leafy greens, e.g., lettuce, spinach, and kale	Credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of raw leafy greens credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables component.	Same
Juice limit	The total cups of all juices (fruit, vegetable, and combination) offered during the week cannot exceed half of the total cups of fruits and vegetables offered during the week.	Juice credits as the fruits component or vegetables component at no more than one preschool meal or snack per day.
Enriched grains	Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-E or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H-I. Enriched grains cannot exceed 20 percent of the weekly offered oz eq of grains.	The noncreditable grains limit and the weekly limit for enriched grains do not apply to the preschool meal patterns.
Enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereals (group H) and cold breakfast cereals (group I)	Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion. Added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Count with all enriched grains toward the limit of no more than 20 percent per week.	Added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. The noncreditable grains limit and the weekly limit for enriched grains do not apply to the preschool meal patterns.
Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement	At least 80 percent of weekly grains must be WGR based on the total offered oz eq of grains.	At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR, between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers.

Requirement	Grades K-12	Preschool (ages 1-5)
WGR criteria for grain foods in groups A-E	Must meet three criteria: 1) whole grains are the primary ingredient by weight; 2) any remaining grains are enriched; and 3) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion.	Must meet two criteria: 1) whole grains are the primary ingredient by weight; and 2) any remaining grains are enriched.
WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals (group H) and cold breakfast cereals (group I)	Must meet three criteria: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; 2) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion; and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.	Must meet two criteria: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.
Grain-based desserts	Not allowed	Same
Sweet crackers, e.g. graham crackers and animal crackers	Allowed but recommended limit of no more than twice per week.	Allowed but recommended limit of no more than twice per week between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers.
Yogurt and soy yogurt	No more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce).	Same

For guidance on the specific crediting requirements for each meal component, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving the Same Menu to Preschoolers and Grades K-12

SFAs must consider the different ASP meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 and preschool when making menu planning and purchasing decisions for foods that will be served to both groups. Foods served to both groups must comply with whichever meal pattern requirements are stricter. The examples below show how these requirements apply.

- The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 requires stricter WGR criteria than the preschool meal patterns. Grain foods served to both groups must comply with the WGR criteria for grades K-12.
- The preschool meal patterns do not allow flavored milk. Milk served to both groups must be unflavored.

Snack menus must meet these requirements unless meals are co-mingled.

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. Examples include preschool and grades K-5 eating together or preschool and grades K-8 eating together. 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 afterschool 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.

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. Training on co-mingled meals is available in [Module 10: Co-mingled Meal Service](#) of the CSDE’s *Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs*.

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 "[Co-mingled Meals and Afterschool Snacks](#)" in the "Meal Service" 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 snacks are served to preschoolers in a different area or at a different time than K-12 students. The USDA allows the option to serve the K-12 meal pattern to preschoolers only when preschoolers are co-mingled with K-12 students during the snack service.

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 and Crediting Resources

The resources below provide guidance for SFAs on planning snack menus to meet the ASP meal patterns.

- [Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf) (CSDE):
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) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_grades_k-12.docx
- [Afterschool Snack Program Preschool Meal Pattern](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf
- [Afterschool Snack Program Sample Menu for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf
- [Afterschool Snack Program Sample Preschool Menu for Ages 3-5](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf
- [Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster](https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/) (ICN):
https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/
- [Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nsip/crediting/calculate_wgr_percentage_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nsip/crediting/calculate_wgr_percentage_snp.pdf

- [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp.pdf
- [Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf
- [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>
- [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs>
- [Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_crediting_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_crediting_snp.pdf
- [Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp.pdf
- [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs) (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>
- [Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp.pdf
- [Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_snp.pdf
- [Guide to the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/guide_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/guide_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf
- [Instructions for the Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/worksheet_calculate_wgr_percentage_snp_grades_k-12_instructions.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/worksheet_calculate_wgr_percentage_snp_grades_k-12_instructions.pdf

- [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal_pattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal_pattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_snp.pdf
- [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs
- [Menu Planning](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/menu-planning) (CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/menu-planning
- [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning) (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning
- [Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guidance-for-school-meals) (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guidance-for-school-meals
- [Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp.pdf
- [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs Module 8: Meal Service for Preschoolers](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/preschool-meal-pattern-training) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/preschool-meal-pattern-training
- [Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes) (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes
- [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs
- [Standardized Recipes](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes) (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes
- [What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

- [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf
- [Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/worksheet_calculate_wgr_percentage_snp_grades_k-12.xlsx) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/worksheet_calculate_wgr_percentage_snp_grades_k-12.xlsx

For more resources, refer to the CSDE's [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs](#).



3 — Menu Planning

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

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.

SFAs should ensure that menu planners use the FBG to determine the crediting information for commercial products and foods made from scratch in ASP menus.

Documentation for Commercial Products

SFAs must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all commercial processed products. Some examples include combination foods like pizza, chicken nuggets, cheese ravioli, hummus and other bean dips, fruit and yogurt smoothies, fruit-filled pastries, and trail mixes with dried fruits and nuts; foods with added liquids, binders, and extenders, e.g., deli meats, hotdogs, and sausages; dried meat, poultry, and seafood products, e.g., jerky and summer sausages; and fruits and vegetables with added ingredients, e.g., breaded onion rings, hash brown patties, coleslaw, and dried soup mix.

Acceptable documentation for commercial processed products includes any of the documents below.

- **Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A CN label is a USDA-approved statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements. CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute at least $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq of the MMA component. Allowable CN label documentation includes 1) the original CN label from the product carton; 2) a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or 3) a CN label copied with a

watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor and the bill of lading (invoice). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

- **Product formulation statement (PFS):** A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. The PFS must be signed by an official of the manufacturer and state the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product. For more information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks unless they are listed in the FBG.

A PFS is required for all commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the FBG. The USDA requires that SFAs must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable afterschool snacks.

For more information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#), and the USDA's resource, [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#).

Additional guidance is available in the CSDE's [Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs](#) and the CSDE's [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in [Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#) of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Storing crediting documentation

SFAs must maintain all crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the school nutrition programs (refer to the CSDE's [Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the [Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs](#).

Documentation for Foods Made from Scratch

Foods made from scratch require a standardized recipe that indicates the contribution of each meal component in the serving. For example, a snack menu credits a serving of macaroni and cheese as 1 oz eq of the MMA component and 1 oz eq of the grains 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 information on standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the "[Standardized Recipes](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the requirements for standardized recipes is available in [Module 7: Meal Pattern Documentation for School Menus](#) of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Planning Healthy Snacks

The CSDE encourages SFAs to develop nutritious snack menus that are appealing to students. Snack menus should reflect the principles of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and include nutrient-dense foods in a variety of flavors, colors, and textures. This provides the best nutrition for children and creates an environment that supports healthy eating habits.

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).

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. Avoid serving the same combination of meal components each day.

- Serve a different fruit or vegetable each day of the week and include a serving of each vegetable subgroup each week. **Note:** While the vegetable subgroups are not required in the ASP, the USDA recommends offering a variety of vegetables from all subgroups during the week to help meet children's nutritional needs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [*Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program*](#).
- Make fruits and vegetables appealing to students. Cut up whole fruits like oranges and apples so they are easy for children to eat. Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumbers, bell peppers into fun shapes or sticks. Offer tasty dips like hummus, guacamole, or yogurt-based ranch to encourage vegetable consumption.
- Incorporate variety in color and texture to make snacks more visually appealing and enjoyable to eat. Incorporate [*Farm to School*](#) and use seasonal produce in a range of colors throughout the week. Pair foods with different colors and textures together, like red apples and yellow cheese cubes, baby carrots and hummus, blueberries and yogurt, and red pepper strips and green grapes.
- 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 for Child Nutrition Programs*](#)" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
- Serve a different MMA at least three days per week. The USDA's best practices recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, 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 for Child Nutrition Programs*](#)" 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 juices 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. Conduct taste test and nutrition education activities with children to encourage them to try new foods. For more information on taste tests, refer to the USDA's [Taste-Testing Event Resources](#) webpage. 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 for Child Nutrition Programs](#)" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

The CSDE encourages SFAs to use cycle menus to plan snacks that meet these guidelines. For more information and specific guidance, refer to "Snack Menus" in section 5.

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.

Snack Menu Ideas

The sections below provide examples of creditable foods within each meal component. For guidance and resources on menu planning and creditable foods, refer to "[Menu Planning and Crediting Resources](#)" in section 2, and the CSDE's [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs](#). Resources with ideas for snack menus are under "[Snack Menu Ideas](#)" in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

Milk component

The minimum serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for ages 1-5 (preschool) and 1 cup for grades K-12. Effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, [Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs](#), changes the fluid milk requirements for ages 2 and older in the ASP. The milk component includes whole and reduced-fat (2%) milk in addition to the previously allowed low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. Allowable types of milk also include lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT).

Milk for ages 1-5 must be unflavored. SFAs may choose which type of milk to offer and are not required to offer a variety of milk choices.

Age 1

- Whole milk, unflavored

Ages 2-5

- Whole milk, unflavored
- Reduced-fat milk, unflavored
- Low-fat milk, unflavored
- Fat-free milk, unflavored

Grades K-12

- Whole milk, unflavored or flavored
- Reduced-fat milk, unflavored or flavored
- Low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored
- Fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored

MMA component

The minimum serving is ½ oz eq for ages 1-5 (preschool) and 1 oz eq for grades K-12.

- Meat, fish, and poultry, e.g., beef, chicken, ham, pork, tuna, and turkey. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- 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, sliced cheese, and cottage cheese.
- Eggs, e.g., hard-boiled and egg salad.
- 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. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Tofu, soy products, and foods with alternate protein products (APP) like beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

- Nuts and seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [*Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).
- 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. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [*Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).
- Yogurt and soy yogurt that contains no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [*Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).
- Yogurt smoothies made with pureed fruits and vegetables: Yogurt in smoothies cannot exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, [*Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*](#) and [*Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

Vegetables component

The minimum serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for ages 1-5 (preschool) and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup for grades K-12.

Vegetable juice cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component.

- 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.
- 100 percent vegetable juice, e.g., tomato juice, mixed vegetables. **Note:** ASP menus cannot exceed the juice limit for each age/grade group. For the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12, juices cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits and vegetables. For the preschool meal patterns, juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes 100 percent juices, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [*Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs*](#) and [*Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

- Smoothies made with pureed vegetables. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice and count toward the juice limit. Vegetable smoothies cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component at snack. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Canned vegetables, e.g., corn, green beans, and chickpeas. Canned vegetables must be drained. Read labels for sodium content and choose varieties that are lowest in sodium.
- Salsa (100 percent vegetables), e.g., vegetable or mango.
- Salads, e.g., garden salad, mixed greens, carrot-raisin salad, coleslaw, and three-bean salad. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served.
- Vegetable soups, e.g., tomato, minestrone, and lentil. **Note:** The large serving of commercial vegetable soup required to credit as the full serving of vegetables might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. Commercial soups that are not listed in the FBG require a PFS to credit. Soups made from scratch credit based on the amount of vegetables per serving, which must be documented by a standardized recipe. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Soups in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Fruits component

The minimum serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for ages 1-5 (preschool) and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup for grades K-12. Juice cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component.

- 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, watermelon, and fruit salad (mixed fruits).
- 100 percent fruit juice, e.g., apple cider, orange, grape, and pineapple. **Note:** ASP menus cannot exceed the juice limit for each age/grade group. For the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12, juices cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits and vegetables. For the preschool meal patterns, juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes 100 percent juices, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies. For more

information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

- Smoothies made with pureed fruits. Pureed fruits in smoothies credit only as juice and count toward the juice limit. Fruit smoothies cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component at snack. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Canned fruit in juice or water, e.g., applesauce, apricots, peaches, pears, and pineapple tidbits. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup.
- Dried fruits, e.g., raisins, apple chips, apricots, and prunes. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served.
- Trail mix of dried fruits and nuts: Commercial products require a PFS (refer to "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 3).



Grains component

The minimum serving is ½ oz eq for ages 1-5 (preschool) and 1 oz eq for grades K-12. The CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](#), indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements.

Grains must be WGR or enriched. For grades K-12, at least 80 percent of the grains offered in the weekly snack must be WGR, based on the total oz eq of all offered grains during the week. For preschoolers, SFAs must offer at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers. Serve 100 percent whole grains most often.

Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP meal patterns, except for sweet crackers like animal crackers and graham crackers. The USDA encourages menu planners to limit sweet crackers due to their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Animal crackers | • Macaroni |
| • Bagels | • Melba toast |
| • Biscuits | • Muffins, e.g., corn, blueberry |
| • Bread | • Noodles |
| • Breadsticks | • Oatmeal |
| • Breakfast cereals (with no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce) | • Oyster crackers |
| • Brown rice | • Pancakes |
| • Cinnamon toast | • Pasta |
| • Cooked grain salads, e.g., bulgur, couscous, quinoa, and tabouleh | • Pita bread |
| • Crackers | • Pizza crust |
| • English muffin | • Pretzels (hard or soft) |
| • French bread | • Rice cakes |
| • French toast sticks | • Rolls |
| • Graham crackers | • Soft tortillas |
| | • Toast |
| | • Tortilla chips |
| | • Waffles |

4 — Program Requirements

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

Time Restrictions

An afterschool care program sponsored by a school under the NSLP is reimbursed only for snacks served after school on a regular school day. Programs operating on weekends or during school vacations cannot be reimbursed for 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 the school day 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 [USDA Memo SP 04-2011 and CACFP 01-2011-Revised: Eligibility of Expanded Learning Time Programs for Afterschool Snack Service in the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#)

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 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 and resources on cycle menus, refer to [Chapter 3: Menu Development](#) in the USDA's [Menu Planner for School Meals](#), and visit the "[Cycle Menus](#)" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

CSDE sample menu forms

The CSDE's sample ASP menu forms help menu planners include the required meal components in the appropriate portions for each age/grade group.

- 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 Forms](#)" 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 under "[Snack Menu Ideas](#)" in the "Menu Planning" 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 under "[Production Records](#)" in the "Forms" 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.

Snack counts must be recorded at the point of service. The point of service is the moment in the snack service where staff can accurately determine that a reimbursable snack has been served to an eligible child.

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: 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

SFAs must institute a collection procedure that charges a snack fee to students based on their eligibility status. 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](#)).

- Free-eligible students cannot be charged.
- The snack price for reduced-eligible children cannot exceed 15 cents. At the SFA's discretion, participating schools 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 are an allowable cost of the NSFSFA. 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.
- The SFA establishes the snack price charged to paying children. This must be documented in the SFA's collection procedure.
- The USDA regulations do not permit the NSFSFA 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. For more information on the requirements for collection procedures, visit the CSDE's [Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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.

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's general fund, the organization sponsoring the afterschool care program, a parent organization, or other community group. The 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 snack 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.

Schools that are not site/area eligible can use the CSDE attendance and snack count forms listed below.

- 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: 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 (grades K-12 or preschool) 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](#)" 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.
 - A. **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 Preschool 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 Preschool](#)
 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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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 “[Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage. For more information, refer to “[Site/area eligible schools](#)” under “Counting and Claiming” in this section.

- B. **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](#)

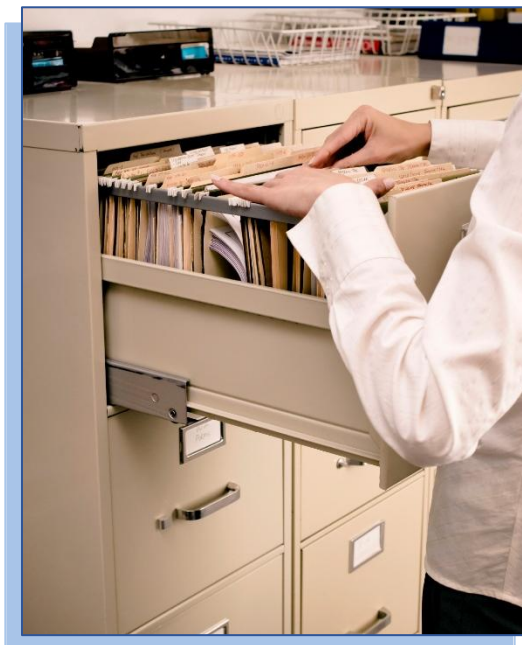
For more information, refer to “[Schools that are not site/area eligible](#)” under “Counting and Claiming” in this section.

- **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 [Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) On-site Monitoring Form](#) is available in the “[Forms](#)” section of 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. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Storing documentation

SFAs must maintain all documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the school nutrition programs. This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the [Administrative Review](#) of the school nutrition programs.



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's [school nutrition programs 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 "[Civil Rights for School Nutrition Programs](#)" section of 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, audiotope, 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

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.



5 — Resources

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

Connecticut Nutrition Standards

[CNS Worksheets](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/connecticut-nutrition-standards/evaluating-foods-for-cns-compliance#CNSWorksheets>

[Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/connecticut-nutrition-standards>

[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

[Healthy Food Certification](#) (CSDE webpage):

<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

[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

[List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) (CSDE webpage):

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

[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

[Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/cns/connecticut_nutrition_standards_summary.pdf

Crediting Foods

[Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for School](#)

[Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp.pdf

[Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

[Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs>

[Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_crediting_snp.pdf

[Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)

(CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp.pdf

[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (USDA):

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

[Fruits Component](#) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/fruits>

[Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp.pdf

[Grains Component](#) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/grains>

[Guide to the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/guide_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf

[Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_snp.pdf

[Meats and Meat Alternates Component](#) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/meats-and-meat-alternates>

[Milk Component](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/milk) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/milk>

[Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp.pdf

[Serving School Meals to Preschoolers](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers) (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers>

[Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs>

[USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation>

[Vegetables Component](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/vegetables) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/vegetables>

Meal Patterns

[Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

[Afterschool Snack Program Preschool Meal Pattern](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf

[Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf

[Meal Patterns and Crediting](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/meal-patterns-and-crediting) (CSDE's ASP webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/meal-patterns-and-crediting>

[Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs>

[Sample Afterschool Snack Program Menu for Grades K-12](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

[Sample Afterschool Snack Program Preschool Menu for Ages 3-5](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_ages_3-5.pdf) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/sample_menu_asp_ages_3-5.pdf

[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>

Menu Planning Forms

[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

[Afterschool Snack Program Menu Form for Preschool](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/menu_form_asp_preschool.docx

[Menu Planning](#) (CSDE's ASP webpage):

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

[Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning>

Monitoring

[Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) On-site Monitoring Form](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/monitoring_form_asp.pdf

[Monitoring](#) ("Forms" section of CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):

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

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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Preschool – Completed Sample](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_preschool_sample.pdf

[Afterschool Snack Program Production Record for Preschool](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_preschool.docx

[Instructions for the Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) Production Records for Grades K-12 and Preschool](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/forms/production_record_asp_instructions.pdf

[Menu Forms and Production Records](#) (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/menu-forms-and-production-records>

[Production Records](#) ("Forms" section of CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):

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

USDA Regulations and Policy

[National School Lunch Program Regulations \(7 CFR 210\)](#).

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

[Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks](#) (USDA):

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

[USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans \(89 FR 31962\)](#):

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for>

[USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs \(91 FR 25073\)](#):

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/08/2026-09212/expanding-fluid-milk-options-in-child-nutrition-programs>

[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 SP 04-2011 and CACFP 01-2011 Revised: Eligibility of Expanded Learning Time Programs for Afterschool Snack Service in the NSLP and the CACFP](#):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/eligibility-expanded-learning-time-programs-afterschool-snack-service-nslp-and-cacfp>

Program Guidance

[Afterschool Snack Program](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/child-nutrition-cn-labeling-program) (USDA webpage):

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

[Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Choking Prevention](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-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/choking-prevention>

[Competitive Foods in Schools](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/competitive-foods) (CSDE webpage):

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

[CT Fresh Ed \(Farm to School\)](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/ct-fresh-ed) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/ct-fresh-ed>

[Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-to-preschool) (USDA webpage):

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

[FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/fns-instructions-for-child-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Healthy Food Certification](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/operational-memoranda-for-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/operational-memoranda-for-school-nutrition-programs>

[Procurement for School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/procurement-for-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/procurement-for-school-nutrition-programs>

[Production Records for School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/production-records-for-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/production-records-for-school-nutrition-programs>

[Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Put Local on Your Tray](https://putlocalonyourtray.uconn.edu/) (University of Connecticut webpage):

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

[Resources for Child Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

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

[School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-lunch-tray-and-table-talk) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-lunch-tray-and-table-talk>

[Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs) (CSDE webpage):

<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. For more information, 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. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [*Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

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 meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels 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 "[Child Nutrition Labels](#)" section of the [CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) 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 meeting the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

cycle menu: A series of menus planned for a specific period of time, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help schools comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time. For more information, visit the “[Cycle Menus](#)” section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs

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 (B₁), riboflavin (B₂), niacin (B₃), 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 that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for different types of grain foods to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component. For guidance on applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for each school nutrition program, refer to the CSDE's resource, [*Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

fluid milk substitutes: Plant-based beverages designed to replace cow's milk, such as soy milk, almond milk, rice milk, and oat milk. Fluid milk substitutes may replace regular cow's milk in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks for children who do not consume regular milk due to non-disability reasons, if they meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [*Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs*](#) and [*Determining if Nondairy Milk Substitutes Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes 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 meal 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 includes fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings at lunch or breakfast. For more information, visit the "[Fruits](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods 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." For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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). **Note:** Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP meal patterns except for sweet crackers, e.g., graham crackers and animal crackers.

grains component: The meal component of the NSLP, SBP, and ASP 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 and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For more information, visit the "[Grains](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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.

lactose-free milk: A type of fluid milk that is processed to remove the lactose (naturally occurring sugar) found in regular milk. Lactose-free milk typically has the same nutritional benefits as regular milk, including calcium, protein, and vitamins. Like other types of fluid milk, lactose-free milk comes in a variety of flavors and fat contents. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Offering Lactose-Free and Lactose-Reduced Milk in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

lactose-reduced milk: A type of fluid milk that is processed to remove some of the lactose (naturally occurring sugar). Lactose-reduced milk typically has the same nutritional benefits as regular milk, including calcium, protein, and vitamins. Like other types of fluid milk, lactose-reduced milk comes in a variety of flavors and fat contents. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Offering Lactose-Free and Lactose-Reduced Milk in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

lean meat and poultry: Defined by the USDA 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 section 2.

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 five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the ASP (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA). For information on the crediting requirements for each meal component, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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, visit the [“Meats and Meat Alternates”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods 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, visit the [“Meats and Meat Alternates”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods 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 the CSDE’s resource, [*Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

noncreditable grains: 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 Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

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 guidance on the FDA approved nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to the FDA’s [*Aspartame and Other Sweeteners in Food*](#) 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 Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the 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, SBP, and ASP 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. The amount of a MMA food that provides 1 oz eq is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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 snack count: The moment in the snack service where staff can accurately determine 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 and afterschool snacks served to children ages 1-5. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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 developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. A PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The USDA requires a PFS for commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the FBG. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. The USDA requires that SFAs must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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 food service operation has tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, refer to the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition’s [USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the “[Standardized Recipes](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Documentation for the Child 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 oz eq of the MMA component.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq 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 the vegetable subgroups. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#).

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, visit the “[Vegetables](#)” section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods 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) for the meal patterns for grades K-12: Foods that meet three criteria: 1) contain between 50 and 100 percent whole grain; 2) the remaining grain ingredients are enriched, bran, or germ; and 3) noncreditable grains do not exceed 3.99 grams per portion for food in groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for foods in groups H-I. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [*Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

whole grain-rich (WGR) for the preschool meal patterns: Foods that contain between 50 and 100 percent whole grain 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*](#).

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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