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

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

Serve any 2 meal components [1, 2]	**Minimum quantities** [3]
Milk, fluid [4]	8 fluid ounces (1 cup)
Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA), ounce equivalents (oz eq) [5]	**1 oz eq =**
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs) [6]; or tempeh [7]	1 ounce
Surimi [8]	3 ounces
Tofu [9]	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)
Cottage cheese	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Egg, large	½
Beans, peas, and lentils [10]	¼ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	2 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds [11]	1 ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened [12]	4 ounces (½ cup)
Vegetables, cup [13, 14]	¾ cup
Fruits, cups [14, 15]	¾ cup
Grains, oz eq [16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21] Must be whole grain-rich (WGR) (at least 80 percent per week) or enriched (cannot exceed 20 percent per week)	**1 oz eq =**
WGR or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	1 oz eq [17]
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal [20], cereal grain [21], or pasta	1 oz eq [17]
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) cold breakfast cereal [20] Flakes or rounds	1 cup
Puffed	1¼ cups
Granola	¼ cup
Whole grain or enriched savory crackers and sweet crackers, e.g., animal crackers and graham crackers	1 oz eq [17]

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Menu Planning Notes

[1] Snacks must include the minimum serving of two of the five meal components. Only one meal component may be a creditable beverage, such as milk or juice. Use the USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG) to determine how foods credit and the amount that provides the required meal pattern serving. Commercial processed foods not listed in the FBG require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to document crediting information. School food authorities (SFAs) must verify PFS forms for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable snacks. Foods made from scratch must have a standardized recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. For information on crediting documentation, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resources, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*, and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. The CSDE's What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs training program provides comprehensive guidance on meeting the ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements.

[2] In addition to the ASP meal pattern requirements, ASP snacks in public schools that implement Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes must comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS). Visit the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage for lists of allowable commercial foods and beverages. For guidance on meeting the CNS for foods made from scratch, refer to the "Foods Made from Scratch" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage.

[3] Children may be served larger portions but not less than the minimum quantities. Larger portions may be appropriate to meet older children's nutritional needs.

[4] Effective June 8, 2026, the U. S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, revised the allowable types of milk to include whole and reduced fat (2%) milk, in addition to the previously allowed low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. These types of milk may be unflavored or flavored (cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces). Allowable types of milk also include lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT). SFAs may choose which type of milk to offer. For children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability, SFAs may choose to offer optional nondairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk) that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (7 CFR 210.10(d)(2)(ii)). For guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs*. For more information, visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[5] The serving of MMA refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Commercial processed products (such as combination entrees, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information unless they are listed in the FBG. For crediting guidance on commercial products, 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*. For information on the MMA component, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[6] APPs must meet the requirements in appendix A of 7 CFR 210. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[7] For 1 ounce of tempeh to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA, the product's ingredients must include only soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. Tempeh products that contain other ingredients require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information.

[8] Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A CN label or PFS is required for commercial products that indicate a different crediting amount.

[9] Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (¼ cup) to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[10] Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same snack. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[11] Creditable nuts and seeds include 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.*

[12] Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce). To increase nutrient variety, yogurt should not be served when milk is the only other meal component at snack. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[13] The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent vegetable juice. Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of lettuce or spinach credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. A serving of canned vegetables must be drained. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on their rehydrated volume and require a PFS. For information on the vegetables component, visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[14] The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent fruit juice. The creditable serving of canned fruit in 100 percent juice may include the juice but cannot include water or syrup. Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. Check the FBG to ensure the proper crediting of fresh fruits. Depending on the size, one piece of fresh fruit might not provide the required ¾-cup serving. For example, one 60-count plum and one 88-count peach each credit as ⅜ cup of fruit; one 100-120-count banana and one 138-count orange each credit as ½ cup of fruit; and one 113-count or 125-count orange credits as ⅝ cup of fruit. For information on the fruits component, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[15] Fruit and vegetable juices must be pasteurized 100 percent juices. The total cups of fruit and vegetable juices offered during the week cannot exceed half of the total cups of fruits and vegetables offered during the week. The juice limit includes all fruit and vegetable juices, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[16] Commercial grain products and standardized recipes must be made with creditable grains (whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ) and must be WGR or enriched. For information on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[17] To credit as the required oz eq, the serving of a commercial grain product or standardized recipe must provide either: 1) the required serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs* and *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*); or 2) the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs* and *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*). For more information, visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[18] At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at snack must be WGR, based on the total oz eq of offered grains. Foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart are WGR if: 1) the grain content is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched; and 2) noncreditable grains do not exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-E or 6.99 grams per portion for group H. RTE breakfast cereals (group I) are WGR if: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; 2) noncreditable grains do not exceed 6.99 grams per portion; and 3) added sugars do not exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. RTE breakfast cereals that are not WGR must be enriched or fortified, cannot exceed 6.99 grams of noncreditable grains per portion, and must meet the limit for added sugars. Fortification is not required for 100 whole-grain RTE cereals. Grains that are not WGR must be enriched. For guidance on the WGR criteria, 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*. For information on meeting the weekly WGR requirement, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[18] Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. Sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers) are allowed but the CSDE recommends limiting them to no more than twice per week.

[20] RTE and cooked breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified, and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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

For more information on the ASP meal pattern, visit the " Meal Patterns and Crediting" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage and the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage, or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_ pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf.

CONNECTICUT
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Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)
Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

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