

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Preschool Meal Pattern

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

Snack meal components <i>Serve any two of the five meal components</i> ^{1, 2}	Minimum for ages 1-2	Minimum for ages 3-5
Milk, fluid ³ Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored Ages 2-5: Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)
Meats/meat alternates (MMA), ounce equivalents (oz eq) ⁴	½ oz eq =	½ oz eq =
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs) ⁵ ; or tempeh ⁶	½ ounce	½ ounce
Surimi ⁷	2 ounces	2 ounces
Tofu ⁸	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)
Cottage cheese	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	1 ounce (⅛ cup)
Egg, large	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils ⁹	⅛ cup	⅛ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds ¹⁰	½ ounce	½ ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened ¹¹	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Vegetables, cups ^{12, 13}	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits, cups ^{13, 14}	½ cup	½ cup
Grains, oz eq ^{15, 16, 17, 18}	½ oz eq =	½ oz eq =
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq ¹⁸	½ oz eq ¹⁸
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ¹⁹ , cereal grain ²⁰ , or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds ¹⁹	½ cup	½ cup
Puffed ¹⁹	¾ cup	¾ cup
Granola ¹⁹	⅛ cup	⅛ cup

◀ Refer to pages 2-3 for important menu planning notes ▶

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Menu planning notes

- ¹ Snacks must include the minimum serving of two of the five meal components. Only one of the two required snack components may be a creditable beverage, such as milk or juice. The USDA's [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) best practices](#) recommend serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one of the two required snack components. 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 (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](#)). Foods made from scratch must have a standardized recipe that documents crediting information. For information on crediting documentation, visit the "[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)" section and "[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. The CSDE's [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#) provides comprehensive guidance on meeting the preschool 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). For more information, visit the CSDE's [HFC](#), [CNS](#), and [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpages.
- ³ Flavored milk cannot be served. For more information on the milk component, visit the "[Milk Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁴ The serving size 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 that contain added ingredients (such as combination entrees, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs](#)). The USDA's [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) best practices](#) recommend serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese. For more information, visit the "[Meats/Meat Alternates Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁵ APPs must meet the requirements in [appendix A of 7 CFR 210](#) (refer to the CSDE's [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#)).
- ⁶ For a 1-ounce serving 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.
- ⁷ 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.
- ⁸ Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (¼ cup) to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#)).
- ⁹ Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs](#)).
- ¹⁰ Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs](#)). **Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped.
- ¹¹ Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Yogurt in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). **Note:** Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the limit for yogurt to no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

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- ¹² The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength 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. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend that preschool menus include at least one serving per week of each vegetable subgroup (dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other). For more information on the vegetables component, refer to the CSDE's [Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and visit the "[Vegetables Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- ¹³ Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). The juice from canned fruit also counts toward the juice limit if the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- ¹⁴ The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice. 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. For more information, visit the "[Fruits Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- ¹⁵ Grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains, i.e., whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. For information on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's [How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the "[Grains Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- ¹⁶ At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. To meet the preschool meal pattern WGR criteria, foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and visit the "[Whole Grain-rich Requirement](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- ¹⁷ Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component. 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 not grain-based desserts and may credit as the grains component. However, the CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, visit the USDA's webpage, [Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP](#).
- ¹⁸ To credit as the required oz eq, the serving of grain products and recipes 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 [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#)); or 2) the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#)). For more information, visit the "[Ounce Equivalents](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- ¹⁹ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). **Note:** Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the limit for breakfast cereals to no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- ²⁰ Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

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For more information on the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns](#), and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_preschool.pdf.

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