

Sample Afterschool Snack Program Menus for Ages 3-5

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

This document provides guidance and sample preschool snack menus for ages 3-5 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This guidance applies through June 30, 2025. Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the preschool meal pattern’s product-based limits for yogurt and breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars.

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Overview of Snack Meal Pattern Requirements

Preschool snack menus meet the requirements below.

- Reimbursable snacks must include any two of the five meal components: ½ cup of unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk; ½ ounce equivalent (oz eq) of meats/meat alternates (MMA); ½ cup of vegetables; ½ cup of fruits; and ½ oz eq of grains. Each component must provide at least the minimum serving in the preschool meal pattern.
- Snack menus may include additional foods or larger servings beyond the minimum requirements. Menu planners should offer nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to the nutritional needs of each age group.
- Only one of the two snack components may be a creditable beverage such as milk or juice.
- Juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day (refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). Before planning juice as a snack component, check that other preschool meals offered that same day do not include juice. 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 Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). The juice from canned fruit counts toward the juice limit if the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component or the vegetables component.

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- The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommends serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one of the two required snack components.
- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR), between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day.
- 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. However, the CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all preschool meals and snacks. For more information, visit the USDA's webpage, [Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP](#).
- Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals cannot exceed 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](#)). Effective with school year 2024-25 (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.
- Grain products and recipes must provide 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 provide 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
- 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](#)). 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).
- The USDA recommends serving water when snacks do not include milk or juice. Water does not credit in the preschool meal patterns and cannot be offered in place of the required meal components. For more information, visit the "Water Availability" section of the CSDE's [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- Noncreditable foods cannot be served in place of the required meal components. Examples of noncreditable foods include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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- Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Consider children’s age and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer in CACFP menus. Modify menus as appropriate and use preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage

Detailed guidance on the ASP preschool meal pattern is available in the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#). For additional resources, refer to the CSDE’s [Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on crediting foods in preschool menus, refer to the CSDE’s [Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE’s “[Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Required Crediting Documentation

School food authorities (SFAs) must be able to document that snack menus provide the required meal components and quantities. Menu planners must 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 CN label or PFS to document crediting information. Commercial processed foods not listed in the FBG require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information.

For information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE’s [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 “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE’s training program, [What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

Foods made from scratch must have a standardized recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. For more information, visit the “[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in Preschool Menus](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Sample Preschool Menus

This document contains ten sample preschool snack menus. The servings in each snack menu meet or exceed the [ASP Preschool Meal Pattern](#) requirements and are indicated in parentheses after each menu item. Servings may be adjusted as appropriate for ages 1-2.

The CSDE’s sample menus are intended for informational purposes and do not guarantee the SFA’s compliance with the ASP preschool meal pattern. Crediting information for local menus will vary depending on the types of foods purchased by the SFA, and the standardized recipes and preparation techniques used by food service staff. SFAs are responsible for ensuring that their menus meet the ASP meal pattern and maintaining appropriate crediting documentation on file (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document).

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Week 1

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz		Yogurt and fruit parfait: Low-fat vanilla yogurt (¼ cup)			Ham (¼ ounce) and cheese (¼ ounce) roll- up
Vegetables ½ cup			Cucumber slices (½ cup)	Vegetable soup (½ cup vegetables)	
Fruits ½ cup	Orange slices (½ cup)	Sliced strawberries (¼ cup) Blueberries (¼ cup)		Cantaloupe chunks (½ cup)	
Grains ½ oz eq	Enriched corn muffin (1 ounce)		Whole-grain crackers (½ ounce) WGR		Whole-corn tortilla (½ ounce) WGR
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)		Whole-grain granola (2 tablespoons)			Shredded lettuce (⅓ cup)
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water	Low-fat dip (1 tablespoon) Water	Water	Mustard (1 teaspoon) or low-fat mayonnaise (1 teaspoon) Water

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Week 2

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz	Diced turkey (½ ounce)		Sunflower butter (1 tablespoon)	Hummus (⅛ cup chickpeas) pita with shredded carrots	
Vegetables ½ cup	Tossed salad: Lettuce (½ cup) with tomatoes and cucumbers (¼ cup)	Sliced avocado (½ cup)			Cucumber slices (¼ cup) Carrot sticks (¼ cup)
Fruits ½ cup			Apple slices (½ cup)		
Grains ½ oz eq		Whole-wheat toast (½ ounce) WGR		Whole-wheat pita half (½ ounce) WGR	Enriched pretzels (½ ounce)
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)	Enriched croutons (¼ ounce)			Shredded carrots (⅛ cup)	
Other foods (noncreditable)	Low-fat dressing (1 tablespoon) Water	Water	Water	Water	Low-fat dip (1 tablespoon) Water

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Week 3

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup				Unflavored low-fat milk (½ cup)	
MMA ½ oz		Low-fat cottage cheese (⅛ cup)	Tortilla wrap: Refried beans (⅛ cup) and shredded cheese (⅛ ounce)		
Vegetables ½ cup				Carrot-pineapple-raisin salad: Shredded carrots (½ cup),	Roasted cauliflower bites (⅔ cup)
Fruits ½ cup	Mixed berries (½ cup)	Canned apricots in juice (½ cup)			Honeydew melon (⅔ cup)
Grains ½ oz eq	Soft whole-grain pretzel (½ ounce) WGR		Whole-grain tortilla (½ ounce) WGR		
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)			Diced tomato (⅛ cup)	Crushed pineapple (⅛ cup) Raisins (1 teaspoon)	
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water	Water		Low-fat dip (1 ounce) Water

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Week 4

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz	Part-skim Mozzarella cheese stick (½ ounce)	Ants on a log: Peanut butter (1 tablespoon)		Pasta veggie salad: Ham (½ ounce)	
Vegetables ½ cup		Carrot sticks (¼ cup) Celery sticks (¼ cup)	Corn and black bean salad (½ cup)		
Fruits ½ cup	Red grapes (½ cup)				Sliced kiwi (½ cup)
Grains ½ oz eq			Whole-grain pita chips (½ ounce)	Enriched rotini pasta (¼ cup)	Whole-grain cornbread (1 ounce) WGR
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)		Raisins (1 tablespoon)		Diced vegetables: Carrots, broccoli, and tomatoes (¼ cup)	
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water

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Week 5

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz	Low-fat cottage cheese (⅓ cup)	Peanut butter (1 tablespoon)		Fruit and yogurt smoothie: Yogurt (¼ cup)	
Vegetables ½ cup		Carrot sticks (½ cup)			
Fruits ½ cup			Diced papaya (½ cup)	Pureed strawberries (½ cup)	Sliced green grapes (½ cup)
Grains ½ oz eq	Whole-grain puffed cereal (¾ cup) WGR		Trail mix: Whole-grain cereal rounds (¼ cup) WGR , enriched pretzels (¼ ounce), and dried fruit		Enriched pretzel sticks (½ ounce)
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)	Crushed pineapple in juice (1 tablespoon)		Dried fruit (½ tablespoon)		
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water

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Week 6

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup				Unflavored low-fat milk (½ cup)	
MMA ½ oz			Low-fat Greek yogurt (¼ cup)	Almond butter (1 tablespoon)	Tuna salad (½ ounce tuna)
Vegetables ½ cup	Jicama sticks (¼ cup) Zucchini sticks (¼ cup)	Marinated broccoli florets (½ cup)			
Fruits ½ cup		Plums (½ cup)	Fruit salad: oranges, bananas, sliced grapes, pineapple (½ cup)		
Grains ½ oz eq	Enriched bread sticks (½ ounce)			Whole-wheat bagel (½ ounce) WGR	Whole-grain crackers (½ ounce) WGR
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)					
Other foods (noncreditable)	Low-fat Ranch dressing (1 tablespoon) Water	Water	Water	Water	Water

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Week 7

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup			Unflavored low-fat milk (½ cup)		
MMA ½ oz		Hummus (⅛ cup chickpeas)		Shredded low-fat cheese (½ ounce)	Berry-peach yogurt parfait: Low-fat yogurt (¼ cup)
Vegetables ½ cup		Zucchini sticks (¼ cup) Pepper strips (¼ cup)		Garden salad: Lettuce (½ cup), tomatoes, cucumbers, and carrots (¼ cup)	
Fruits ½ cup	Watermelon chunks (½ cup)				Seasonal berries (¼ cup) Diced peaches (¼ cup)
Grains ½ oz eq	Enriched soft pretzel (½ ounce)		Enriched pumpkin cranberry muffin (1 ounce) WGR		
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)					Crumbled graham crackers (1 tablespoon)
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water		Low-fat Italian dressing (1 tablespoon) Water	Water

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Week 8

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz	Pita bread triangles: Low-fat cheese (½ ounce)				Chicken salad (1 ounce cooked chicken)
Vegetables ½ cup		Lentil salad (½ cup)	Marinated diced cucumber-tomato salad (½ cup)		
Fruits ½ cup		Pineapple chunks (½ cup)		Strawberry shortcake: Sliced strawberries (½ cup)	
Grains ½ oz eq	Whole-wheat pita bread (½ ounce) WGR		Whole-grain roll (½ ounce) WGR	Enriched biscuit (½ ounce)	Whole-grain crackers (½ ounce) WGR
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)	Vegetable salsa (⅛ cup)				
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water	Water	Whipped cream (2 tablespoons) Water	Water

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Week 9

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz				Almond butter (1 tablespoon)	Herbed cottage cheese (⅓ cup)
Vegetables ½ cup		Marinated chickpea salad (½ cup)			Celery sticks and cucumber slices (½ cup)
Fruits ½ cup	Pineapple slices (½ cup)		Sliced kiwi (½ cup)	Frozen banana (½ cup)	
Grains ½ oz eq	Whole-grain bagel (½ ounce) WGR	Enriched pretzels (½ ounce)	Whole-grain puffed cereal (¾ cup) WGR		
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)					Whole-grain crackers (¼ ounce) WGR
Other foods (noncreditable)	Light cream cheese (½ tablespoon) Water	Water	Water	Water	Water

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Week 10

Meal Component	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Milk ½ cup					
MMA ½ oz	Hard-boiled egg (½ large)				Peanut butter (1 tablespoon)
Vegetables ½ cup		Sliced cherry tomatoes (½ cup)	Refried beans (¾ cup) Salsa (⅛cup)	Roasted green beans (½ cup)	
Fruits ½ cup		Diced pears (½ cup)		Apple slices (½ cup)	
Grains ½ oz eq	Whole-grain roll (½ ounce) WGR		Whole-corn tortilla chips (½ ounce) WGR		Whole-wheat bagel (½ ounce) WGR
Additional foods (credible but not full serving)					
Other foods (noncreditable)	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water

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Resources

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

Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources>

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp_preschool.pdf

Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers (Institute of Child Nutrition):
<https://theicn.org/resources/1575/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers/118740/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers.pdf>

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

Menu Planning Basics: A Guide for CACFP Operators in Child Care (Institute of Child Nutrition):
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menu-planning-basics-cacfp>

Menu Planning for Preschoolers (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs#menuplanningpreschoolers>

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

Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/how-to>

Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes>

Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/resources_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf

Serving Snacks in the CACFP (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-snacks-cacfp>

Snack Inspiration (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction):
https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/community-nutrition/pdf/snack_inspiration.pdf

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE training program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

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For more information 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/forms/sample_menu_asp_ages_3-5.pdf.

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3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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