Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to reimbursable meals and snacks served in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

For information on the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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Overview of Crediting Requirements

Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna) credit as the MMA component in the CACFP meal patterns. The amount of deli meat that provides 1 ounce equitant (oz eq) of the MMA component depends on the product's ingredients. The required serving can vary greatly between different brands and types of deli meats.

- **100 percent meat:** Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, 1 ounce of deli meat that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

- **Added liquids, binders, and extenders:** Products that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The crediting depends on the amount of meat per serving, excluding added ingredients. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component might require 1.6 ounces of one brand of deli meat and 2.3 ounces of another brand of deli meat.

CACFP facilities must ensure that the serving of deli meat provides the correct amount of the MMA component being credited toward the reimbursable meal or snack.



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Liquids, Binders, and Extenders

Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS that states the amount of the MMA component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if commercial products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA's regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7).

Examples of binders and extenders

Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA's regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7). The list below indicates some examples

- Agar-agar
- Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)
- Bread
- Calcium-reduced dried skim milk
- Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)
- Carrageenan
- Cereal
- Dried milk
- Dry or dried whey
- Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate
- Gums, vegetable
- Isolated soy protein (APP)
- Locust bean gum
- Methyl cellulose
- Modified food starch
- Reduced lactose whey
- Reduced minerals
- Sodium caseinate
- Soy flour (APP)
- Soy protein concentrate (APP)
- Starchy vegetable flour
- Tapioca dextrin
- Vegetable starch
- Wheat gluten
- Whey
- Whey protein concentrate (APP)
- Xanthan gum

APPs in the list above are indicated with "(APP)" after the ingredient name. Commercial products may contain APPs if they meet the USDA's APP requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Examples of commercial products with added liquid, binders, and extenders

The ingredients statements below show some examples of commercial turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders (indicated in *italics*).

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

- Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.

To credit these products in reimbursable meals and snacks, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS indicating the oz eq of MMA per serving.





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Developing Recipes for Menu Items with Deli Meats

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, CACFP facilities should develop standardized recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees.

These recipes should indicate the deli meat's contribution to the MMA component based on the specific weight of a specific brand. To make portioning simple for food service staff and ensure that the serving provides the proper crediting amount, round up the weight of the deli meat in the standardized recipe to the nearest ¼ ounce. For example, the standardized recipe should list 1.2 ounces of deli meat as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces of deli meat as 1.75 ounces.

If the CACFP facility makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the standardized recipe should include the specific weight of each brand.

- **Example:** A child care center makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, depending on product availability and price. The child care center's standardized recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand for 1 oz eq and the required weight of XYZ brand for 1 oz eq. Alternatively, the child care center could also choose to develop a separate standardized turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat.

The USDA recommends using standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements.

> The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been 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.

For information on standardized recipes, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on standardized recipes is available in Bite Size Module 6: Menus, Production Records, and Standardized Recipes of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.*

Comparing Cost

Determining the cost per oz eq of MMA helps CACFP facilities decide if the required meal pattern serving for a specific brand of deli meat is reasonable and cost effective. The deli product with the lowest cost per pound might not be the least expensive. Considering the cost per oz eq of the MMA component instead of the cost per ounce of meat provides a more accurate reflection of the product's cost in reimbursable meals and snacks.

The table below shows a sample cost comparison of two deli meat products. Products with added liquids, binders, extenders require a CN label or PFS to document the MMA oz eq per serving (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation for Deli Meats" in this document). CACFP facilities must obtain the oz eq contribution of the deli meat from the manufacturer's PFS.

Table 1. Cost comparison of sample deli meats

Food Item	Price per pound	Price per ounce	1 oz eq of MMA	Cost of 1 oz eq of MMA
Sample product A: Deli meat with liquids, binders, or extenders	$4.99	$ .31	1.7 ounces	$ .53
Sample product B: Deli meat without liquids, binders, or extenders	$6.99	$ .44	1 ounce	$ .44

Sample product A (deli meat with liquids, binders, or extenders) costs $2 less per pound than sample product B (deli meat without liquids, binders, or extenders). However, when the menu planner compares the cost based on 1 oz eq of the MMA component, a serving of sample product A costs 53 cents and a serving of sample product B costs 44 cents. Sample product A requires almost twice the weight of sample product B to provide 1 oz eq of the MMA component because of the added liquids, binders, and extenders.

Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Required Crediting Documentation for Deli Meats

CACFP facilities must obtain appropriate crediting documentation that states the oz eq of the MMA component per serving for all deli meats that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation 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 ½ ounce equivalent (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 on CN labels, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **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 resource, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. For guidance on how to review a PFS, visit the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement webpage.

Deli meats without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in reimbursable meals and snacks unless they are listed in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG).

> A PFS is required for all deli meats without a CN label that are not listed in the FBG. The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must obtain and verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks.

For more information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. Additional guidance is available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the documentation requirements, CN labels, and PFS forms is available in Bite Size Module 7: Introduction to Crediting Documentation, Bite Size Module 8: Child Nutrition (CN) Labels, and Bite Size Module 9: Product Formulation Statements of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.*

Storing crediting documentation

CACFP facilities must maintain all CN labels, PFS forms, recipes, and other crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the CACFP. This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the CACFP. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Large chunks or cubes of deli meats are choking hazards. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding how to offer deli meats in CACFP menus and modify foods and menus as appropriate. For additional guidance, visit the "Choking Prevention" section of the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_cacfp.pdf

Accepting Product Documentation (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/accepting-product-documentation

Bite Size Module 6: Menus, Production Records, and Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module6

Bite Size Module 7: Introduction to Crediting Documentation (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module7

Bite Size Module 8: Child Nutrition (CN) Labels (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module8

Bite Size Module 9: Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module9

Bite Size Module 11: Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module11

Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs

Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_commercial_mma_cacfp.pdf

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg

Meats and Meat Alternates Component (CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/meats-and-meat-alternates

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements

Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (Institute of Child Nutrition):
https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/step-by-step-recipe-standardization-guide-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/app_requirements_snp.pdf

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

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

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

Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_cn_labels_cacfp.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_product_formulation_statements_cacfp.pdf

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage or contact the CACFP 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/cacfp/crediting/credit_deli_cacfp.pdf.

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   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
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