

# Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served to children in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, and at-risk afterschool care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) CACFP. Foods served in reimbursable meals and snacks must meet the CACFP meal patterns. For information on the CACFP meal patterns and crediting foods for children, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages.



Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the meal patterns for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. They include foods and beverages in amounts too small to credit (i.e., less than the minimum creditable amount), and foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal pattern components. Examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. The chart on page 2 lists additional examples of noncreditable foods for CACFP child care programs. This list is not all-inclusive.

CACFP facilities may serve noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Some 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 CACFP meals and snacks meet children’s nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.

The USDA’s [CACFP best practices](#) recommend that CACFP menus avoid noncreditable foods that are sources of added sugars. Examples include sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, and syrup), mix-in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, and cookie pieces), and sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks and sodas).

**Note:** CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase noncreditable foods, except for condiments served with creditable foods, and herbs and spices used to prepare and enhance the flavor of meals. For example, CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase grain-based desserts, gelatin, pudding, or canned cream soups.

# Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

## Examples of noncreditable foods for CACFP child care programs

For additional guidance, refer to the footnotes on page 4.

Almond flour	Cream soups, canned, e.g., cream of mushroom, cream of celery, and cream of broccoli
Almond milk <sup>1</sup>	Cream, half and half
Bacon (pork)	Drinkable or squeezable yogurt <sup>6</sup>
Bacon bits, regular or imitation	Egg whites without the yolk
Banana chips	Eggnog
Bread products that are not whole grain, whole grain-rich (WGR), or enriched <sup>2</sup>	Frozen yogurt
Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) that are not whole grain, whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified <sup>3</sup>	Fruit drink, fruit beverage, powdered fruit drink mix
Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) with more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce <sup>3</sup>	Fruit leathers (100 percent fruit)
Brownies <sup>4</sup>	Fruit punch (not 100 percent juice)
Butter	Fruit snacks, e.g., fruit roll-ups, wrinkles, twists
Cake <sup>4</sup>	Gelatin, regular and sugar free
Candy	Grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, sweet piecrusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies <sup>4</sup>
Candy-coated popcorn	Grains that are not whole grain, WGR, or enriched <sup>2</sup>
Caramel popcorn	Granola bars <sup>4</sup>
Cashew milk <sup>1</sup>	Home-canned products, e.g., vegetables and fruits
Cereal bars <sup>4</sup>	Honey <sup>7</sup>
Chocolate milk-based drinks, e.g., Yoo-Hoo	Hot chocolate
Cinnamon buns or rolls <sup>4</sup>	Ice cream and ice cream novelties
Coconut flour	Ice milk
Coconut milk	Iced coffee
Coffee (regular, decaffeinated, and iced)	Iced tea
Commercial processed products without a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS), e.g., entrees, smoothies, and breaded vegetables <sup>5</sup>	Jam and jelly
Commercial smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements	Ketchup
Condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, relish, and barbecue sauce	Lemonade
Cookies <sup>4</sup> , except animal crackers and graham crackers	Limeade
Cranberry cocktail drink	Liquid egg substitutes
Cream cheese	Maple syrup
	Margarine
	Marshmallows

# Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

## Examples of noncreditable foods for CACFP child care programs, *continued*

Mayonnaise	Scrapple
Milk for age 1: Plain or flavored reduced fat (2%), plain or flavored low fat (1%), and plain or flavored fat free	Sherbet
Milk for ages 2-5: Plain or flavored whole, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%), and flavored low fat (1%)	Soda, regular and diet
Mustard	Soups, commercial cream of vegetable, e.g., cream of broccoli, cream of mushroom, and cream of celery
Nondairy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes <sup>1</sup>	Soups, commercial non-vegetable, canned, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice
Nutritional beverage supplements, e.g., Abbott's Pediasure	Sour cream
Oat milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes <sup>1</sup>	Soy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes <sup>1</sup>
Pastries <sup>4</sup>	Sports drinks, regular and diet
Pickle relish	Spreadable fruit
Pies, e.g., coconut, fruit, pecan <sup>4</sup>	Sweet rolls <sup>4</sup>
Popsicles (not 100 percent juice)	Syrup
Potato chips	Tea, regular, herbal, and iced
Powdered milk beverages, e.g., Nestle's NIDO	Toaster pastries <sup>4</sup>
Probiotic dairy drinks	Tofu with less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) <sup>8</sup>
Pudding	Water <sup>9</sup>
Pudding pops	Yogurt or soy yogurt with more than more than 3.83 grams of total sugars per ounce <sup>6</sup>
Puffs, fruit and vegetable	Yogurt products, e.g., drinkable or squeezable yogurt, frozen yogurt, yogurt bars, and yogurt-covered fruits and nuts
Rice milk <sup>1</sup>	
Salad dressings	
Salt pork	
Scones, sweet, e.g., blueberry, raisin, or orange cranberry <sup>4</sup>	

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Milk substitutes for children without a disability must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in CACFP Child Care Programs](#).
- <sup>2</sup> For guidance on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP](#).

# Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

- <sup>3</sup> For guidance on creditable cereals, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.
- <sup>4</sup> These items are grain-based desserts and do not credit in the CACFP. For more information, refer to the USDA’s handout, *Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP*.
- <sup>5</sup> Commercial products without a CN label or PFS do not credit in the CACFP. For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and the USDA’s *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement*. Additional guidance is available in the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Child Care Programs” section of the CSDE’s CACFP webpage.
- <sup>6</sup> For guidance on crediting yogurt, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.
- <sup>7</sup> Honey cannot be served to infants younger than age 1, including honey cooked in products such as honey graham crackers. Honey can contain botulism spores that can cause a serious type of foodborne illness in infants.
- <sup>8</sup> For guidance on crediting tofu, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.
- <sup>9</sup> CACFP facilities must make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service. For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#) and [USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

## Resources

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/SpecDiet/Milk\\_Substitutes\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/SpecDiet/Milk_Substitutes_CACFP.pdf)

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit\\_Cereals\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Cereals_CACFP.pdf)

Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#CommercialProducts>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting\\_Summary\\_Charts\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_CACFP.pdf)

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit\\_Tofu\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Tofu_CACFP.pdf)

## Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit\\_Yogurt\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Yogurt_CACFP.pdf)

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP – Handouts and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp>

Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

[http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Guide\\_CACFP\\_Meal\\_Patterns.pdf](http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Guide_CACFP_Meal_Patterns.pdf)

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR\\_Requirement\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_CACFP.pdf)

How to Identify Creditable Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Identify\\_Creditable\\_Grains\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Identify_Creditable_Grains_CACFP.pdf)

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR\\_Requirement\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_CACFP.pdf)

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Resources\\_CACFP\\_Meal\\_Patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Resources_CACFP_Meal_Patterns.pdf)

Standardized Recipes in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp>

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](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):

[http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Using\\_Product\\_Formulation\\_Statements\\_CACFP.pdf](http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Using_Product_Formulation_Statements_CACFP.pdf)

# Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) 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/Noncreditable\\_Foods\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Noncreditable_Foods_CACFP.pdf).

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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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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