

# Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks 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 crediting foods, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage. For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and crediting foods, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.



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# Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

## Recommended Vegetable Subgroups

The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends consuming a variety of vegetables from each of the five vegetable subgroups: dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other. The CACFP meal patterns do not require these vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend offering at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup each week. The chart below identifies common vegetables in each subgroup. Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the name of the previous "legumes (beans and peas)" subgroup to the "beans, peas, and lentils" subgroup.

<b>Dark Green</b> Fresh, frozen, and canned	<b>Red/Orange</b> Fresh, frozen, and canned	<b>Beans, Peas, and Lentils</b> Cooked from dry, canned, or frozen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arugula</li><li>• Beet greens</li><li>• Bok choy</li><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Broccoli rabe (rapini)</li><li>• Broccolini</li><li>• Butterhead lettuce (Boston, Bibb)</li><li>• Chicory</li><li>• Cilantro</li><li>• Collard greens</li><li>• Endive</li><li>• Escarole</li><li>• Fiddle heads</li><li>• Grape leaves</li><li>• Kale</li><li>• Mesclun</li><li>• Mustard greens</li><li>• Parsley</li><li>• Spinach</li><li>• Swiss chard</li><li>• Red leaf lettuce</li><li>• Romaine lettuce</li><li>• Turnip greens</li><li>• Watercress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acorn squash</li><li>• Butternut squash</li><li>• Carrots (orange only)</li><li>• Cherry peppers</li><li>• Hubbard squash</li><li>• Orange peppers</li><li>• Pimientos</li><li>• Pumpkin</li><li>• Red chili peppers</li><li>• Red peppers</li><li>• Salsa (100% vegetables)</li><li>• Spaghetti squash</li><li>• Sweet potatoes</li><li>• Tomatoes</li><li>• Tomato juice</li><li>• Winter squash</li><li>• Yams</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Black beans</li><li>• Black-eyed peas (mature, dry)</li><li>• Cowpeas</li><li>• Edamame</li><li>• Fava beans</li><li>• Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)</li><li>• Great northern beans</li><li>• Kidney beans</li><li>• Lentils</li><li>• Lima beans (mature, dry)</li><li>• Mung beans</li><li>• Navy beans</li><li>• Pink beans</li><li>• Pinto beans</li><li>• Red beans</li><li>• Refried beans</li><li>• Soybeans (mature, dry)</li><li>• Split peas</li><li>• White beans</li></ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The beans, peas, and lentils subgroup does not include immature (fresh) beans and peas, such as green beans, green lima beans, and green (string) beans. For more information on this subgroup, refer to the CSDE's <a href="#">Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program</a>.</p>

# Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

## Starchy Fresh, frozen, and canned

- Black-eyed peas, fresh (not dry)
- Cassava
- Corn
- Cowpeas, fresh (not dry)
- Field peas, fresh (not dry)
- Green bananas
- Green peas
- Hominy, whole (canned, drained)
- Jicama
- Lima beans, green (not dry)
- Parsnips
- Pigeon peas, fresh (not dry)
- Plantains
- Poi
- Potatoes
- Taro
- Water chestnuts
- Yautia (tannier)



## Other Fresh, frozen, and canned

- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Bamboo shoots
- Bean sprouts, cooked only (for food safety), e.g., alfalfa, mung
- Beans, green and yellow
- Beets
- Breadfruit
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage (green, red, celery, Napa)
- Cactus (nopales)
- Carrots, rainbow (e.g., pink, purple, red, white, and yellow)
- Cauliflower
- Celeriac
- Celery
- Chayote (mirliton)
- Chives
- Cucumbers
- Daikon (oriental radish)
- Eggplant
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Green chili peppers
- Green onions (scallions)
- Green peppers
- Horseradish
- Kohlrabi
- Leeks
- Mushrooms
- Okra
- Olives
- Onions (white, yellow, red)
- Peas in pod, e.g., snap peas, snow peas
- Pepperoncini
- Pickles (cucumber)
- Purple peppers
- Radishes
- Rhubarb
- Rutabagas
- Sauerkraut
- Seaweed
- Shallots
- Snap peas
- Snow peas
- Tomatillo
- Turnips
- Wax beans
- White sweet potatoes
- Yellow peppers
- Yellow summer squash
- Zucchini squash



# Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

## Crediting Guidance for the Vegetables Component

The vegetables component of the CACFP meal patterns includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and 100 percent full-strength vegetable juice.

### Serving size

Vegetables credit based on the yields and crediting information in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). All vegetables credit based on volume (cups) with the exceptions below.

- **Raw leafy greens** credit as half the volume served, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of raw leafy greens credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component. Examples of raw leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce (e.g., iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix).
- **Dried or dehydrated vegetables** (like potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on the amount of vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume. A product formulation statement (PFS) is required to document crediting information (refer to "[Required Crediting Documentation](#)" in this document).

For more information on crediting vegetables, visit the "Vegetables Component" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage or [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

### Vegetable juice

Pasteurized full-strength juice meets the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)). Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)).

### Canned vegetables

A serving of canned vegetables must be drained; it cannot include the packing liquid, such as water or sauce. For example, to credit as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of canned peas cannot include the water in which it is packed and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. The serving must contain  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of vegetables before any added liquid.

# Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

## Crediting Vegetables in CACFP Meals and Snacks

The CACFP meal pattern requirements for the vegetables component are summarized below.

- **Lunch and supper:** The CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern requires a serving of the vegetables component. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend that CACFP meals contain at least one weekly serving of each of the five vegetable subgroups ( refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)).
- **Breakfast:** The CACFP breakfast meal patterns require a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. Vegetables may be served at any breakfast.
- **Snack:** The vegetables component may be served as one of the two required components in the CACFP snack meal pattern. The [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one of the two required snack components.

For additional guidance, visit the "Vegetables Component" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.

## Required Crediting Documentation

Commercial processed vegetable products (such as vegetable egg rolls and breaded onion rings) and vegetables prepared from scratch with added ingredients (such as coleslaw, mashed potatoes, and carrot-raisin salad) require crediting documentation to indicate the amount of vegetables per serving. Commercially prepared foods with added ingredients require a PFS stating the specific contribution of each vegetable subgroup per serving. Foods made from scratch require a standardized recipe that indicates the amount of each vegetable subgroup per serving.

For information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the 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 [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks](#) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). Additional guidance is available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.

# Vegetable Subgroups in 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. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of vegetables to offer in CACFP menus. This consideration is also important for children and adult participants with a disability that requires dietary restrictions.

Examples of vegetables that may cause choking include cooked or raw whole-kernel corn, and small pieces of raw vegetables, e.g., raw green peas, whole beans, raw carrot rounds, baby carrots, string beans, celery, and other raw or partially cooked hard vegetables. Preparation techniques for vegetables to reduce the risk of choking include cooking until soft, and cutting, dicing, or shredding into small pieces. For additional guidance, visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Resources

CACFP Meal Pattern Updates (CSDE's CACFP webpage):

[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-and-adult-care-food-program#CACFP\\_Meal\\_Pattern\\_Updates](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-and-adult-care-food-program#CACFP_Meal_Pattern_Updates)

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit\\_beans\\_peas\\_lentils\\_cacfp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_cacfp.pdf)

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

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit\\_juice\\_cacfp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_juice_cacfp.pdf)

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

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit\\_smoothies\\_cacfp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_smoothies_cacfp.pdf)

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

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit\\_soups\\_cacfp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_soups_cacfp.pdf)

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Vegetables Component (USDA):

[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section2\\_Vegetables.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section2_Vegetables.pdf)

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Yield Table for Vegetables (USDA):

[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section2\\_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section2_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf)

Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-adult-centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs>

## Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Total\\_Veg\\_Fruits\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Total_Veg_Fruits_Fillable_508.pdf)

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs – Completed Sample for Vegetables (USDA):

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

Serving Vegetables in the CACFP (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-vegetables-cacfp>

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

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

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):

<https://www.federalregister.gov/Documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/Child-Nutrition-Programs-Meal-Patterns-Consistent-With-The-2020-2025-Dietary-Guidelines-For>

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>

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

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)

Vegetables Component (“How To” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-adult-day-care-centers/how-to#Vegetables>

Vegetables Component (“How To” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Vegetables>

## Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program

For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages 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/vegetable\\_subgroups\\_cacfp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/vegetable_subgroups_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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