Vegetable Subgroups 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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Recommended Vegetable Subgroups

The *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend consuming a variety of vegetables from each of the five vegetable subgroups: dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend offering at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup each week. The lists below identify common vegetables in each subgroup.

Dark Green — Fresh, frozen, and canned

- Arugula
- Beet greens
- Bok choy
- Broccoli
- Broccoli rabe (rapini)
- Broccolini
- Butterhead lettuce (Boston, Bibb)
- Chicory
- Cilantro
- Collard greens
- Endive
- Escarole
- Fiddle heads
- Grape leaves
- Kale
- Mesclun
- Mustard greens
- Parsley
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Red leaf lettuce
- Romaine lettuce
- Turnip greens
- Watercress

Red/Orange — Fresh, frozen, and canned

- Acorn squash
- Butternut squash
- Carrots (orange only)
- Cherry peppers
- Hubbard squash
- Orange peppers
- Pimientos
- Pumpkin
- Red chili peppers
- Red peppers
- Salsa (100% vegetables)
- Spaghetti squash
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Tomato juice
- Winter squash
- Yams






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Beans, Peas, and Lentils — Cooked from dry, canned, or frozen

- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas (mature, dry)
- Cowpeas
- Edamame
- Fava beans
- Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- Great northern beans
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Lima beans (mature, dry)
- Mung beans
- Navy beans
- Pink beans
- Pinto beans
- Red beans
- Refried beans
- Soybeans (mature, dry)
- Split peas
- White beans

Note: 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 resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils 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)







Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

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 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., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ 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" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. Training on the vegetables component is available in Bite Size Module 8 Vegetables Component of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.*

Vegetable juice

Vegetable juice must be pasteurized full-strength (100 percent) juice. Pasteurized full-strength juice meets the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *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 ½ cup of the vegetables component, ½ cup of canned peas cannot include the packing water and ½ cup of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. The serving must contain ½ cup of vegetables before any added liquid.

Required Crediting Documentation for Vegetables

CACFP facilities must be able to document that all menu items offered in reimbursable meals and snacks meet the meal pattern requirements. The guidance below summarizes the required documentation for commercial processed vegetable products and foods made from scratch that contain vegetables. These foods require crediting documentation to indicate the cups of vegetables per serving. Documentation must be based on the food yields and crediting information in the FBG.

Documentation for commercial processed products

Commercial processed vegetable products and combination foods that contain vegetables require documentation stating the cups of each vegetable subgroup per serving. Some examples include vegetable egg rolls, breaded onion rings, pizza, black bean burritos, and chili) For example, to credit chili with kidney beans as ¼ cup of the vegetables component, the product's CN label or PFS must state that one serving contains ¼ cup of beans, peas, or lentils.

The acceptable types of documentation for commercial products include 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. 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, attached to the bill of lading (invoice). For more information, 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.

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in reimbursable meals and snacks unless they are listed in FBG.

> A PFS is required for all commercial processed vegetables products that are not listed in the FBG. The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks.

For more information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs, 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.*

Documentation for foods made from scratch

Foods made from scratch require a recipe that indicates the cups of each vegetable subgroup per serving. Some examples include tossed salad, coleslaw, potato salad, mashed potatoes, and vegetable soup. 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 CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and 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.*

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*.

Resources

2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and USDA):
https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines/previous-editions/2020-dietary-guidelines

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

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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 12: Vegetables 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#module12

CACFP Best Practices (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp

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

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

Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_juices_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

Crediting Soups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_soups_cacfp.pdf

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

Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guide_cacfp_crediting.pdf

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Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guide_cacfp_menu_documentation.pdf

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/

Serving Vegetables in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA webpage):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-vegetables-cacfp

Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes

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

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 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fna.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.fna.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/cn_labels_snp.pdf

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Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf

Vegetables 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/vegetables

What's in a Meal Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module8

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/vegetable_ subgroups_cacfp.pdf.

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Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
   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

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