

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Snack Meal Pattern for Children

July 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025

Snack meal components ¹ <i>Serve any 2 of the 5 meal components</i>	Minimum for ages 1-2	Minimum for ages 3-5	Minimum for ages 6-12	Minimum for ages 13-18 ²
Milk, fluid ³ Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored Ages 2 and older: Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	8 fluid ounces (1 cup)	8 fluid ounces (1 cup)
Meats/meat alternates (MMA), ounce equivalents (oz eq) ⁴	½ oz eq =	½ oz eq =	1 oz eq =	1 oz eq =
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs) ⁵ ; or tempeh ⁶	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Surimi ⁷	2 ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces	3 ounces
Tofu ⁸	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)
Cottage cheese	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Egg, large	½	½	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils ⁹	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut/seed butters	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	2 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds ¹⁰	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened ¹¹	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)
Vegetables, cups ^{12, 13}	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Fruits, cups ^{13, 14}	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Grains, oz eq ^{15, 16, 17, 18}	½ oz eq =	½ oz eq =	1 oz eq =	1 oz eq =
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq ¹⁸	½ oz eq ¹⁸	1 oz eq ¹⁸	1 oz eq ¹⁸
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ¹⁹ , cereal grain ²⁰ , or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds ¹⁹	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Puffed ¹⁹	¾ cup	¾ cup	1¼ cups	1¼ cups
Granola ¹⁹	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

◀ Refer to pages 2-3 for important menu planning notes ▶

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Menu planning notes

- ¹ Snack must include the minimum serving of two of the five meal components. Only one of the two meal components may be a creditable beverage, such as milk or juice. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one of the two required meal components. Use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. Commercial processed foods not listed in the FBG require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to document crediting information (refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the CACFP](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#)). Foods made from scratch must have a recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. For information on crediting documentation, visit the "[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)" section and "[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ² The age group for ages 13-18 applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portions may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.
- ³ Milk must be unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk for ages 2 and older. Flavored low-fat or fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving only unflavored milk. For more information, visit the "[Milk Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁴ The serving size of MMA refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Commercial processed products that contain added ingredients (such as combination entrees, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP](#)). The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese. For more information, visit the "[Meats/Meat Alternates Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁵ APPs must meet the requirements in [appendix A of 7 CFR 226](#). For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP](#).
- ⁶ For a 1-ounce serving of tempeh to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA, the product's ingredients must include only soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. Tempeh products that contain other ingredients require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information.
- ⁷ Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A CN label or PFS is required for commercial products that indicate a different crediting amount.
- ⁸ Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (¼ cup) to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP](#)).
- ⁹ Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the CACFP](#)).
- ¹⁰ Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP](#)). **Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped.
- ¹¹ Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces, i.e., no more than 3.83 grams per ounce (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#)). **Note:** 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).

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- ¹² The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength vegetable juice. Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of lettuce or spinach credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. A serving of canned vegetables must be drained. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on their rehydrated volume and require a PFS. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend that child care menus include at least one serving per week of each vegetable subgroup (dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other). For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP](#) and visit the "[Vegetables Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹³ Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP](#)). The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- ¹⁴ The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice. The creditable serving of canned fruit in 100 percent juice may include the juice but cannot include water or syrup. Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. For more information, visit the "[Fruits Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹⁵ Grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains (whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ). For information on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#), [Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP](#), and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP](#), and visit the "[Grains Component](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹⁶ At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. To meet the CACFP WGR criteria, foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP](#) and visit the "[Whole Grain-rich Requirement](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹⁷ Grain 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 and may credit as the grains component. However, the CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, visit the USDA's [Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP](#) webpage.
- ¹⁸ To credit as the required oz eq, the serving of grain products and recipes must provide either: 1) the required serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP](#) and [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the CACFP](#)); or 2) the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP](#) and [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the CACFP](#)). For more information, visit the "[Ounce Equivalents](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹⁹ Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#)). **Note:** 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 breakfast cereals to no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- ²⁰ Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

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For more information on the CACFP meal patterns for children, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) 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/mealpattern/cacfp_snack_meal_pattern.pdf.

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