Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Child Care Centers • Family Day Care Homes • Emergency Shelters

At-risk Afterschool Care Centers • Adult Day Care Centers

Program Year 2026-27 (Effective June 8, 2026)

CONNECTICUT
Education

Revised November 2026

Connecticut State Department of Education
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About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides comprehensive information and resources to assist child care programs and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) with crediting foods and beverages toward the CACFP meal patterns. The requirements in this guide apply to CACFP child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, family day care homes, and adult day care centers.

This guide is part of the CSDE's menu planning guidance series for CACFP child care programs and adult day care centers (refer to "CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series" in this section).

This guide does not apply to crediting foods and beverages toward the CACFP infant meal patterns for birth through 11 months. For guidance on the infant meal patterns, visit the CSDE's Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

> This guide reflects the USDA regulations and policies in effect as of the publication date. Please note that this information may change. The CSDE will update this guide whenever the USDA issues new guidance regarding the CACFP meal patterns. Please check the "CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage for the most current version. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guide_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA. Product names are used solely for clarification.

Questions regarding this guide may be directed to Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, at 860-807-2075 or susan.fiore@ct.gov.

CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series

This guide is part of the CSDE's menu planning guidance series for the CACFP. These guides are designed to assist CACFP sponsors with meeting the CACFP meal patterns, including the requirements for crediting foods and beverages, menu documentation, and meal service.

- Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns
- Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children
- Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (applies to the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns)
- Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (applies to the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns)
- Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

The menu planning guidance series for the CACFP is available in the "CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Contact Information for CSDE CACFP Staff

For questions regarding the CACFP, please contact the CACFP staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities*.

For links to federal and state requirements and guidance for the CACFP, visit the CSDE's Program Guidance for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage or Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

APP	alternate protein product
AR	Administrative Review
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CN	Child Nutrition
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG	Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNA	Food and Nutrition Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture
FR	Federal Register
ICN	Institute of Child Nutrition
MMA	meats/meat alternates
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
oz eq	ounce equivalents
PFS	product formulation statement
RTE	ready to eat
SOP	standard operating procedure
TCS	Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

WGR	whole grain-rich
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Commonly Used Acronyms and Abbreviations in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)*.

1 — Introduction

Institutions that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) must offer meals and snacks that comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CACFP meal patterns. Foods and beverages must meet specific requirements to credit toward the required meal components for reimbursable meals and snacks. These crediting requirements apply to commercial products, foods prepared from scratch by the CACFP facility, and foods prepared by vendors. This guide assists CACFP menu planners with meeting these crediting requirements.

Overview of Meal Patterns

The CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns consist of minimum servings of specific meal components for each age group. Meals and snacks served to participants are eligible for USDA reimbursement when they contain the minimum serving of each required meal component. Reimbursable meals may also contain additional foods beyond the minimum requirements (refer to "Additional Foods" in this section).

The meal pattern requirements are defined in section 7 CFR 226.20(c) of the CACFP regulations. CACFP facilities that meet these meal pattern requirements may claim reimbursement for meals and snacks served to participants.

Meal components

A meal component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (MMA).

- The breakfast meal pattern requires minimum daily servings of three meal components: milk; fruits and vegetable; and grains. MMA may substitute for the entire grains component up to three times per week (refer to "MMA at breakfast" in section 4).

- The lunch and supper meal pattern requires minimum servings of the five meal components, but milk is optional at supper for adult day care centers. Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch or supper. The two servings of vegetables must be different kinds (refer to "Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch and supper" in section 4).

- The snack meal pattern requires minimum daily servings of any two meal components.

The CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns have different requirements. For detailed guidance on the meal pattern requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children* or *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns*, and visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Menu items

Menu items contribute to the meal components. A menu item is any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk. Menu items may contribute to one or more meal components. For example, a hamburger (MMA component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one menu item that contributes to two meal components.

Creditable Foods

Creditable foods are foods and beverages that count toward the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA considers the following factors when determining if a food credits toward the meal components:

- nutrient content;
- function in a meal;
- regulations concerning the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs (quantity requirements and definition);
- the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standards of identity;
- the USDA's standards for meat and meat products; and
- administrative policy decisions on the crediting of specific foods.

The USDA crediting requirements are indicated in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section). Additional guidance is communicated through the USDA policy memos on the USDA's Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) Documents & Resources webpage.

Minimum Creditable Amounts

Each meal component requires a minimum amount to credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. Food items that contain less than the minimum amount do not credit.

- **Milk component:** The minimum creditable amount is the full serving of fluid milk for all meals and age groups. For smoothies only, the minimum creditable amount is ¼ cup. If the amount of milk in a smoothie is not the full meal pattern serving, the meal must include the additional amount of milk required to provide the full serving for each age group. For more information, refer to "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in section 2.

- **MMA component:** The minimum creditable amount is ¼ ounce equivalent (oz eq). At lunch and supper, the MMA component must be served in the main dish or in the main dish and one other food item. For more information, refer to "Main Dish Requirement for Lunch and Supper" in section 3.

- **Vegetables component:** The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. Smaller amounts of vegetables used for flavorings or garnishes do not credit. Menu planners may offer more than one food item to meet the full serving of the vegetables component for each age group if each food item contains at least ⅛ cup of vegetable. For example, a lunch/supper menu for ages 3-5 may provide the required ¼ cup of the vegetables component from ⅛ cup of broccoli and ⅛ cup of carrots.

- **Fruits component:** The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. Smaller amounts of fruits used for flavorings or garnishes do not credit. Menu planners may offer more than one food item to meet the full serving of the fruits component for each age group if each food item contains at least ⅛ cup of fruit. For example, a snack menu for ages 6-12 and ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may provide the required ¾ cup of the fruits component from ⅜ cup of strawberries and ⅜ cup of blueberries.

- **Grains component:** The minimum creditable amount is ¼ oz eq. Menu planners may offer more than one food item to meet the full serving of the grains component for each age group if each food item contains at least ¼ oz eq. For example, a breakfast menu for adult participants may provide the required 2 oz eq of the grains component from 1 oz eq of cereal and 1 oz eq of toast.

If a food item provides less than the required meal pattern serving, the CACFP menu must include additional foods from that same meal component to provide the full serving for each age group. For example, the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires ¼ cup of the vegetables component. If a food item provides ⅛ cup of vegetables, the lunch/supper menu must include another food item with at least ⅛ cup of vegetables to provide the full vegetables component.

Rounding requirements for crediting foods

When crediting menu items toward the meal components, menu planners must round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq for MMA and grains and the nearest ¼ cup for fruits and vegetables. For example, a standardized recipe or commercial product that contains 1.9 ounces of cooked chicken per serving credits as 1.75 oz eq of the MMA component.

Requirement for Visible Components

The USDA requires that foods must be visible (recognizable) to credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. Foods that are not visible do not credit unless the menu item also contains the minimum creditable amount of a visible food from the same meal component. The minimum creditable amounts for visible creditable meal components are ⅛ cup for fruits and vegetables and ¼ oz eq for MMA and grains. The examples below illustrate this requirement.

- A smoothie recipe contains 2 tablespoons of peanut butter per serving. The peanut butter does not credit toward the MMA component because it is not visible.
- A muffin recipe contains ⅛ cup of applesauce per serving. The applesauce does not credit as the fruits component because it is not visible.
- A baked oatmeal recipe contains ½ oz eq of egg per serving. The egg does not credit as the MMA component because it is not visible. However, if this recipe also contains ½ oz eq of visible sunflower seeds, the menu planner may credit the egg and sunflower seeds together as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.
- A macaroni and cheese recipe contains ⅛ cup of pureed carrots (red/orange subgroup) per serving. The pureed carrots do not credit as the vegetables component because they are not visible. However, if this recipe also contains ⅛ cup of visible diced butternut squash (red/orange subgroup) per serving, the menu planner may credit the pureed carrots and butternut squash together as ¼ cup of the vegetables component (red/orange subgroup). For more information, refer to "Unrecognizable pureed vegetables" in section 4.
- A soup recipe contains ½ oz eq of pureed tofu per serving. The pureed tofu does not credit as the MMA component because it is not visible. However, if this recipe also contains ½ oz eq of visible diced chicken, the menu planner may credit the tofu and chicken together as 1 oz eq of the MMA component

The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that children can easily identify the foods in school menus.

Exceptions for certain foods

The USDA allows exceptions to the requirement for visible components for the foods below.

- Yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies may credit as the MMA component (refer to "Yogurt in smoothies" in section 3 and "Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies" in section 5).
- Pureed fruits in smoothies may credit as the fruit component and pureed vegetables in smoothies may credit as the vegetables component (refer to "Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies" and "Crediting Pureed Fruits" in section 5).
- Pasta made with 100 percent legume flour may credit as the MMA component if the menu also includes an additional meat or meat alternate, such as tofu, cheese, or meat (refer to "Crediting Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in section 3).

Other foods must meet the USDA's requirement for visible components (refer to "Requirement for Visible Components" in this section).

Additional Foods

CACFP menus may include additional (extra) foods or larger servings beyond the minimum meal pattern requirements. Additional foods are creditable and noncreditable foods served in addition to the minimum meal pattern requirements.

- Creditable foods are additional servings of a meal component, such as larger servings of fruits and vegetables.
- Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not credit toward the meal patterns, such as water, potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, butter, bacon, and condiments like syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and salad dressings. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in this section.

When offering additional foods, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to choose nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to the nutritional needs of each age group. Examples include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat milk products, beans, peas, and lentils, and lean meats, fish, poultry.

Noncreditable Foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the meal components. Noncreditable foods include:

- foods and beverages in amounts too small to credit (refer to "Minimum Creditable Amounts" in this section); and
- foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal components.

Examples of noncreditable foods include flavored milk for ages 5 and younger, water, potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, butter, bacon, and condiments like syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and salad dressings. Examples of noncreditable foods for each meal component are listed at the end of sections 2 through 6. For more examples, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Allowable noncreditable foods

CACFP facilities may serve certain 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 participants' nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages menu planners to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fat, 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).

Use of CACFP funds for noncreditable foods

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.

Required Crediting Documentation

CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate documentation to indicate that meals and snacks meet the applicable meal pattern and crediting requirements for each age group. This documentation is required for commercial processed products and foods prepared from scratch. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Documentation for commercial processed products

The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must be able to document how commercial processed foods credit toward the meal components in reimbursable meals and snacks. Commercial processed products are commercially prepared foods and beverages with added ingredients. Some examples include:

- combination foods that contain more than one meal component, e.g., pizza, chicken nuggets, cheese ravioli, hummus and other bean dips, fruit and yogurt smoothies, fruit-filled pastries, and trail mixes with dried fruits and nuts (refer to "Crediting MMA in Commercial Products," "Crediting Hummus and Bean Dips as MMA," and "Crediting Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products" in section 3);

- foods with added liquids, binders, and extenders, e.g., deli meats, hotdogs, and sausages (refer to "Crediting Deli Meats, Hot Dogs, and Sausages" in section 3):

- dried meat, poultry, and seafood products, e.g., jerky and summer sausages (refer to "Crediting Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products" in section 3);

- foods that are alternate protein products (APPs) or contain APPs (refer to "Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)" in section 3);

- fruits and vegetables with added ingredients, e.g., breaded onion rings, french fries, hash brown patties, coleslaw, and dried soup mix (refer to "Crediting Fruits in Commercial Products" in section 5 and "Crediting Vegetables in Combination Foods" in section 4); and

- whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched grain products that also contain noncreditable grains (e.g., oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch, including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours), such as muffins, crackers, and breakfast cereals (refer to "When method 2 is required for commercial products" in section 8).

These types of foods require specific documentation to credit toward the meal components of the CACFP meal patterns. CACFP facility must obtain this documentation prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and snacks.

The acceptable types of documentation for processed foods include any of the documents below.

1. **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*.

2. **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 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.

> A PFS is required for all commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must obtain and verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and snacks. Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS do not credit.

The requirements for crediting documentation for processed foods are defined in USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the documentation requirements is available in Module 4: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns*. 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

CACFP facilities that serve foods made from scratch must have recipes on file that document the amount of each meal component per serving. 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. Standardized quantity recipes produce 25 or more servings.

> Recipes are required for all foods prepared on site by the CACFP facility and all vended foods made from scratch, such as foods provided through a contract with a food service vendor or food service management company (FSMC).

The meal pattern crediting information for recipes must be based on the yields in the USDA's FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section). For guidance on recipe standardization, refer to the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. This "how-to" guide describes recipe standardization techniques in detail and includes examples, practice exercises, and reference materials.

For more guidance and resources on standardized recipes, refer to section 4 of the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation 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.

Storing crediting documentation

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

CACFP facilities should ensure that menu planners use the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to plan reimbursable meals and snacks for the CACFP. The FBG is the definitive resource for determining yields and crediting information for foods and beverages. It provides yield information for common types and customary sizes of milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains, including commercially available foods and USDA Foods.

The FBG helps menu planners determine:

- a food's specific contribution toward the meal pattern requirements;
- how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide;
- what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a standardized recipe; and
- how much food to buy.

The FBG is available as an interactive web-based tool (which includes the Exhibit A Grains Tool, Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW), and Product Formulation Statement (PFS) Workbook), a mobile app, and a downloadable PDF. These resources are available on the USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs webpage. This webpage also includes training modules and recorded webinars to assist menu planners with using the FBG.

For additional resources, visit the "Food Buying Guide" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Resources for Crediting Foods

The websites and resources below provide guidance on the requirements for crediting foods in the CACFP meal patterns. For a list of resources with guidance on meeting the meal pattern and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's resource list, *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns (CSDE webpage)
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training

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

- Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program

- Crediting Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/crediting-handbook

- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_ charts_ cacfp.pdf

- Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cn/crediting-tipsheets

- Crediting Updates for Child Nutrition Programs: Be in the Know! Webinar Series (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cn/crediting-updates-webinars

- Exhibit A Grains Tool of the Food Buying Guide (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool

- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg
- Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf
- Operational Memoranda for the CACFP (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/operational-memoranda-for-the-cacfp
- Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) for Standardized Recipes (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool
- USDA Policy Memos (USDA's FNA Documents & Resources webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/resources

For additional guidance on crediting foods, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the meal components and crediting foods is available in the CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

Guidance on Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements

The resources below provide CACFP facilities with information and guidance on meeting the requirements for the CACFP meal patterns.

- Links to the USDA's regulations and final rules for the meal patterns for the CACFP are available on the CSDE's Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
- The USDA provides guidance for implementing the CACFP through the policy memos on their FNA Documents & Resources webpage.
- The CSDE's Operational Memoranda for the CACFP webpage provides links to relevant USDA memos by year, and includes memos from the CSDE Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs on the requirements for the CACFP.
- The CSDE's Program Guidance for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage and Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage provide an alphabetical listing of links to information and guidance on the federal and state requirements for the CACFP, including the meal patterns, crediting foods and beverages, menu documentation, and meal service.
- The CSDE's CACFP Updates e-newsletter provides important guidance and resources to help CACFP facilities comply with the federal and state requirements, and identifies deadlines for completing required activities.
- The CSDE's Training for Child Nutrition Programs webpage provides links to recorded trainings on a variety of topics for the Child Nutrition Programs, including the CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.
- The CSDE's Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs webpage provides links to guides on a variety of topics, including food safety, menu planning and meal patterns, program administration, and special diets.

CACFP facilities may contact the CSDE's CACFP staff for more information and program-specific questions.

2 — Milk Component

Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements, and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the FDA. The USDA meal patterns require fluid milk as a beverage. Only fluid milk meets the USDA's definition for milk and the FDA's standard of identity for milk.

Required Milk Servings

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of fluid milk at breakfast, lunch, and supper. The CACFP adult meal patterns require a serving of fluid milk at breakfast and lunch. Milk is optional at supper.

A serving of milk may be one of the two required meal components at snack. Only one meal component at snack can be a creditable beverage. Milk cannot be served when juice is the only other meal component at snack. Meals and snacks with breakfast cereals may include fluid milk as a beverage, on cereal, or both.

The table below summarizes the required servings of the milk component for each age group and meal.

Table 2-1. Required meal pattern servings for fluid milk

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)	Adults
Breakfast	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Lunch and supper	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Snack	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

Allowable Types of Milk

Unflavored whole milk is required for age 1. Effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, changes the allowable types of milk for ages 2 and older to include unflavored whole and reduced fat (2%) milk, in addition to the previously allowed unflavored low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. Allowable types of milk also include lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT). Flavored milk may be served to ages 6 and older and adult participants but the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk.

Table 2-2 summarizes the allowable types of milk for each age group.

Table 2-2. Allowable types of milk in the CACFP meal patterns

Type of milk	Age groups
Whole, unflavored	Age 1, ages 2 and older, and adult participants
Whole, flavored [1]	Ages 6 and older and adult participants
Reduced-fat, unflavored	Ages 2 and older and adult participants
Reduced-fat, flavored [1]	Ages 6 and older and adult participants
Low-fat, unflavored	Ages 2 and older and adult participants
Low-fat, flavored [1]	Ages 6 and older and adult participants
Fat-free, unflavored	Ages 2 and older and adult participants
Fat-free, flavored [1]	Ages 6 and older and adult participants

[1] The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk.

Lactose-Free/Reduced Milk

Lactose-free/reduced milk is fluid milk and credits the same as regular milk. These types of milk are processed by adding lactase enzymes to reduce or eliminate the lactose (naturally occurring milk sugar) found in regular milk. Participants who cannot digest the lactose found in regular milk may be able to drink lactose-free/reduced milk. The USDA recommends these types of milk as the first choice for participants with lactose intolerance.

Lactose-free/reduced milk must meet the specific fat content and flavor restrictions for each meal pattern (refer to "Allowable Types of Milk" in this section). **Note:** For child care programs that operate in public schools, lactose-free/reduced milk must also meet the additional state beverage requirements for milk under Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) (refer to "Additional State Beverage Requirements for Child Care Programs in Public Schools" in this section).

Transitioning Infants from Breast Milk or Infant Formula to Whole Milk

Iron-fortified infant formula does not meet the fluid milk requirement of the CACFP meal patterns for children. However, meals that contain an allowable iron-fortified infant formula are reimbursable for a one-month transition period when children ages 12 to 13 months are weaning (transitioning) from infant formula to whole cow's milk.

When a child is weaned from formula (or breast milk) to cow's milk, it is common practice to provide the infant with both foods at the same meal. A small amount of whole milk is added to the iron-fortified infant formula and gradually increased over time. This eases the transition by helping the infant to accept some of the new food.

Breastmilk past age 1

Breastmilk is allowed as the milk component at any age in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Breastmilk may be served in combination with other types of milk. For meals and snacks to be reimbursable, the combined amount of breastmilk and milk must provide the minimum serving.

- **Example:** The CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children requires ½ cup of milk for age 2. If a mother provides ¼ cup of expressed breastmilk, the CACFP facility must serve ¼ cup of milk to make up the difference and meet the minimum ½-cup milk requirement at breakfast. The breastmilk and milk do not need to be mixed in the same cup; they may be served separately. The CACFP facility must provide all other required meal components for the meal or snack to be reimbursable.

Documentation for Milk in CACFP Menus

CACFP menus must document the type of milk served to each age group. For example, the menu for age 1 should state “unflavored whole milk” instead of “whole milk.” The menu for ages 2 and older and adult participants should state “unflavored low-fat milk” instead of “low-fat milk.” This ensures that CACFP menus reflect the appropriate type of milk being served to each age group.

Optional Fluid Milk Substitutions (Nondairy Beverages) for Non-disability Reasons

Section 7 CFR 226.20(g)(3)) of the CACFP regulations defines the requreitns for optional fluid milk substitutions in the CACFP. CACFP facilities may choose, but are not required, to offer one or more fluid milk substitutes (nondairy beverages) to all participants whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Fluid milk substitutes are plant-based beverages like fortified soy milk that are intended to replace cow's milk. Fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes in section 7 CFR 226.20(g)(3)(ii)) of the CACFP regulations.

Fluid milk substitutes are plant-based beverages designed to replace cow's milk, such as soy milk. To credit in reimbursable meals and snacks, fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. **Note:** For child care programs that operate in public schools, fluid milk substitutes must also meet the additional state beverage requirements for nondairy milk substitutes under Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) (refer to “Additional State Beverage Requirements for Child Care Programs in Public Schools

Fluid milk substitutes for children require a written request from the parent/guardian, a state licensed healthcare professional, or a registered dietitian that identifies the reason for the milk substitute.

Fluid milk substitutes for adult participants require a written request from the participant or their guardian/caregiver, a state licensed healthcare professional, or a registered dietitian that identifies the reason for the milk substitute.

For detailed guidance on the requirements and considerations for fluid milk substitutes, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and the CSDE’s *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Modifications for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. More resources are available in the “Milk Substitutes” section of the CSDE’s Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Additional State Beverage Requirements for Child Care Programs in Public Schools

Child care programs that operate in Connecticut public schools must meet additional state requirements for the milk component, as required by the state beverage (C.G.S. Section 10-221q). Milk and milk substitutes available for sale to students anywhere on school premises in public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements. These requirements apply to all types of fluid milk and fluid milk substitutes available for sale to students in public schools, including reimbursable meals and snacks, and a la carte sales (beverages available for sale separately from reimbursable meals and snacks).

- Milk cannot exceed 4 grams of sugars per ounce.
- Milk substitutes cannot exceed 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat.

Commercial products that meet the federal and state requirements for milk and nondairy milk substitutes are included in the approved product lists on the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage (refer to List 16: Milk and List 17: Dairy Alternative Beverages). For more information on the state beverage statute, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Beverages for Connecticut Public Schools*, and visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

Crediting Milk in Smoothies

Milk that meets the applicable requirements for each age group credits as the milk component when served in smoothies (refer to "Allowable Types of Milk" in this section). For smoothies only, the minimum creditable amount of milk is ¼ cup. If a smoothie contains less than the required meal pattern serving of milk, the CACFP menu must include the additional amount of milk required to provide the full milk component for each age group. For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to "Crediting Fruit in Smoothies" in section 5, "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in section 4 and "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in section 3.

Substituting Yogurt for Milk in Adult Day Care Centers

The CACFP adult meal patterns allow menu planners to substitute yogurt for the milk component at one meal per day (breakfast, lunch, or supper). Milk is optional at supper.

A ¾-cup serving of yogurt (6 ounces weight) credits as 8 fluid ounces of milk. Yogurt substituted for milk cannot exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce (refer to "Limit for added sugars in yogurt" in section 3).

Yogurt cannot credit as both the milk component and MMA component in the same meal. However, adult day care centers may serve yogurt in place of fluid milk at one meal, and as the MMA component in another meal on the same day. The yogurt restriction applies to the served meals, not what the participant selects or consumes.

Milk in Prepared Foods Does Not Credit

Only fluid milk meets the USDA's definition for milk and the FDA's standard of identity for milk. The CACFP meal patterns require fluid milk as a beverage.

Milk does not credit when cooked in cereals, puddings, cream sauces, or other foods. For example, milk does not credit when used to make quiche or macaroni and cheese. Foods made from milk (such as cheese, yogurt, and ice cream) do not credit as the milk component. For information on crediting cheese and yogurt as MMA, refer to section 3.

Reconstituted Dry Milk Does Not Credit

Section 7 CFR 226.20(a)(1) of the USDA regulations for the CACFP meal patterns require fluid milk as a beverage. Reconstituted milk does not meet the USDA's definition for milk or the FDA's standard of identity for milk and is not allowed in reimbursable meals and snacks. This includes reconstituted milk made by a CACFP facility from dry milk powder and commercial products made using reconstituted milk powder. An example of an ingredients statement for a commercial product made using reconstituted milk powder is "low fat milk (water, nonfat milk powder, whole milk powder)."

Reconstituted dry milk credits only under emergency conditions with state agency approval. Section 7 CFR 210.10(d)(3)(ii) of the CACFP regulations specifies that when an institution or facility is unable to obtain a supply of milk on a continuing basis, the state agency may approve the service of meals without fluid milk if the CACFP facility uses an equivalent amount of canned, whole dry or fat-free dry milk in the preparation of the meals.

In addition, milk made from reconstituted milk powder does not meet the state beverage requirements for fluid milk under C.G.S. Section 10-221q (refer to "Additional State Requirements for Milk and Milk Substitutes in Public Schools" in this section). Products made using reconstituted milk powder cannot be sold a la carte in Connecticut public schools.

Keeping Milk Cold

Implementing procedures to keep milk cold is important for food safety and helps make milk more appealing to children. Milk must be kept at 40°F or below but tastes best at 35°F. CACFP facilities should develop procedures to maintain milk at 35°F during all points of the meal service (receiving, storing, and serving). CACFP facilities may use the U.S. Dairy's Milk Quality Checklist to evaluate current practices and implement procedures for keeping milk cold.

Noncreditable Foods in the Milk Component

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the milk component include:

- **for age 1**, unflavored or flavored reduced fat milk, low-fat milk, and fat-free milk (refer to "Allowable Types of Milk" in this section);
- **for ages 2-5**, flavored milk, refer to "Allowable Types of Milk" in this section);
- **for children and adult participants without disabilities**, nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, e.g., almond milk, cashew milk, rice milk, some brands of soy milk, and most brands of oat milk (refer to "Allowable Milk Substitutions for Non-disability Reasons" in this section);
- **for child care programs operating in public schools**, milk and nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the state beverage requirements of Connecticut General Statute Section 10-221q (refer to "Additional State Requirements for Milk and Milk Substitutes in Public Schools" in this section);
- milk reconstituted from dry milk powder (refer to "Reconstituted Dry Milk Does Not Credit" in this section);
- milk that is cooked or baked in prepared foods, e.g., cereals, puddings, cream sauces, and macaroni and cheese (refer to "Milk in Prepared Foods Does Not Credit" in this section);
- foods made from milk, e.g., cheese, yogurt, and ice cream ;
- nutrition supplement beverages, such as Abbott's Pediasure; and
- powdered milk beverages, such as Nestle's NIDO.

This list is not all-inclusive. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in section 1 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Resources for Crediting Milk

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting the milk component in the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack.

- Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons for Adult Participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_cacfp_adults.pdf

- Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_cacfp.pdf

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns Module 10: Milk Component ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module10

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

- Crediting Fluid Milk in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cn/crediting-tipsheets/milk

- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

- Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/determining_allowable_nondairy_milk_substitute_cacfp.pdf

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

- Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/identify_allowable_nondairy_milk_substitutes_cacfp.pdf

- Milk 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/milk

- Milk Substitutes (CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/milk-substitutes

- Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/milk

- USDA Memo CACFP 01-2025: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Questions and Answers https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-requirements-fluid-milk-qas

- 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

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. Training on the milk component is available in Module 5: Milk Component of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.*

3 — Meats/Meat Alternates Component

The meats/meat alternates (MMA) component consists of meats (like cooked lean meat, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, which provide a similar protein content to meat. Examples of meat alternates include alternate protein products (APPs), cheese, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, nuts and seeds and their butters, yogurt, soy yogurt, tofu, tempeh, and surimi.

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.

Required MMA Servings

The required servings of MMA in the CACFP meal patterns are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq). These servings refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients.

Most MMA (such as cooked lean meat, poultry, and fish, cheese, APPs, tempeh, and surimi) credit based on weight. Nut and seed butters and beans, peas, and lentils credit based on volume (cups). Yogurt and tofu credit based on either weight or volume. Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the number of servings provided by a specific quantity of meat or meat alternate as purchased (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

The MMA component is not required at breakfast. A serving of the MMA component is required at lunch and supper. A serving of MMA may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

The table below summarizes the required servings of the MMA component for each age group and meal.

Table 3-1. Required meal pattern servings for the MMA component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)	Adults
Breakfast	None	None	None	None	None
Lunch and supper	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Snack (may be one of the two required meal components)	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

MMA Substitutions for Breakfast Menus

The breakfast meal pattern does not require the MMA component, but menu planners may substitute MMA for the entire grains component up to three times per week. A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component. Some examples of 1 oz eq of MMA are 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 ounce of cheese, half of a large egg, and ½ cup of yogurt.

This provision applies regardless of the number of days in the week. For example, the menu planner could choose to substitute the MMA component for the entire grains component three times during a three-day week or three times during a five-day week. For more information, refer to the USDA's resource, *Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Minimum Creditable Amount for MMA

The minimum creditable amount of MMA is ¼ oz eq. MMA offered in amounts less than ¼ oz eq do not count toward the required meal pattern servings (refer to "Minimum Creditable Amounts" in section 1).

When crediting MMA toward the meal pattern requirements, menu planners must round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq. For example, a standardized recipe or commercial product that contains 1.9 ounces of cooked chicken per serving credits as 1.75 oz eq of the MMA component.

Amounts for 1 Oz Eq

The amounts in the MMA component refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. The serving must contain the appropriate edible portion of MMA, excluding any other ingredients. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, tuna salad must contain 1 ounce of tuna fish before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, celery, and seasonings.

A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- 1 ounce of natural cheese, e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss or processed cheese, e.g., American;
- ¼ cup of cottage cheese;
- 2 ounces of cheese food/spread or cheese substitute;
- ¼ cup of cooked beans, peas, and lentils, e.g., kidney beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt (unflavored or flavored);
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients;
- 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) of tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein; and
- 1 ounce of alternate protein product (APP) that meets the USDA's APP requirements.

Menu planners should review the USDA's FBG to determine the specific yield and crediting information for foods in the MMA component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

MMA versus Protein

The USDA meal patterns require a specific amount of the MMA component, not a specific amount of protein. The terms "protein" and "meats/meat alternates" are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. "Meats/meat alternates" refers to the meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. "Protein" refers to one of the key nutrients found in meats and meat alternates.

Except for commercial tofu and tofu products, protein content is not an indicator that a commercial product credits as the MMA component because the grams of protein listed on the product's Nutrition Facts label do not correspond to the oz eq of the MMA component contained in the product. A serving of meat or meat alternate contains other components in addition to protein, such as water, fat, vitamins, and minerals. Protein is also found in varying amounts in other ingredients (such as cereals, grains, and many vegetables) that may be part of a commercial meat or meat alternate product.

> Menu planners cannot use the Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement to determine the oz eq of MMA in a commercial product. The only exception is commercial tofu and tofu products, which must contain at least 5 grams of protein in a 2.2-ounce serving by weight (refer to "Crediting Commercial Tofu and Tofu Products" in this section).

All commercial processed products require a CN label or PFS to document the oz eq of MMA per serving. For more information, refer to "Crediting MMA in Commercial Products" in this section.

Crediting Documentation for Commercial Processed Products

CACFP facilities must obtain crediting documentation for all commercial processed MMA products such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and cheese ravioli. This documentation must state the amount of the MMA component per serving. For example, to credit a commercially prepared cheese pizza as 2 oz eq of the MMA component, the product's CN label or PFS must indicate that the serving contains 2 ounces of cheese. For more information, refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1 and the CSDE's resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Main Dish Requirement for Lunch and Supper

The daily MMA component at lunch and supper must be served in the main dish, or in the main dish and one other food item. The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. For example, a lunch or supper menu for ages 3-5 could provide the required 1½ oz eq of the MMA component from:

- a sandwich containing 1½ ounces of tuna (1½ oz eq of MMA); or
- a sandwich containing 1 ounce of tuna (1 oz eq of MMA) served with a ½ ounce of cheese (½ oz eq of MMA).

CACFP facilities cannot serve the MMA component for lunch or supper in more than two food items.

Requirement for recognizable main dish

MMA foods that are not a recognizable main dish do not credit in CACFP menus unless the food also contains at least ¼ oz eq of another recognizable (visible) MMA. For example, CACFP facilities cannot credit peanut butter in a muffin or smoothie, pureed beans in spice cake, or blended soft tofu in soup because the MMA is not recognizable. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP menus offer MMA in a form that is recognizable to children.

The USDA allows two exceptions to the requirement for a recognizable main dish.

- Yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies credits as the MMA component (refer to "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in this section).

- Pasta made with 100 percent bean, pea, or lentil flours may credit as the MMA component if the menu also includes an additional MMA, such as tofu, cheese, or meat (refer to "Crediting Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in this section).

For more information, refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1.

Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)

APPs are food ingredients that may be used alone or in combination with meat, poultry, or seafood. They are processed from soy or other vegetable protein sources and may be dehydrated granules, particles, or flakes. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs may be used in the dry (nonhydrated), partially hydrated, or fully hydrated form.

APPs are generally used as part of a formed meat patty or in a vegetarian patty resembling a meat product. Examples of foods that might contain added APPs include beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos, and tuna salad.

APPs credit as meat alternates. A 1-ounce serving of a creditable APP credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The total MMA contribution cannot exceed the product's weight.

Criteria for APPs

APPs must meet the USDA's requirements specified in appendix A of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). These regulations specify that APPs may credit for part or all of the MMA requirement if they meet the three criteria below.

1. The APP must be processed so that some portion of the non-protein constituents of the food is removed. This refers to the manufacturing process for APP. APPs must be safe and suitable edible products produced from plant or animal sources.

2. The biological quality of the protein in the APP must be at least 80 percent of casein (milk protein), determined by performing a Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS). The PDCAAS is a method of evaluating protein quality.

3. The APP contains at least 18 percent protein by weight when fully hydrated or formulated. "When hydrated or formulated" refers to a dry APP and the amount of water, fat, oil, colors, flavors, or any other substances that have been added.

Menu planners cannot determine if commercial APP products meet these criteria by reading the product's label. The labeling laws of the USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) require manufacturers to list product ingredients, but percentage labeling is voluntary. For example, a product may list whey protein concentrate and hydrolyzed soy protein in the ingredients but will not indicate the percentage of these protein ingredients by weight.

Required documentation for APPs

The FBG does not contain yield information for APPs. CACFP facilities must obtain documentation from the manufacturer that the product meets the USDA APP criteria. APPs do not credit without appropriate documentation.

CN-labeled APP products will indicate the appropriate crediting information. Products that are CN labeled require a PFS from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead to indicate that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements. The USDA provides APP sample documentation.

The manufacturer's documentation should include information on the percent protein contained in the dry alternate protein product and in the prepared product. For an APP product mix, manufacturers should provide information on the amount by weight of dry APP in the package, hydration instructions, and instructions on how to combine the mix with meat or other meat alternates.

> If the PFS for a commercial lists APP ingredients that are being credited as the MMA component, the manufacturer must provide supporting documentation to indicate that these APP ingredients meet the USDA's APP requirements. APP ingredients without this supporting documentation do not credit.

The USDA's Alternate Protein Products webpage provides additional guidance on documenting the APP requirements. For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1. For more information on crediting APPs, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as MMA

Beans, peas, and lentils are pulses, which are a type of legumes, i.e., plants that include pods. Pulses are the dried edible seeds of legumes. Examples include black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), edamame (soybeans), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soybeans, split peas, and white beans.

Menu planners must follow the crediting guidance below.

- Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. A ¼-cup serving credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component or ¼ cup of the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils a subgroup).

- Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as the MMA component or the vegetables component in different meals and snacks. For example, refried beans may credit as the MMA component at one lunch and as the vegetables component at another lunch.

- If a meal or snack includes two servings of beans, peas, or lentils, the menu planner may choose to credit one serving as the MMA component and one serving as the vegetables component. For example, ¼ cup of garbanzo beans in a salad may credit as ¼ cup of the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils a subgroup) and ½ cup of kidney beans in chili may credit as 2 oz eq of the MMA component.

Menu planners must determine in advance how to credit beans, peas, and lentils in meals and snacks.

Serving size for beans, peas, and lentils credited as MMA

Beans, peas, and lentils credit based on volume. A ¼-cup serving (4 tablespoons) of beans, peas, or lentils credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is 1 tablespoon (¼ oz eq).

The meal pattern serving size refers to the amount of cooked beans, peas, or lentils excluding other ingredients, such as sauce and pork fat in baked beans. For example, to credit baked beans as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, the serving must contain ¼ cup of beans, not including the sauce and pork fat.

The table below shows the oz eq contribution for different amounts of cooked beans, peas, and lentils.

Table 3-1. MMA contribution of cooked beans, peas, and lentils

Serving size	MMA contribution
1 tablespoon	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
2 tablespoons (⅛ cup)	½ oz eq
3 tablespoons	¾ oz eq
4 tablespoons (¼ cup)	1 oz eq
5 tablespoons	1¼ oz eq
6 tablespoons (⅜ cup)	1½ oz eq
7 tablespoons	1¾ oz eq
8 tablespoons (½ cup)	2 oz eq

For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables" in section 4.

Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as MMA in recipes

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file (preferably standardized recipes) that document the oz eq of MMA per serving for all foods prepared from scratch that contain beans, peas, or lentils as an ingredient (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1). Some examples include lentil soup, bean burritos, hummus, and chili. These foods credit based on the cups of cooked beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe's serving. The serving must provide at least 1 tablespoon (¼ oz eq) of beans, peas, or lentils to credit toward the MMA component.

The menu planner must determine the oz eq of MMA in the recipe by dividing the cups of cooked beans, peas, and lentils in one serving of the recipe by 0.25, then rounding down to the nearest ¼ oz eq. For guidance on how to calculate the contribution of beans, peas, and lentils in a standardized recipe, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils as MMA

Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils (such as roasted soybeans or roasted chickpeas) credit based on weight (ounces). A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried beans, beans, or lentils credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

For information on crediting roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils as the vegetables component, refer to "Crediting Roasted or Dried Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables" in section 4.

> Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention for MMA with Young Children" in this section.

Resources for beans, peas, and lentils

The recipes and resources below assist CACFP facilities with incorporating beans, peas, and lentils into CACFP menus.

- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/cnrb/
- 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
- Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-child-care-centers

For additional resources, refer to "Beans, Peas, and Lentils" in the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage

Crediting Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flour Pasta Products as MMA

Pasta products made of 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flours (such as chickpea flour or lentil flour) credit as MMA if they are offered with an additional MMA, such as tofu, cheese, or meat. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP menus offer MMA in a form that is recognizable to participants (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1).

The table below shows the oz eq contribution for different amounts of bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta products. A ¼-cup cooked serving credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Table 3-2. MMA contribution of cooked 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta products

Serving size	MMA contribution
1 tablespoon	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
⅛ cup	½ oz eq
¼ cup	1 oz eq
⅜ cup	1½ oz eq
½ cup	2 oz eq

Manufacturers and CACFP facilities may credit bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta using the bean flour yield information in the Appendix C of the FBG, or with appropriate documentation on the manufacturer's PFS. For more information, refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1

Pasta made of 100 percent beans, peas, or lentils may also credit as the vegetables component but cannot credit as both the vegetables component and MMA component in the same meal or snack (refer to "Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flours" in section 4).

The requirements for crediting vegetable flour pasta products are summarized in USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: *Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Crediting Cheeses

Cheeses credit as meat alternates. The USDA recommends choosing natural cheeses.

Natural cheeses

Natural cheeses are produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, Muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheeses also include pasteurized blended cheeses made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheeses.

Natural cheeses credit based on weight. A 1-ounce serving credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Processed cheeses

Processed cheeses are made by blending natural cheeses with other ingredients such as emulsifiers, preservatives, colorings, and flavorings. Examples include American cheese, pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, and pasteurized process cheese products.

Processed cheeses credit based on weight. A 1-ounce serving credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Cheese substitutes

Cheese substitutes include reduced fat, low fat, nonfat, and lite versions of cheese substitute, cheese food substitute, and cheese spread substitute. These foods must meet the FDA's standard of identity for substitute foods and must be labeled as "cheese substitute," "cheese food substitute," or "cheese spread substitute." The FDA's standard of identity requires that a cheese substitute is not nutritionally inferior to the standardized cheese for which it is substituting.

Cheese substitutes require 2 ounces to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Menu items that contain cheese

CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate crediting documentation for menu items that contain cheese as an ingredient, such as pizza, lasagna, and macaroni and cheese. CACFP facilities must document the oz eq of cheese per serving with a PFS or CN label for commercial products and a recipe for foods made from scratch (preferably a standardized recipe). This documentation must be based on the food yields in the FBG. For more information, refer to

"Required Crediting Documentation" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1.

Summary of required amounts of cheese for 1 oz eq

The table below summarizes the required quantity for different types of cheeses to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Table 3-3. MMA contribution of cheeses

Type of cheese	1 oz eq of MMA =
Natural cheese, e.g., cheddar and Swiss	1 ounce
Grated cheese, e.g., Parmesan or Romano	1 ounce (⅜ cup)
Processed cheese, e.g., American	1 ounce
Cottage or ricotta cheese	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Process cheese food	2 ounces
Process cheese spread	2 ounces
Process cheese substitute, cheese food substitute, or process cheese spread substitute	2 ounces

Noncreditable cheeses

Imitation cheese and cheese products do not credit.

Choking prevention with cheese for young children

Large chunks of cheese (such as cheese cubes or string cheese) may be a choking hazard for young children. Grate or slice cheeses thinly to reduce the risk of choking. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention for MMA for Young Children" in this section.

Crediting Deli Meats, Hot Dogs, and Sausages

Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna), hot dogs, and sausages are commercial processed products. Many brands contain added liquids (such as water or broth), binders, and extenders. This means that a 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

The serving that provides 1 oz eq depends on the product's ingredients and can vary greatly between different brands and types of products. CACFP facilities must review the crediting documentation for all commercial processed products to ensure that the crediting information is correct (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1).

Hotdogs and other tube-shaped meats may be a choking hazard for young children. Cut hot dogs into short strips instead of round pieces. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer hot dogs in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention for MMA for Young Children" in this section.

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). APPs are indicated with "(APP)" after the ingredient name. Products may contain APPs if they meet the USDA's APP requirements (refer to "Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)" in this section).

- 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

Crediting meat products with added liquids, binders, and extenders

Meat products with added liquids, binders, and extenders do not credit based on serving weight. CACFP facilities must credit these foods based on the percentage of meat in the product formula, as indicated by a CN label or PFS. Crediting depends on the amount of meat per serving, excluding added ingredients. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces.

The examples below show some commercial turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders.

- **Example 1**
  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.

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

These products require a PFS or CN label to document how they credit toward the MMA component.

CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS to document the oz eq of MMA per serving for all commercial meat products with added liquids, binders, and extenders. For more information, refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1 and the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting 100 percent meat products

Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids, binders, or extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis, i.e., the actual serving weight. For example, 1 ounce of sliced turkey that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Developing recipes for deli meats

Different brands and types of deli meats credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, CACFP facilities should develop 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 a specific weight of a specific brand. The USDA recommends using standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements.

To simplify portioning for food service staff and ensure that the serving provides the proper crediting amount, round up the weight of the deli meat in the recipe to the nearest ¼ ounce. For example, the 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 recipe should include the specific weight of each brand.

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

For information on standardized recipes, refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1.

Crediting Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products

Some examples of shelf-stable, dried, and semi-dried meat, poultry, and seafood products include jerky and summer sausage. The USDA indicates that these products are most useful in meals served off-site like field trips, but they may also credit in meals and snacks served on site

The FBG does not include crediting information for dried meat, poultry, or seafood products because industry production standards for these products vary widely. Dried meat, poultry, and

seafood products require a CN label or PFS to document the oz eq of the MMA component per serving.

Evaluating the PFS for dried meat products

Menu planners must evaluate the dried meat product's PFS to ensure that it complies with the USDA's crediting principles below.

1. The creditable meat, poultry, or seafood ingredient listed on the product's PFS must match or have a similar description as the ingredient listed in the product's ingredients statement.

    - **Example**
      Ingredients: Ground beef (not more than 30% fat), water, salt, less than 2% brown sugar, spices, monosodium glutamate, sugar, flavorings, sodium nitrate.

      The first ingredient is "Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)." The product's PFS must match this information by listing the crediting information for "Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)."

2. The creditable meat, poultry, or seafood ingredient listed on the product's PFS must have a similar description to a food item in the FBG. For the example above, "Ground beef (not more than 30% fat" matches the description for "Beef, Ground, fresh or frozen, Market Style, no more than 30% fat (Like IMPS #136), cooked lean meat" of the FBG.

Section 1 - Meats/Meat Alternates

1. Food As Purchased (AP)	2. Purchase Unit	3. Servings per Purchase Unit, Edible Portion (EP)	4. Serving Size per Meal Contribution	5. Purchase Units for 100 Servings	6. Additional Information
BEEF, GROUND, fresh or frozen					
Beef, Ground, fresh or frozen Market Style[8,9], no more than 30% fat, (Like IMPS #136)	Pound	11.20	1 oz cooked lean meat	9.00	1 lb AP = 0.70 lb cooked, drained, lean meat
	Pound	7.46	1-1/2 oz cooked lean meat	13.50	1 lb AP = 0.70 lb cooked, drained, lean meat
Beef, Ground, fresh or frozen[9,10] no more than 26% fat, (Like IMPS #136)	Pound	11.50	1 oz cooked lean meat	8.70	1 lb AP = 0.72 lb cooked, drained, lean meat
	Pound	7.68	1-1/2 oz cooked lean meat	13.10	1 lb AP = 0.72 lb cooked, drained, lean meat

3. The creditable amount cannot exceed the finished weight of the product, i.e., the cooked weight ready for serving. For example, a 1-ounce serving of beef jerky cannot credit for more than 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

CACFP facilities must ensure that all dried meat products comply with these crediting requirements.

Crediting dried meat products with ground pork and beef ingredients

Ground pork and beef ingredients must include the percent fat because the fat content has a direct correlation to the cooking yield. To credit in reimbursable meals and snacks, the fat content of ground beef or ground pork in dried meat products cannot exceed 30 percent. Products that do not indicate the fat percentage do not credit.

- **Example**
  Ingredients: Pork, cane sugar, garlic (garlic, citric acid, ascorbic acid), contains 2% or less of: Spanish smoked paprika (paprika, rosemary extract), sea salt, natural flavors, sherry wine vinegar, red pepper chili flakes, celery powder, in collagen casing.

  This dried pork stick product does not credit as the MMA component because the creditable ingredient (pork) does not list the fat percentage and does not match a description in the FBG.

The requirements for crediting dried meat are summarized in 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*. For additional guidance on crediting dried meat products, refer to the USDA's webinar, *Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products*.

Crediting Eggs

Only whole eggs are creditable. Liquid egg substitutes are not whole eggs and do not credit. Egg whites do not credit when they are served without the yolks.

One large egg credits as 2 oz eq of the MMA component. Half of a large egg credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Menu items that contain eggs

CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate crediting documentation for menu items that contain eggs as an ingredient, such as quiche, frittatas, breakfast sandwiches, pre-cooked egg patties, and breakfast burritos made with scrambled eggs. Commercial products require a CN label or a PFS and menu items made from scratch require a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe). This documentation must be based on the food yields in the FBG. For more information, refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1.

Crediting Enriched Macaroni Products with Fortified Protein

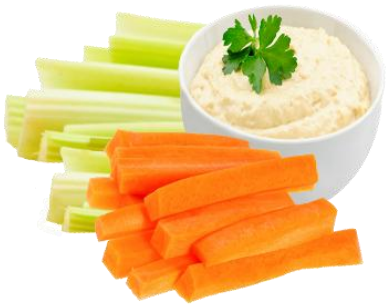
Enriched macaroni products with fortified protein may credit as part of the MMA component or part of the grains component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. A 1-ounce serving (28.35 grams) of dry product may meet up to half of the MMA requirement when served with 1 ounce of cooked meat, poultry, fish, or cheese. The serving sizes of the cooked combination may be adjusted for various age groups.

To be allowable, the product label must state: "One ounce (28.35 grams) dry weight of this product meets one-half of the meat or meat alternate requirements of lunch or supper of the USDA child nutrition programs when served in combination with 1 or more ounces (28.35 grams) of cooked meat, poultry, fish, or cheese."

Crediting Hummus and Bean Dips as MMA

Hummus and bean dips may credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup), but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. To credit as the MMA component, the serving must contain at least ¼ oz eq of MMA from the combined amount of chickpeas (or other beans, peas, and lentils) and tahini (sesame paste) or other nut/seed butters.

- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** A ¼-cup serving of beans, peas, or lentils credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is 1 tablespoon (¼ oz eq).
- **Tahini or other ground nut/seed butters:** Two tablespoons of tahini or other ground nut/seed butters credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is ½ tablespoon (¼ oz eq).



CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation for hummus and bean dips that indicates the amount per serving of beans, peas, and lentils, and tahini or other ground nut/seed butters, based on the yields in the FBG. Commercial products require a CN label or a PFS and menu items made from scratch must have a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe). For more information, refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1.

For information on crediting hummus as the vegetables component, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables" in section 4.

> The USDA defines bean dip is a spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness.

Crediting MMA in Combination Entrees

Combination entrees contain the MMA component and at least one other meal component. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains component) and cheese (MMA component).

CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation for these foods. Commercial combination entrees require a CN label or a PFS stating the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 2). Combination entrees made from scratch must have a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the amount of the MMA component per serving based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Crediting MMA in Commercial Products

Commercial processed MMA products (such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and cheese ravioli) require documentation stating the amount of the MMA component per serving. For example, to credit a commercial breaded chicken patty as 2 oz eq of the MMA component, the product's CN label or PFS must state that one serving of the product contains 2 ounces of cooked chicken.

> CACFP facilities must have a CN label or manufacturer's PFS to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial MMA products used in reimbursable meals and snacks (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1). Commercial processed products without this documentation do not credit.

The CSDE's resource, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, summarizes the requirements for crediting commercial MMA in the CACFP.

Crediting Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and seeds may credit for the full MMA component at any meal or snack. A 1-ounce serving of nuts or seeds credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, soy nuts, and sunflower seeds.

Roasted or dried soybeans also credit as MMA. However, fresh soybeans (edamame) are legumes and credit only as the vegetables component.

For more information, refer to the crediting guidance below and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting Nut/Seed Butters

Examples of creditable nut/seed butters include almond butter, cashew nut butter, peanut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, and sunflower seed butter. Reduced-fat peanut butter credits if it meets the FDA's standard of identity for peanut butter (21 CFR 164.150), which requires that products contain at least 90 percent peanuts.

Serving size based on volume not weight

The serving size for nut/seed butters is based on volume (tablespoons), not weight (ounces). Two tablespoons (⅛ cup) of nut/seed butter credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This crediting is the same for all types of nut/seed butters, such as smooth, crunchy, and natural.

The required volume measure (tablespoons) for nut/seed butters is not the same as weight (ounces). One ounce does not provide 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The FBG indicates that 1.1 ounces (two tablespoons) of nut/seed butter credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

The table below shows the oz eq contribution for different amounts of nut/seed butters. The scoop (disher) size equivalents are from the Institute of Child Nutrition's *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster*. The weight equivalents are from the FBG.

Table 3-4. MMA contribution of nut/seed butters

Serving size	Scoop (disher) size	Meal pattern contribution	Weight equivalent
½ tablespoon (1½ teaspoons)	Closest is No. 100 (2 teaspoons)	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)	0.275 ounces
1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons)	Closest is No. 60 (3¼ teaspoons)	½ oz eq	0.55 ounces
1½ tablespoons	Closest is No. 40 (1⅔ tablespoons)	¾ oz eq	0.825 ounces
2 tablespoons (⅛ cup)	No. 30 (2 tablespoons)	1 oz eq	1.1 ounces
3 tablespoons	Closest is No. 20 (3⅓ tablespoons)	1½ oz eq	1.65 ounces
4 tablespoons (¼ cup)	No. 16 (¼ cup)	2 oz eq	1.2 ounces

Serving size considerations for nut/seed butters

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the required serving for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of nut/seed butter in one menu item, such as a peanut butter sandwich. For example, the lunch/supper meal pattern for ages 6-12, ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters, and adult day care centers requires 2 oz eq of the MMA component. This equals 4 tablespoons (¼ cup) of peanut butter, which is a large amount for two slices of bread.

The CSDE recommends providing a smaller portion of peanut butter and supplementing it with another MMA to provide the full serving. For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could provide 2 oz eq of MMA from a sandwich containing 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (1 oz eq) served with ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq). Another option is providing the required 4 tablespoons of peanut butter in three half-sandwiches that each contain 4 teaspoons of peanut butter.

Nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters in commercial products

CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS for commercial processed products that contain nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters. Some examples include pre-made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and trail mixes with nuts and dried fruits.

This documentation must state the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 2). For example, to credit a commercial pre-made peanut butter sandwich as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, the product's CN label or PFS must state that one serving contains 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.

Nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters that are ingredients in commercial products must be visible and easily recognizable as meat substitutes to credit in reimbursable meals (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1). Commercial products that are not easily recognizable as meat substitutes do not credit. Some examples include peanut butter blended into other foods such as muffins and smoothies, peanut butter in granola bars, and chopped nuts in muffins.

Crediting recipes with nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file (preferably standardized recipes) that document the oz eq of nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters per serving for all foods prepared from scratch (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1). This documentation must be based on the food yields in the FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Noncreditable nuts and seeds

Acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts do not credit. For guidance on crediting coconut as the fruits component, refer to "Crediting Coconut" in section 5.

Choking prevention with nuts and seeds for young children

Nuts, seeds, chunky peanut butter, and chunks or spoonfuls of nut or seed butters may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer these foods in CACFP menus and modify foods and menus as appropriate. Preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking include grinding or finely chopping peanuts, nuts, and seeds before adding to prepared foods, and using only creamy nut or seed butters and spreading them thinly on other foods such as toast and crackers.

Crediting Surimi Seafood

Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). Surimi seafood is available in many forms and shapes, including chunks, shredded, and flaked. Surimi seafood can be incorporated into a variety of menu items, such as seafood salads, sushi-style rolls, sandwiches, tacos, and ramen.

The amount of fish in surimi varies depending on the manufacturer and product. Surimi seafood may contain as little as one-third seafood ingredient and may include other creditable food ingredients. A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

The requirements for crediting surimi are summarized in USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019, and SFSP 10-2019: *Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs*. The USDA's webinar, *Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi*, provides additional guidance on crediting surimi.

Oz eq contribution per serving

The table below shows the oz eq contribution for different amounts of surimi seafood. The crediting ratio for surimi seafood differs based on portion size due to the USDA rounding rules that require rounding down to the nearest 0.25 oz eq (refer to "Rounding requirements for crediting foods" in section 1).

Table 3-5. MMA contribution of surimi seafood

Serving size	MMA contribution
1 ounce	¼ oz eq
2 ounces	½ oz eq
3 ounces	1 oz eq
4.4 ounces	1½ oz eq
6 ounces	2 oz eq

To credit surimi differently from the amounts above, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS that documents how the crediting is determined. For example, a manufacturer's PFS might document that 1 ounce of a surimi product credits as ½ oz eq of the MMA component.

Crediting recipes with surimi

For all menu items made from scratch, CACFP facilities must maintain recipes (preferably standardized recipes) that document the MMA contribution of surimi per serving based on the crediting ratio of 3 ounces of surimi per oz eq (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1).

Crediting Tempeh

Tempeh is a highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. Tempeh may be used as a meat alternate in a variety of recipes, including stir-fries, sandwiches, and salads. The CACFP facility's standardized recipe must document the ounces of tempeh per serving.

The requirements for crediting tempeh are summarized in USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019, and SFSP 11-2019: *Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs*. For additional guidance on crediting tempeh, refer to the USDA's webinar, *Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi*.

Oz eq contribution per serving

A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS to document crediting (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 2).

Varieties of tempeh that include other creditable foods as ingredients (such as brown rice, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, flax seed, and vegetables) may also credit toward any other applicable meal components, such as MMA, grains, and vegetables. These types of tempeh product must provide the minimum creditable quantities (refer to "Minimum Creditable Amounts" in section 1). CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS to document how much tempeh and other creditable foods these products contain.

Crediting recipes with tempeh

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file (preferably standardized recipes) that document the oz eq of MMA per serving for all foods prepared from scratch that contain tempeh as an ingredient (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1). This documentation must be based on the food yields in the FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products

Tofu does not have an FDA standard of identity. Tofu must meet the three requirements below to credit as a meat alternate.

1. **Must be commercially prepared products that meet USDA's definition:** Tofu must be commercially prepared and meet the following definition in 7 CFR 210.2 and 7 CFR 226.2: "a soybean-derived food, made by a process in which soybeans are soaked, ground, mixed with water, heated, filtered, coagulated, and formed into cakes. Basic ingredients are whole soybeans, one or more food-grade coagulants (typically a salt or an acid), and water."

2. **Must be easily recognizable:** The tofu or tofu product must be easily recognizable as a meat substitute (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1). Tofu is widely recognized as a meat substitute and comes in a variety of textures such as silken, soft, firm, and extra firm. Some examples of recognizable tofu and tofu products include firm or extra firm tofu in stir-fries, omelets, miso soup, and minced in lasagna as a substitute for ricotta cheese; and commercial meat substitute products like tofu burgers and tofu sausage.

   Tofu products that are not easily recognizable as meat substitutes do not credit. Some examples include tofu blended into other foods (like smoothies, soup, and sauces), tofu baked in desserts, and tofu that does not represent a meat substitute, such as tofu noodles.

3. **Must meet protein requirement:** The tofu ingredient must contain at least 5 grams of protein in a 2.2-ounce serving by weight (¼ cup volume equivalent) to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. Menu planners must use the Nutrition Facts panel or PFS to determine if commercial tofu meets this protein requirement. Table 3-6 shows the oz eq contribution for different amounts of tofu and the minimum grams of protein required to credit in reimbursable meals and snacks

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that commercial tofu products comply with these requirements. For guidance on calculating the grams of protein per serving,

refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Table 3-6. MMA contribution of tofu

Serving size	MMA contribution	Minimum protein (grams) per serving
0.55 ounce (1 tablespoon)	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)	1.25 grams
1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	½ oz eq	2.5 grams
2.2 ounces (¼ cup)	1 oz eq	5 grams
3.3 ounces (⅜ cup)	1½ oz eq	7.5 grams
4.4 ounces (½ cup)	2 oz eq	10 grams

Crediting recipes with tofu

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file (preferably standardized recipes) that document the oz eq of MMA per serving for all foods prepared from scratch that contain tofu as an ingredient (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1). This documentation must be based on the food yields in the FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Crediting Yogurt

Commercial yogurt and soy yogurt must meet the added sugars limit to credit as a meat alternate in CACFP menus. Yogurt may contain added fruit, either blended or on the bottom, and may be unflavored or flavored, sweetened or unsweetened, and any fat content, e.g., whole fat, low fat, or nonfat. Yogurt must meet the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for yogurt (21 CFR 131.200).

Limit for added sugars in yogurt

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires that yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce). Products that exceed this limit do not credit.

CACFP facilities must have documentation on file to indicate that all yogurt and soy yogurt products served in CACFP menus comply with this limit. For guidance on how to determine if a product complies, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and the CSDE's *Worksheet for Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. For addition guidance, refer to "Resources for crediting yogurt" in this section.

> The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to choose yogurt without nonnutritive sweeteners (such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia) or sugar alcohols. These products are often labeled as "light" or "lite."

Serving size for yogurt

The required serving for yogurt is based on volume (cups) or weight (ounces) and is the same for all types, flavors, and fat contents. A ½-cup serving (volume) or 4 ounces (weight) credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup or 1 ounce. The table below shows the oz eq contribution for different amounts of yogurt.

Table 3-7. MMA contribution of yogurt

Serving size	MMA contribution
⅛ cup or 1 ounce	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
¼ cup or 2 ounces	½ oz eq
⅜ cup or 3 ounces	¾ oz eq
½ cup (4 ounces)	1 oz eq
¾ cup (6 ounces)	1½ oz eq
1 cup (8 ounces)	2 oz eq

Crediting yogurt in smoothies

Yogurt and soy yogurt that meet the limit for added sugars may credit as the MMA component when used as an ingredient in smoothies. A ½-cup serving of yogurt credits as 1 oz eq of MMA.

CACFP facilities must document the cups of yogurt per serving with a recipe (preferably a standardized recipes) for smoothies made from scratch, and a CN label or PFS for commercial products (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1). For example, to credit a smoothie as 1 oz eq of MMA, the CACFP facility's recipe or the commercial product's CN label or PFS must indicate that each serving contains ½ cup of yogurt.

> The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk and does not meet the milk component requirement of the CACFP meal patterns. **Note:** For the CACFP adult meals patterns only, menu planners may substitute yogurt for the milk component at one meal per day (refer to "Substituting Yogurt for Milk in Adult Day Care Centers" in the Milk section).

For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to "Crediting Fruit in Smoothies" in section 5, "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in section 4, and "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in section 2.

Noncreditable yogurt products

Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and frozen yogurt do not credit. The FDA's definition and standard of identity requires that yogurt must be "coagulated," not liquid. Frozen yogurt does not have an FDA standard of identity and does not credit. Yogurt-flavored products (such as yogurt bars and yogurt-covered fruit or nuts) do not meet the FDA's definition and standard of identity for yogurt. Homemade yogurt does not credit for food safety reasons.

Resources for crediting yogurt

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting yogurt in reimbursable meals and snacks.

- Choose Yogurt That Is Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/yogurts-lower-sugar
- Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt
- Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_yogurt_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
- USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, and SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meals Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-soy-yogurt-products-school-meals-cacfp
- 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
- Worksheet for Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/worksheet_credit_ yogurt_cacfp.pdf

Links to these resource are also available under "Yogurt" in the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Noncreditable Foods in the MMA Component

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the MMA component include:

- acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts;
- APPs that do not meet the USDA's regulatory requirements (refer to "Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)" in this section);
- bacon (pork);
- commercial canned soups, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice;
- cream cheese;
- drinkable yogurt;
- egg whites without the yolks;
- frozen yogurt;
- imitation cheese and cheese products;
- liquid egg substitutes;
- pork fat;
- products made with tofu that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes (refer to "Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products" in this section);
- sour cream;
- tofu that contains less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2-ounce serving by weight (refer to "Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products" in this section);
- tofu that is not easily recognized as a meat substitute (refer to "Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products" in this section); and
- Yogurt and soy yogurt that exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce (refer to "Crediting Yogurt and Soy Yogurt" in this section).

This list is not all-inclusive. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in section 1 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the MMA component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Avoiding Common Compliance Issues for the MMA Component

Some common compliance issues for the MMA component are indicated below.

- **Incorrect crediting of commercial processed foods:** CACFP facilities must have a CN label or PFS to determine the crediting information for commercial processed MMA foods that are not listed in the FBG, such as chicken nuggets and pizza. Commercial processed products without appropriate crediting documentation do not credit (refer to "Crediting MMA in Commercial Products" in this section).

- **Incorrect crediting of deli meats:** Commercial processed meat products like deli meats, hotdogs, and sausages do not credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis. Menu planner must credit these products using the weight specified in their CN label or PFS. For more information, refer to "Crediting Deli Meats, Hot Dogs, and Sausages" and "Crediting MMA in Commercial Products" in this section.

- **Incorrect crediting of peanut butter:** The required serving for nut/seed butters is based on volume not weight. A 1-ounce serving of nut/seed butter does not provide 1 oz eq of the MMA component. CACFP facilities must serve 2 tablespoons of nut/seed butter (1.1 ounces) to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA. For more information, refer to "Crediting Nut/Seed Butters" in this section.

- **Crediting noncreditable foods, e.g., bacon and cream cheese:** Bacon (pork) and cream cheese are high in fat and low in protein and do not credit. Some types of turkey bacon might credit depending on the product's CN label or PFS. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable MMA," "Crediting Deli Meats, Hot Dogs, and Sausages" and "Crediting MMA in Commercial Products" in this section.

CACFP facilities must plan the MMA component of CACFP menus to avoid these compliance issues.

Choking Prevention for MMA with Young Children

Some MMA may be a choking hazard for young children. Examples include:

- nuts and seeds, e.g., peanuts, almonds and sunflower or pumpkin seeds;
- chunks and spoonfuls of peanut butter or other nut/seed butters;
- tough meat or large chunks of meat;
- fish with bones; and
- large chunks of cheese, especially string cheese.

Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what MMA to offer in CACFP menus. Preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking include cutting tube-shaped foods like hot dogs or string cheese into short strips instead of round pieces; removing all bones from fish, chicken, and meat before cooking or serving; grinding up tough meats and poultry; chopping peanuts, nuts, and seeds finely, or grinding before adding to prepared foods; and spreading nut/seed butters thinly on other foods (such as toast and crackers).

Resources for Crediting MMA

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the MMA component in the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack. For additional crediting resources specific to different types of MMA, refer to the crediting topics throughout this section.

- 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

- Alternate Protein Products (USDA webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cnp/food-industry-toolkit/app

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

- 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 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 Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_deli_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 Nuts and Seeds in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_nuts_seeds_cacfp.pdf

- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): 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

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

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

- Grab and Go Lesson: Defining Tofu and How It Credits in the CACFP (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/wpfd_file/defining-tofu-and-how-it-credits-in-the-cacfp/

- 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

- Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products (USDA webinar): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/moving-forward-update-food-crediting-dried-meat-products

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-mma-template.pdf

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs: Completed Sample (USDA): https://fna-bwbufwdzbabpezgc.z01.azurefd.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-mma-sample.pdf

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

- Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/serving-mma-breakfast

- USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs and the CACFP: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-soy-yogurt-products-school-meals-cacfp

- 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

- USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019, and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs

- USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019, and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tempeh-child-nutrition-programs

- 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 53-2016 and CACFP 21-2016: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs and the CACFP: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-soy-yogurt-products-school-meals-cacfp

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. Training on the MMA component is available in Module 11: Meats/Meat Alternates Component of the CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

4 — Vegetables Component

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables; and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice.

The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of the vegetable subgroups recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These include dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

The USDA's CACFP best practices also recommend incorporating seasonal and locally produced foods into CACFP meals and snacks. For information on farm to school for young children, refer to the USDA's resources, Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings and Integrating Local Foods into Child Nutrition Programs, and visit the USDA's Farm to CACFP webpage and Procuring Local Foods webpage.

Required Vegetable Servings

The required servings of vegetables in the CACFP meal patterns are measured in cups. These servings refer to the edible portion after any applicable preparation techniques, such as peeling, trimming, and cooking.

All vegetables credit based on volume (cups) with the exceptions below.

- Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served (refer to "Crediting Raw Leafy Greens" in this section).
- Dried or dehydrated vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on the cups of vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume (refer to "Crediting Dried Vegetables" in this section).
- Tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume of tomatoes prior to pureeing (refer to "Crediting tomato paste and puree" in this section).

Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the number of servings provided by a specific quantity of vegetable as purchased (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Vegetables and fruits are one meal component at breakfast and may include a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. A serving of the vegetables component is required at lunch and supper. However, menu planners may choose to substitute vegetables for the fruits component

at any lunch or supper (refer to "Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper" in section 5). A serving of vegetables may be one of the two required meal components at snack.

Table 4-1 below summarizes the required servings of the vegetables component for each age group and meal.

Table 4-1. Required meal pattern servings for the vegetables component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)	Adults
Breakfast (vegetables, fruits, or both)	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Lunch and supper	⅛ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Snack (may be one of the two required meal components)	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	½ cup

Minimum Creditable Amount for Vegetables

The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. Vegetables offered in amounts less than ⅛ cup do not count toward the required meal pattern servings.

When crediting vegetables toward the meal pattern requirements, menu planners must round down to the nearest ⅛ cup. For example, a recipe or commercial product that contains 2½ tablespoons of vegetables per serving credits as ⅛ cup of the vegetables component.

Offering A Combination of Vegetables

CACFP facilities may choose to serve a combination of several vegetables to meet the minimum requirement if each serving contains at least ⅛ cup of vegetables, i.e., the minimum creditable amount. For example, a lunch or supper menu for ages 3-5 could meet the required ¼-cup serving of the vegetables component with ¼ cup of broccoli, or ⅛ cup of broccoli and ⅛ cup of carrots. The CACFP facility determines these menu planning decisions.

If a menu item contains less than the required meal pattern serving of the vegetables component, the menu planner must include additional vegetables to meet the full serving for each age group. For example, the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern requires ½ cup of the vegetables component for ages 6-12, ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters, and adult participants. If a menu item contains ¼ cup of vegetables, the menu planner must include another menu item with at least ¼ cup of vegetables to provide the full serving for these participants.

Crediting Canned Vegetables

Canned vegetables must be drained. A serving of canned vegetables 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 serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. The serving must contain ½ cup of vegetables before any added liquid.

Crediting Dried Vegetables

Dried or dehydrated vegetables like potato flakes and dried soup mix credit as the vegetables component based on their rehydrated volume. Dried vegetables used for seasonings (such as dried onion and dried parsley) do not credit.

The FBG lists yields for some dehydrated vegetables, such as pinto beans, refried beans, onions, bell peppers, potatoes, seaweed, and sweet potatoes. Dried vegetables not listed in the FBG require a PFS to determine crediting information.

The PFS must provide specific documentation on the cups of vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1). Menu planners should check the accuracy of the PFS prior to including foods with dehydrated vegetables in CACFP menus.

Determining rehydrated volume for dried vegetables

The rehydration volume of dried vegetables often varies among different brands and products. Menu planners must use the procedures below to determine and document the rehydrated volume of dehydrated vegetable products.

1. Rehydrate (add water or liquid to) a purchase unit of the dehydrated vegetable according to the manufacturer's directions. If the container does not include directions, request rehydration directions from the manufacturer.

2. Measure the rehydrated volume.

3. Measure the number of ¼-cup servings of rehydrated product that one purchase unit provides.

4. Keep records on file as verification. Records should include information on the size of the purchase unit, the number of ¼-cup servings of rehydrated product per purchase unit, the name of the manufacturer, and the manufacturer's directions for rehydrating the product.

Since product rehydration volumes often vary from brand to brand, CACFP facilities should use this procedure for each brand of dehydrated product. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Crediting Hominy as Vegetables

Hominy is a traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin.

Hominy is available dried and in a fully cooked canned form. Drained canned hominy or cooked whole hominy (from dried hominy) credits toward the vegetables component as the starchy vegetables subgroup based on the cups served. For example, ¼ cup of canned drained hominy credits as ¼ cup of starchy vegetables.

For information on crediting hominy as the grains component, refer to "Crediting Hominy as Grains" in section 6.

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables

Menu planners may credit beans, peas, and lentils as either the vegetables component or the MMA component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. CACFP facilities must determine in advance how to credit beans, peas, and lentils in meals and snacks. For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as the MMA component, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as MMA" in section 3.

Beans, peas, and lentils credit as the vegetables component based on the cups served. For example, ½ cup of kidney beans credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

> The serving refers to the amount of cooked beans, peas, or lentils, excluding other ingredients such as sauce and pork fat. For example, ½ cup of baked beans that contains ⅛ cup of sauce and pork fat credits as ⅜ cup of the vegetables component. For more information, refer to "Vegetables with Added Ingredients" in this section.

A menu item must provide at least ⅛ cup of beans, peas, or lentils to credit toward part of the vegetables component. For more information, refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in section 1 and "Required Servings for Vegetables" in this section. For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as the MMA component, refer to "Crediting Hummus and Bean Dips as MMA" in section 3.

Crediting roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables

Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils, such as chickpeas and soybeans, credit as the vegetables component based on the cups served. For example, ¼ cup of roasted chickpeas credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component.

The USDA recommends that menu planners use discretion when offering snack-type products (such as individually wrapped soy nuts) in reimbursable meals, due to their perception as snack foods. While these types of products credit in the CACFP, they may be better suited for meals served off site, such as bagged lunches for field trips. When offering these foods as either the MMA component or vegetables component, make sure that CACFP menus clearly identify how they contribute to reimbursable meals or snacks.

For information on crediting roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils as the MMA component, refer to "Crediting roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils as MMA" in section 3.

Crediting hummus and bean dips as vegetables

Beans, peas, and lentils in hummus and bean dips may credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. Crediting as the vegetables component is based on the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving. For example, hummus that contains ¼ cup of chickpeas per serving credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. The minimum creditable amount of chickpeas is ⅛ cup.

To credit hummus and bean dips as the vegetable component, CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation that indicates the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving, based on the yields in the FBG. Commercial products require a CN label or PFS (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 2). Hummus and bean dips made from scratch require a recipe (refer to "Crediting beans, peas, and lentils in recipes as vegetables" in this section).

For information on crediting hummus as the MMA component, refer to "Crediting Hummus and Bean Dips as MMA" in section 3.

Crediting beans, peas, and lentils in recipes as vegetables

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file (preferably standardized recipes) that document the cups of beans, peas, or lentils per serving for all foods prepared from scratch (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1). Some examples include lentil soup, bean burritos, hummus, and chili. The serving must provide at least ¼ cup of beans, peas, or lentils to credit toward the MMA component.

The menu planner must determine the crediting information for the vegetables component by dividing the total cups of beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe by the number of servings, then rounding down to the nearest ⅛ cup. For guidance on how to calculate the contribution of beans, peas, and lentils in a standardized recipe, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting documentation for commercial bean, pea, and lentil products

CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation for all commercial processed products that contain beans, peas, and lentils, such as black bean burritos and vegetarian chili. This documentation must state the amount of the MMA component per serving. For more information, refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1.

Crediting Mixed Vegetables at Lunch and Supper

Mixed vegetables credit based on the amount of each type of vegetable in the mixture. Some examples of mixed vegetables include carrots, peas, and corn; three-bean salad; and a California mix of broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots.

Known quantities of vegetables

A vegetable mixture may credit as two different servings of vegetables if the menu planner knows the quantities of the different vegetables and each vegetable is at least ⅛ cup. At lunch or supper, vegetable mixtures with two different servings may credit as the vegetables component and as a vegetable substitution for the fruits component.

- **Example:** A lunch/supper menu for ages 3-5 includes a vegetable mixture of ¼ cup of broccoli and ¼ cup of cauliflower. Since vegetables may substitute for the fruits component at any lunch or supper, the menu planner may choose to credit the broccoli as the full ¼-cup serving of vegetables component and use the cauliflower to replace the full ¼-cup serving of the fruits component.

For more information, refer to "Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper" in this section.

Unknown quantities of vegetables

If the menu planner does not know the quantities of the different vegetables, the vegetable mixture credits as one serving of vegetables and cannot credit as the fruit component. In this case, the lunch or supper menu would require either a serving of the fruits component or another serving of vegetables substituted for the fruits component.

Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flours

Pasta products made of 100 percent beans, peas, or lentils may credit as either the vegetables component or the MMA component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. For more information, refer to "Crediting Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in section 3.

Pasta products made of vegetable flours credit as the vegetables component if they meet the specific requirements in USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: *Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs*. These requirements are summarized below.

Crediting vegetable flours as vegetables

Pasta made of one or more 100 percent vegetable flours credits toward the vegetables component. These products credit the same as vegetables. For example, ½ cup of pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flour credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

The ingredients statements below show some examples of pasta products that contain 100 percent vegetable flour.

- Ingredients: Red lentil flour.
- Ingredients: Green lentils, cauliflower, parsnips.

Menu planners could choose to credit these products toward the vegetables component based on the cooked volume of the serving.

Crediting vegetable flours from one vegetable subgroup

Pasta products made of one or more vegetable flours from one vegetable subgroup may credit toward that vegetable subgroups. For example, ½ cup of pasta made of 100 percent red lentil flour credits as ½ cup of the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup.

Pasta made of 100 percent beans, peas, and lentils may also credit as the MMA component but cannot credit as the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup and the MMA component in the same meal or snack. For more information, refer to "Crediting Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in section 3.

Crediting vegetable flours with other non-vegetable ingredients

Pasta products made of vegetable flours with other non-vegetable ingredients may credit as the vegetables component (or the MMA component for 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta products) with a PFS that details the actual volume of vegetable flour per serving. This crediting does not apply to grain-based pasta products that contain small amounts of vegetable powder for color, such as spinach pasta or sun-dried tomato pasta. The examples below show some ingredients statements for vegetable flour pasta products.

- **Example 1**
  Ingredients: Semolina (wheat), durum flour (wheat), **dried spinach**, niacin, ferrous sulfate (iron), thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid.

  This product does not credit toward the vegetables component. The spinach is used for coloring and the amount is too small to credit.

- **Example 2**
  Ingredients: Semolina (wheat), durum flour (wheat), **dried carrots, dried tomato, dried spinach**, niacin, ferrous sulfate (iron), thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid.

  This product might credit toward the vegetables component depending on the amount of dried carrots, dried tomato, and dried spinach per serving. The CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine the crediting information for this product.

Signage and staff training for vegetable flour pastas

The USDA encourages CACFP facilities to provide information, as age appropriate, that helps participants understand what foods are in their meals and snacks. For example, if a lunch or supper menu includes 100 percent chickpea pasta as the vegetables component, the menu could list chickpea pasta with a symbol showing it to be part of the vegetables component of the meal, not the grains component.

Menu planners should also inform staff when meals include pasta made with vegetable flour, so they are aware of how these foods contribute to the CACFP meal patterns.

Crediting Pureed Vegetables

Except for smoothies, pureed vegetables must be visible to credit toward the CACFP meal patterns (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1). Examples include pureed foods made from one vegetable such as tomato sauce, split pea soup, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, and pureed butternut squash.

Pureed vegetables credit based on the volume (cups) after pureeing. For example, to determine the volume of pea puree obtained from 1 cup of green peas, food service staff would puree the whole peas and measure the resulting amount of puree. Pureed vegetables typically have a smaller volume than the whole vegetable pieces. CACFP facilities may use the CSDE's *Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs* to document the yield of pureed vegetables.

Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice toward the vegetables component. For guidance on crediting pureed vegetables in smoothies, refer to "Crediting Pureed Vegetables in Smoothies" below.

Unrecognizable pureed vegetables

Foods made with pureed vegetables that are not visible (such as pureed carrots in macaroni and cheese) cannot credit as the vegetables component unless they also provide at least ⅛ cup of a visible creditable vegetable. For example, a serving of macaroni and cheese that contains ⅛ cup of diced butternut squash (visible) and ⅛ cup of pureed carrots (not visible) credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component.

For example, pureed sweet potatoes in muffins cannot credit toward the vegetables component. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of the CACFP, which includes the goal of helping participants easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

For more information, refer to "Requirement for Visible Components" in section 1.

Crediting tomato paste and puree

Tomato paste and puree credit using the whole food equivalency (volume of tomatoes prior to pureeing) instead of the actual volume served. This crediting is indicated in the FBG. Two tablespoons of tomato paste credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. One tablespoon of tomato paste credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component.

Crediting Pureed Vegetables in Smoothies

Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit as juice toward the vegetables component and count toward the juice limit (refer to "Vegetable juice limit" in this section). Crediting is based on the volume (cups) of pureed vegetables per serving. For example, a smoothie that contains ½ cup of pureed carrots credits as ½ cup of vegetable juice.

Smoothies that contain any combination of pureed fruits, pureed vegetables, and 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the greatest vegetable or fruit ingredient. For more information, refer to "Mixed fruits and vegetables in smoothies" in section 5.

For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to "Crediting Fruit in Smoothies" in section 5, "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in section 2, and "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in section 3.

Combined vegetables and fruits in smoothies

Vegetable juices and purees in smoothies credit as juice toward the vegetables component. Smoothies that contain any combination of pureed fruits, pureed vegetables, and 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the greatest vegetable or fruit ingredient. Commercial smoothies credit as the vegetables component if the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice or vegetable puree, and credit as the fruits component if the first juice ingredient is fruit juice or fruit puree.

Smoothies made from scratch credit as the vegetables component if vegetable juice or vegetable puree is the greatest juice ingredient in the recipe. They credit as the fruits component if fruit juice or fruit puree is the greatest juice ingredient in the recipe. For information on crediting smoothies as the fruits component, refer to "Crediting Fruits in Smoothies" in section 5.

CACFP facilities must document the total cups of vegetable juices/pureed vegetables per serving with a recipe for smoothies made from scratch (preferably a standardized recipe) or a PFS for commercial products (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1).

Crediting Raw Leafy Greens

Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example, 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 such as iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix.

> As a reminder, cooked leafy greens (such as spinach and kale) and roasted or dried leafy greens (such as roasted kale) credit based on the volume served. For example, ½ cup of cooked spinach or roasted kale credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

Crediting Vegetable and Fruit Mixtures

Mixtures of vegetables and fruits may credit toward both the vegetables component and the fruits component if the serving contains at least ⅛ cup of visible vegetables and at least ⅛ cup of visible fruits. For example, a carrot-raisin salad that contains ½ cup of carrots and ⅛ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component and ¼ cup of the fruits component. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served (refer to "Crediting Dried Fruits" in section 5).

Crediting Soups

Vegetable soups made from scratch credit based on the cups of each vegetable subgroup in one serving of the recipe. CACFP facilities must determine this crediting information based on the vegetable yields listed in the FBG (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Commercial vegetable soups credit based on the yields in the FBG. Only certain types of commercial vegetable soups are creditable.

Creditable commercial vegetable soups

The FBG indicates that 1 cup of a commercial vegetable soup credits as ¼ cup of vegetables. Allowable vegetable soups include:

- minestrone soup;
- tomato soup;
- tomato soup with other basic components such as rice;
- vegetable soup (contains only vegetables); and

- vegetable soup with other basic components such as meat or poultry.

The FBG indicates that 1 cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as ½ cup of vegetables (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup). Allowable soups include:

- bean soup, e.g., black bean, navy bean, and mixed bean;
- pea soup, e.g., split pea; and
- lentil soup.

These servings refer to the amount of cooked soup, e.g., heated canned or frozen ready-to-serve soup, reconstituted dried soup, and reconstituted condensed soup.

Commercial vegetable soups not listed in the FBG require crediting documentation that states the specific contribution of each vegetable subgroup per serving. CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS that indicates the specific contribution of vegetables (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1). A CN label might be available for some commercial vegetable soups that contain at least ½ oz eq of MMA.

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Soups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Serving size considerations for commercial vegetable soups

The served portion of a commercial vegetable soup must be sufficient to provide the vegetables being credited in CACFP menus. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for different age groups, and the size of the container used to serve the soup.

- **Meal pattern contribution:** The large serving required for a commercial soup to provide the full serving of vegetables might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. For example, the minimum serving for the vegetables component at snack is ½ cup, which equals 2 cups of a commercial vegetable soup or 1 cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup.

- **Container size:** A 1-cup container (8 fluid ounces) does not provide 1 cup of soup unless it is filled to the top, which is impractical. To prevent spills and ensure the served portion meets the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving of soup. For example, CACFP facilities could use a 10-fluid ounce bowl to hold 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of soup and a 6-fluid ounce bowl to hold 4 fluid ounces (½ cup) of soup.

CACFP facilities must communicate with staff regarding the appropriate serving size for each age group.

Noncreditable soups

Commercial beef barley soup, chicken or turkey noodle soup, chicken or turkey rice soup, and cream vegetable soups (such as cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom) do not credit.

Crediting Vegetable Juices

Any types of pasteurized full-strength (100 percent) vegetable juices may credit in reimbursable meals and snacks. Vegetable juices may be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the terms below.

- Full-strength juice
- Single-strength juice
- 100 percent juice
- Reconstituted juice
- Juice from concentrate

The statements "natural" and "organic" do not indicate that a juice is full strength.

Vegetable juice limit

The CACFP juice limit applies to all fruit and vegetable juices. Juice credits as either the vegetables component or the fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Menu planners must check each day's breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack menus to ensure that juices do not exceed this limit.

For more information, refer to "Limit for fruit and vegetable juices" in section 5 and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting Vegetables in Combination Foods

Combination foods that contain vegetables credit based on the cups of the visible portion of vegetables per serving (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 2). Some examples include tomato sauce in pizza and lasagna, kidney beans and tomatoes in chili, vegetables in egg rolls, chickpeas in hummus, and vegetables in chicken-vegetable stir-fry.

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on the cups of vegetables per serving. Commercial products require a CN label (if the vegetables are part of a main dish entree that contains at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component) or PFS. Foods made from scratch require a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the cups of vegetables per serving based on the yields in the FBG. For more information, refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1.

Crediting Vegetables with Added Ingredients

When vegetables contain added ingredients (such as mayonnaise, yogurt, sugar, molasses, salad dressing, or breading), only the vegetable portion credits in CACFP menus. Some examples of vegetables with added ingredients include tossed salad with dressing and croutons, potato salad made with mayonnaise, chopped celery, and spices, mashed potatoes made with butter and milk, baked beans with sauce, carrot-raisin salad, breaded vegetables like eggplant and onion rings, and vegetables with cheese.

- **Example:** To credit coleslaw as ½ cup of the vegetables component, the serving must contain ½ cup of shredded vegetables like cabbage and carrots, before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, and spices.

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on the cups of vegetables per serving. Commercial products must have a CN label (if the vegetables are part of a main dish entree that contributes to the MMA component) or PFS. Foods made from scratch require a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the cups of vegetables per serving based on the yields in the FBG. For more information, refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1.

> CACFP facilities are not required to maintain recipes and PFS forms for vegetables without added ingredients, such as whole or cut-up fresh vegetables, canned vegetables, and frozen vegetables.

Produce Safety

CACFP facilities must ensure that all food service personnel understand how to prepare produce safely. The Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) Produce Safety Resources webpage includes resources that describe best practices for receiving, storing, handling, and purchasing fresh and fresh-cut produce. The USDA's Best Practices for Handling Fresh Produce in Schools webpage provides guidance on the steps food service personnel can take to ensure that produce is prepared safely. For additional resources, visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage and Resources for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Choking Prevention for Vegetables with Young Children

Some vegetables may be a choking hazard for young children. Examples 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.

Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what vegetables to offer in CACFP menus. Preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking include cooking until soft, and cutting, dicing, or shredding into small pieces.

Noncreditable Foods in the Vegetables Component

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables component include:

- chili sauce;
- dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning;
- cream vegetable soups, e.g., cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom;
- home-canned products (for food safety reasons);
- ketchup;
- pickle relish;
- snack-type foods made from vegetables, such as potato chips and corn chips; and
- unpasteurized vegetable juices.

This list is not all-inclusive. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in section 1 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the vegetables component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Resources for Crediting Vegetables

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the vegetables component in the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack. For additional crediting resources specific to different types of vegetables, refer to the crediting topics throughout this section.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns: Module 12: Vegetables Component ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module12

- 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

- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

- Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in the Child Nutrition Programs (USDA webinar): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetable-noodles-and-coconut-child-nutrition-programs

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

- 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.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-vegfruit-template-cacfp.pdf

- Serving Vegetables in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/serving-vegetables

- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-fruit-requirements-qas

- 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

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

For additional crediting resources, 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 Module 12: Vegetables Component of the CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

5 — Fruits Component

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits, and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice.

Required Fruit Servings

The required servings of the fruits component in the CACFP meal patterns are measured in cups. These servings refer to the edible portion of fruits after any applicable preparation techniques, such as peeling, removing seeds and pits, and cooking.

All fruits credit based on volume (cups) except for dried fruits, which credit as twice the volume served (refer to "Crediting Dried Fruits" in this section). Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the number of servings provided by a specific quantity of fruit as purchased (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Vegetables and fruits are one meal component at breakfast and may include a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. A serving of the fruits component is required at lunch and supper. However, menu planners may choose to substitute vegetables for the fruits component at any lunch or supper (refer to "Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper" in this section). A serving of fruits may be one of the two required meal components at snack.

The table below summarizes the required servings of the fruits component for each age group and meal.

Table 5-1. Required meal pattern servings for the fruits component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)	Adults
Breakfast (vegetables, fruits, or both)	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Lunch and supper	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Snack (may be one of the two required meal components)	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	½ cup

Minimum Creditable Amount for Fruits

The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. Fruits offered in amounts less than ⅛ cup do not count toward the required meal pattern servings.

When crediting fruits toward the meal pattern requirements, menu planners must round down to the nearest ⅛ cup. For example, a recipe or commercial product that contains 2½ tablespoons of fruit per serving credits as ⅛ cup of the fruits component.

Offering A Combination of Fruits

CACFP facilities may choose to serve a combination of several fruits to meet the daily requirement for each age group if each serving contains at least ⅛ cup of fruit, i.e., the minimum creditable amount (refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in section 1).

For example, a lunch or supper menu for ages 3-5 could meet the required ¼-cup serving of the fruits component with ⅛ cup of peaches and ⅛ cup of applesauce. Servings that contain less than ⅛ cup of fruit do not credit in CACFP menus.

If a menu item contains less than the required meal pattern serving of the fruits component, the meal or snack must include additional fruit to meet the full serving for each age group. For example, the CACFP adult lunch and supper meal pattern requires ½ cup of the fruits component. If a menu item contains ¼ cup of fruit, the menu planner must include another menu item with at least ¼ cup of fruit to provide the full serving.

Crediting Canned Fruits

Allowable canned fruits include canned fruits in juice, water, and light syrup. Juice in canned fruit or fruit cups may count toward the fruits component and does not count toward the juice limit. For example, ½ cup of canned peaches in juice credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

Crediting Coconut

Fresh and frozen coconut credit as the fruits component based on the volume served. For example, ⅛ cup of fresh or frozen coconut credits as ⅛ cup of the fruits component. Dried coconut credits the same as other dried fruits, i.e., twice the volume served (refer to "Crediting Dried Fruits" in this section). For example, ⅛ cup of dried coconut credits as ¼ cup of the fruits component

Coconut is high in calories and saturated fat and should be limited in CACFP menus. Coconut flour, coconut oil, and coconut milk do not credit.

The requirements for crediting coconut are summarized in USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Crediting Dried Fruits

Dried fruits (such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, mixed dried fruit, and dried coconut) credit as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

This crediting does not apply to dried fruits in amounts less than ⅛ cup (the minimum creditable amount). For example, $^{1}/_{16}$ cup (1 tablespoon) of raisins does not credit as ⅛ cup fruit.

Manufacturers sometimes process dried fruits with added sugars to keep the fruit pieces separated. The CSDE encourages menu planners to read labels and choose dried fruit without added sweeteners, including sugars and nonnutritive sweeteners (such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia).

Dried fruits may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer dried fruits in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention for Fruits with Young Children" in this section.

Crediting Fresh Fruits

The crediting contribution of one piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut up) depends on the type and size (count pack), and ranges from ¼ cup to 1¼ cups. The count pack is the number of whole fruits that that fit into a case. The smaller the count, the larger the size of the fruit.

For example, the FBG indicates that:

- one 60-count plum, one 88-count peach, and one clementine each credit as ⅜ cup of fruit;
- one 100-120-count banana, one 150-count pear, one 80-count peach, one 138-count orange, and one 45-count plum each credit as ½ cup of fruit;
- one 113-count and 125-count orange each credit as ⅝ cup of fruit;
- one size 56-64 nectarine, one size 56 peach, and one 120-count pear each credit as ¾ cup of fruit; and
- one 125-138-count apple credits as 1 cup of fruit.

Menu planners must ensure that an individual piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut up) provides the correct serving for each meal and age group. If the amount is less than the required meal pattern serving, the meal must include additional fruit to meet the full serving. The examples below illustrate this requirement for the fruits component.

- **Example for breakfast:** The CACFP breakfast meal pattern for ages 3-5, ages 6-12, ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters, and adult participants requires ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both. One 120-count tangerine credits as ⅜ cup of fruit, which does not provide the full serving. To credit as the full fruits component, the breakfast menu must include an additional ⅛ cup of fruits or vegetables.

- **Example for snack:** The CACFP snack meal pattern requires ½ cup of the fruits component for ages 1-2, ages 3-5, and adult participants. One kiwi credits as ¼ cup of fruit, which does not provide the full serving. To credit as the full fruits component, the snack menu must include an additional ¼ cup of the fruits component.

The table below lists the FBG's meal pattern contribution of some fresh fruits, and the additional amount needed to provide ½ cup or 1 cup. The additional amount at breakfast, lunch, and supper may be from the same fruit, a different fruit, or a vegetable.

Table 5-2. Meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits

Fruit (one piece)	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount for ½ cup	Additional amount for 1 cup
Apple, 125 to 138 count	1 cup	0	0
Apricot, medium (1 ⅜-inch diameter)	¼ cup	¼ cup	¾ cup
Banana, 150 count, petite	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅝ cup
Banana, 100-120 count, regular	½ cup	0	½ cup
Clementine, 1 whole	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅝ cup
Grapefruit, 27-32 count, large	1 cup	0	0
Kiwi, 33-39 count	¼ cup	¼ cup	¾ cup
Nectarine, size 88-96 (2¼-inch diameter)	½ cup	0	½ cup
Nectarine, size 56-64 (2¾-inch diameter)	¾ cup	0	¼ cup
Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count	⅝ cup	0	⅜ cup
Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count	⅝ cup	0	⅜ cup
Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count	½ cup	0	½ cup
Peach, size 88 and 84 (2⅛-inch diameter)	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅝ cup
Peach, size 64 and 60 (2½-inch diameter)	⅔ cup	0	⅓ cup
Peach, size 80	½ cup	0	½ cup

Fruit (one piece)	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount for ½ cup	Additional amount for 1 cup
Peach, size 56	¾ cup	0	¼ cup
Pear, 150 count	½ cup	0	½ cup
Pear, 120 count	¾ cup	0	¼ cup
Pear, D'Anjou, Bosc, or Bartlett, 100 count	1¼ cups	0	0
Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)	½ cup	0	½ cup
Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅝ cup
Tangerine, 120 count	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅝ cup

Crediting Frozen Fruits

Frozen fruits credit based on the volume served. For some frozen fruits (like frozen sliced strawberries and frozen apricots), the serving includes the juice or liquid that accumulates during thawing. For other frozen fruits (like frozen berry blends, frozen sweet cherries, and frozen mangoes), the serving is for the thawed, drained fruit. Check the FBG for the specific serving and crediting requirements for different types of frozen fruits.

Some frozen fruits contain added sugars. The USDA recommends limiting sweetened fruits to help reduce participants' consumption of added sugars and help participants develop a taste preference for unsweetened fruit.

Crediting Fruits in Commercial Products

Commercial products that contain at least ⅛ cup of one or more visible fruits (such as an apple turnover) credit based on the cups of fruit per serving (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1). Commercial products must have a PFS that documents the cups of fruits per serving (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1).

Crediting Fruits in Yogurt

Fruits in commercially prepared yogurt (either blended or on the bottom or top) do not credit. Menu planners may credit fresh, frozen, or dried fruits added to yogurt as a separate meal component, based on the cups served. Some examples include yogurt topped with fresh blueberries or a yogurt-fruit parfait made with frozen sliced strawberries.

Crediting Fruits in Desserts

Grain-based desserts do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns (refer to "Grain-based Desserts are Prohibited" in section 6). This includes the grain portion of desserts, such as piecrust and crisp or cobbler topping. However, the visible fruit portion of desserts (such as the fruit in fruit crisp, fruit pies, and fruit turnovers) may credit toward the fruits component based on the cups of fruit in the serving (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1).

- **Example:** A fruit turnover that contains ½ cup of apples per serving credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

The minimum creditable amount of fruit is ⅛ cup. CACFP facilities must document the cups of fruit per serving with a PFS for commercial products and a recipe for desserts made from scratch (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1). This documentation must be

based on the food yields in the FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Menu planners should consider that the large amount of grain-based dessert needed to provide the required serving of fruit might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. In addition, the USDA recommends limiting sweetened fruit in CACFP menus.

Crediting Fruits in Yogurt

Fruits in commercially prepared yogurt (either blended or on the bottom or top) do not credit. Menu planners may credit fruits offered as a separate meal component, such as yogurt topped with fresh blueberries a yogurt-fruit parfait made with sliced strawberries.

Crediting Fruits with Added Ingredients

When fruits contain added ingredients (such as yogurt, mayonnaise, sugar, butter, sauce, or toppings), only the fruit portion credits toward the meal patterns. Some examples of fruits with added ingredients include yogurt-fruit parfaits, carrot-raisin salad, and Waldorf salad.

- **Example:** To credit Waldorf salad as ½ cup of the fruits component, the serving must contain ½ cup of fruit (e.g., diced apples, sliced grapes, and raisins), before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, sugar, spices, and walnuts.

CACFP facilities must document the cups of fruit per serving with a PFS for commercial products and a recipe for foods made from scratch (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1). This documentation must be based on the food yields in the FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

> CACFP facilities are not required to maintain recipes and PFS forms for fruits without added ingredients, such as whole or cut-up fresh fruits; canned fruits in juice, water, or light syrup; frozen fruits; and dried fruits.

Crediting Fruit Juices

Any types of pasteurized full-strength (100 percent) fruit juices may credit in reimbursable meals and snacks. Fruit juices may be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the terms below.

- Full-strength juice
- Single-strength juice
- 100 percent juice
- Reconstituted juice
- Juice from concentrate

The statements "natural" and "organic" do not indicate that a juice is full strength.

Juices may be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate, and may be served liquid or frozen, such as full-strength frozen juice pops. For more information, refer to "Frozen 100 percent juice products" in this section and 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*.

Juices do not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, except for smoothies (refer to "Crediting Fruit Juices and Pureed Fruits in Smoothies" in this section).

> The USDA recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juices. Juices do not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables, which contain fiber, fewer calories, and more nutrients.

Juice concentrates

Juice made from concentrate is reconstituted with a volume of water that is several times the amount of juice concentrate. A typical reconstitution ratio might be three parts water to one part concentrate, but this ratio may vary for different juice products.

Commercial juice products made from concentrate will list "water" as the first ingredient, followed by the type of juice concentrate, for example, "water, orange juice concentrate" and "filtered water, grape juice concentrate." Juices made from concentrate that are labeled "100 percent juice" credit as the fruit component when the CACFP facility follows the manufacturer's specific instructions for reconstituting.

Juice blends

Juice blends must be a combination of full-strength (100 percent) fruit juices, vegetable juices, or fruit and vegetable juices. The crediting of vegetable juice blends depends on the information provided in the manufacturer's PFS. If the PFS indicates the amount of each type of juice in the blend, CACFP facilities may credit each type accordingly.

For example, a PFS indicates that a commercial juice blend contains ⅛ cup of apple juice and ⅛ cup of sweet potato juice. This product credits as ⅛ cup of the fruits component and ⅛ cup of the vegetables component.

If a commercial product does not have a PFS (or the PFS does not provide the specific crediting information for each type of juice), juice blends credit based on the first juice ingredient. If the first juice ingredient is fruit juice, the product credits as the fruits component. If the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice, the product credits as the vegetables component.

- **Example**
  Ingredients: Reconstituted vegetable juice blend (water and concentrated juices of sweet potatoes, purple carrots, carrots), reconstituted fruit juices (water and concentrated juices of apples, white grapes, cranberries, blackberries), contains less than 2% of: natural flavoring, citric acid, lemon juice.

  This product credits as the vegetables component because the first ingredient is a reconstituted vegetable juice blend.

CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation for juice blends credited toward the vegetable subgroups.

Frozen 100 percent juice products

Frozen 100 percent fruit juice products like full-strength frozen juice pops credit based on the fluid volume prior to freezing. CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to document this information (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1). Frozen fruit juice must meet the same requirements as juice and counts toward the juice limit (refer to "Limit for fruit and vegetable juices" in this section).

Apple cider

Apple cider must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Pasteurized juice has been heat-treated to kill harmful bacteria. Menu planners must check labels, as some brands of apple cider are not pasteurized. CACFP facilities cannot serve unpasteurized apple cider or any other

type of unpasteurized juices. Apple cider counts toward the juice limit (refer to "Limit for fruit and vegetable juices" in this section).

Coconut water

Coconut water labeled as 100 percent juice credits toward the fruits component based on the volume served. Coconut water must meet the same requirements as juice and counts toward the juice limit (refer to "Limit for fruit and vegetable juices" in this section).

Juice ingredients

All pasteurized 100 percent juices meet the USDA's requirements for the fruits component, but their ingredients may vary among manufacturers. The FDA's labeling regulations allow 100 percent juice to contain added ingredients and still be labeled "100% juice." Therefore, some 100 percent juices contain added ingredients such as artificial flavors, artificial colors (e.g., red 40, blue 1, yellow 5 and 6, and titanium dioxide), preservatives (e.g., sodium benzoate and potassium sorbate), flavor enhancers (e.g., ethyl maltol), and emulsifiers or thickeners (e.g., glycerol esters of wood rosin and xanthan gum). The CSDE encourages menu planners to read ingredients statements and choose 100 percent juices without these added ingredients.

Limit for fruit and vegetable juices

Pasteurized full-strength fruit juice (fruit, vegetable, or combination) credits as either the vegetables component or the fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. The daily juice limit applies to all sources of 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices, including juices that are fresh, frozen, and made from concentrate, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies.

> If a CACFP meal or snack includes any type of juice as the fruits component or vegetables component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other CACFP meal or snack that same day.

The examples below show how the juice limit applies.

- **Example 1:** The lunch and supper meal pattern requires a serving of the fruits component and a serving of the vegetables component. Lunch/supper menus cannot offer a smoothie and juice as the only two servings of fruits and vegetables because both credit as juice. For example, the lunch/supper menu cannot offer a strawberry smoothie as the fruits component and tomato juice as the vegetables component. At least one of

the required servings of the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch and supper must be a whole fruit or vegetable (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried).

- **Example 2:** If the CACFP lunch menu includes juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, supper, or snack that same day.
- **Example 3:** If the CACFP breakfast menu includes juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch, supper, or snack that same day.
- **Example 4:** If the CACFP snack menu includes a smoothie made with pureed peaches as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, lunch, or supper that same day. Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to "Crediting Smoothies" in this section).

Menu planners must check each day's breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack menus to ensure that juice does not exceed the limit.

Offering juice as an extra menu item

Menu planners may choose to offer juice as an extra menu item that does not credit in CACFP menus. However, the USDA encourages CACFP facilities to limit juice in CACFP menus to ensure that meals and snacks meet participants' nutritional needs.

> The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.

Crediting Fruit Juices and Pureed Fruits in Smoothies

Fruit juices and pureed fruits in smoothies credit only as juices toward the fruits component. Crediting is based on the total cups of juices and pureed fruits per serving. For example, a smoothie that contains ½ cup of pureed strawberries credits as ½ cup of fruit juice.

Juice limit for smoothies

Juices and pureed fruits in smoothies count with all other fruit juices toward the weekly juice limit for the fruits component (refer to "Limit for fruit and vegetable juices" in this section).

Crediting pureed fruits in commercial smoothies

Commercial smoothies made with pureed fruits credit based on the volume of fruits after pureeing and before freezing. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup.

The product label must include a statement regarding the "percent juice content," which is required by the FDA for beverages made with fruit/vegetable juices or purees. For example, an 8-fluid ounce smoothie made from fruit puree labeled with "contains 50% juice" credits as 4 fluid ounces (½ cup) of juice. CACFP facilities may need to obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to document the amount of pureed fruits in the product (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section 1).

Crediting concentrated fruit purees and juices in smoothies

Concentrated fruit purees and concentrated juices are added sugars. They do not credit in smoothies unless they are reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice. The amount before reconstituting is used to determine the creditable amount.

Combined fruits and vegetables in smoothies

Smoothies that contain any combination of pureed fruits, pureed vegetables, and 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the greatest fruit or vegetable ingredient.

- Commercial smoothies credit as the fruits component if the first juice ingredient is fruit juice or fruit puree. Commercial smoothies credit as the vegetables component if the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice or vegetable puree.
- Smoothies made from scratch credit as the fruits component if fruit juice or fruit puree is the greatest juice ingredient in the recipe. Smoothies made from scratch credit as the vegetables component if vegetable juice or vegetable puree is the greatest juice ingredient in the CACFP recipe.

For information on crediting smoothies as the vegetables component, refer to "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in section 4.

Crediting other meal components in smoothies

Other creditable ingredients in smoothies include vegetable juices and pureed vegetables (refer to "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in section 4), milk (refer to "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in section 2), and yogurt (refer to "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in section 3).

Required documentation for smoothies

CACFP facilities must have documentation on file that indicates the quantity of all creditable ingredients in the smoothie serving, such as pureed fruits and vegetables, juices, yogurt, and milk. The total creditable amount in a smoothie cannot exceed the volume served. For example, ½ cup of a commercial smoothie cannot credit as 1 cup of juice.

Commercial smoothie products that contain at least ½ oz eq of yogurt might have a CN label. Products that are not CN labeled require a PFS. Foods made from scratch require a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the cups of fruits per serving based on the yields in the FBG. For more information, refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1.

Noncreditable commercial smoothies

Commercial smoothies that contain dietary supplements (such as whey protein powder) or herbal supplements (such as gingko biloba, ginseng, and echinacea) do not credit. Noncreditable commercial smoothies also include probiotic dairy drinks, drinkable yogurt, and yogurt drinks.

Resources for crediting smoothies

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting smoothies in reimbursable meals and snacks.

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

These resources are available under "Smoothies" in the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Pureed Fruits in Other Foods

Pureed fruits in foods other than smoothies do not credit as the fruits component (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in section 1). Some examples include pureed prunes or applesauce in muffins and pureed bananas in banana bread.

Choking Prevention for Fruits with Young Children

Some fruits may be a choking hazard for young children. Examples include whole grapes, berries, melon balls, apples and other hard pieces of raw fruit, and dried fruits.

Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what fruits to offer in CACFP menus. Preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking include cooking until soft, and cutting, dicing, or shredding into small pieces.

Noncreditable Fruits

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the fruits component include:

- banana chips;
- commercial fruit smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements;
- fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups, fruit leathers, fruit wrinkles, fruit twists, yogurt-covered fruit snacks);
- home-canned products (for food safety reasons);
- jams, jellies, and preserves;
- juice drinks that are not 100 percent juice such as grape juice drink, orange juice drink, pineapple-grapefruit drink, cranberry juice cocktail, and lemonade; and
- unpasteurized fruit juices.

This list is not all-inclusive. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in section 1 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the fruits component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Resources for Crediting Fruits

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the fruits component in the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack. For additional crediting resources specific to different types of fruits, refer to the crediting topics throughout this section.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns Module 13: Fruits Component ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module13

- Crediting Fruits in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cn/crediting-tipsheets/fruits

- 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 Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

- Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in the Child Nutrition Programs (USDA webinar): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetable-noodles-and-coconut-child-nutrition-programs

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

- Fruits 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/fruits

- 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.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-vegfruit-template-cacfp.pdf

- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-fruit-requirements-qas

- USDA memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-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

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. Training on the fruits component is available in Module 13: Fruits Component of the CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

6 — Grains Component Crediting

The USDA encourages menu planners to offer a variety of different grains in CACFP menus. The grains component includes breads and bread products such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products like crackers (including sweet cracker like animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard bread sticks, tortilla chips, and popcorn;
- cereal grains like buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals like puffed cereals, whole-grain round or flaked cereal, and granola;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular) like oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat;
- bread products used as an ingredient in another menu item, such as combination foods, e.g., breading on fish or poultry and pizza crust in pizza; and
- pasta products like macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.

Grain menu items must be whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched. Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to participants. Products that are 100 percent whole grain, such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice, provide the best nutrition and should be served most often.

Crediting Requirements

CACFP facilities must determine if grain menu items meet the applicable crediting and serving size (oz eq) requirements for each meal pattern.

1. **Crediting criteria:** Grain menu items must be WGR or enriched. The specific crediting criteria are different for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and grain foods made from scratch. The crediting criteria are summarized in this section. The WGR criteria are summarized in section 7.

2. **Oz eq contribution:** Menu planners must determine the oz eq contribution of the planned serving of creditable grain menu items. Guidance on how to determine a grain menu item's oz eq contribution is provided section 8.

These requirements apply to all grain menu items, including commercial grain products and foods prepared from scratch by the CACFP facility or vendors.

Grain-based Desserts Prohibited

Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns. Examples of grain-based desserts include breakfast bars, brownies, cakes (including cupcakes and coffee cakes), cereal bars, cinnamon rolls, cinnamon streusel quick breads, cookies (all kinds, including vanilla wafers), doughnuts, gingerbread, granola bars, ice cream cones, marshmallow cereal treats, pastries (such as cinnamon buns, Danish, sweet buns, sweet rolls, and eclairs) piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), sweet biscotti (such as those made with fruits, chocolate, or icing) sweet bread pudding, sweet croissants (e.g. chocolate filled), sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), rice pudding, and toaster pastries. This list is not all-inclusive.

Identifying grain-based desserts

The USDA's resource, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*, identifies creditable grain-based desserts in red. If a product is not listed on the Exhibit A chart, the menu planner may decide if a food is a grain-based dessert by considering the common perceptions of the food and how it's typically served. The questions below help menu planners determine if the product is a grain-based dessert.

- Is the food thought of as a dessert or served as a dessert?
- Is the food frosted, iced, or dessert-flavored, like chocolate, caramel, or butterscotch?
- Does the food contain custard filling or candy?
- Is the food in the shape of a cookie or packaged like a dessert?

Menu planners should not rely on a product's name to determine if it is grain-based dessert because cookies and similar grain-based desserts do not have an FDA standard of identity. This means that manufacturers might use terms in their product names or labels that might be misleading. Some examples include:

- "breakfast rounds" for oatmeal raisin cookies;
- "breakfast bars" for cereal bars; and
- "super stars" for doughnut holes.

Regardless of the name on the label, these types of foods are still grain-based desserts.

Foods that are not grain-based desserts

Grain-based desserts do not include sweet crackers like graham crackers and animal crackers, muffins, quick breads, e.g., banana bread and zucchini bread (except for cinnamon streusel), cornbread, pancakes, waffles, French toast, savory scones (such as cheese and herb), and piecrusts in entrees such as quiche, meat pies, and chicken potpie.

> As a best practice, the USDA encourages CACFP menus to limit sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers) because of their higher sugars content. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all CACFP meals and snacks served to participants.

Serving grain-based desserts as extra foods

CACFP facilities may choose to serve grain-based desserts as an additional food item that does not credit in CACFP menus. Examples include serving cake or cookies at special celebrations.

To ensure that participants' nutritional needs are met, the USDA and CSDE encourage CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods and beverages (refer to "Noncreditable foods" in section 1). In addition, the USDA does not allow CACFP facilities to purchase grain-based desserts with CACFP funds (refer to "CACFP funds cannot purchase noncreditable foods" in section 1).

Resources for grain-based desserts

The resources below provide guidance on the requirements for grain-based desserts.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns: Module 14: Grains Component Crediting Requirements ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module14

- Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp

- USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program

- USDA Memo CACFP 05-2025: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-qas

Links to these resources are also available under "Grain-based Desserts" in the "Grains Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Creditable Grains

Grain products and recipes served in reimbursable CACFP meals and snacks must be made with creditable grains. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, and germ. Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in this section).

> For guidance on the steps for identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *How to Identify Creditable Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting enriched grains

Enriched grains are refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have certain vitamins and minerals added to replace some of the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are defined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and include:

- thiamin (vitamin B_1, thiamin mononitrate, or thiamin hydrochloride):
- riboflavin (vitamin B_2):
- niacin (vitamin B_3 or niacinamide):
- folic acid (folate):
- and iron (reduced iron, ferrous sulfate, or ferric orthophosphate).

If a commercial grain product includes enriched ingredients or the product itself is enriched, the ingredients or product must meet the applicable FDA standard of identity for enrichment. Examples of enriched ingredients include enriched flour (21 CFR 137.165) and enriched

cornmeal (21 CFR 137.260). Examples of enriched products include enriched bread, rolls, and buns (21 CFR 136.115); enriched macaroni products (21 CFR 139.115); enriched noodle products (21 CFR 139.155); enriched rice (21 CFR 137.350); and enriched farina (21 CFR 137.305).

A commercial grain product is enriched if it meets at least one of the criteria below.

1. The food is labeled as "enriched," e.g., enriched long grain rice.

2. An enriched grain is the first ingredient in the food's ingredients statement (or water is the first ingredient, and an enriched grain is the next ingredient). The label will usually state "enriched flour" or "enriched wheat flour," or the grain ingredient includes a sub-listing of the five enrichment nutrients in parenthesis, e.g., "enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, ferrous sulfate, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid)."

For information on identifying enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting whole grains

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel, after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. The kernel includes the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ.

A grain is whole grain if the grain name contains the word "whole," such as whole wheat flour and whole-grain corn. Some whole grains do not contain the word "whole" in the grain name. Examples include berries (the whole kernels of grain), e.g., wheat berries and rye berries, groats (the hulled whole kernels of grain), e.g., oat groats, rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal), brown rice and wild rice, graham flour (a coarsely ground whole-wheat flour), and many other grains such as quinoa, millet, triticale, teff, amaranth, buckwheat, and sorghum.

For information on identifying whole grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting bran and germ

Bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran), and germ (such as wheat germ) credit the same as enriched grains.

Crediting Criteria for Commercial Grain Products

Commercial grain products in groups A-E (baked goods, such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, and waffles) and group H (pasta and cereal grains, such as quinoa, rice, and millet) credit as the grains component if a creditable grain is the first ingredient, or water is the first ingredient and a creditable grain is the second ingredient.

> Groups A-E and H-I refer to the grain groups in the USDA's Exhibit A chart. For more information, refer to section 7. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) do not credit (refer to "Grain-based Desserts Prohibited" in this section).

The ingredients for commercial products are listed in descending order of predominance by weight. The ingredient that weighs the most is listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last. When reviewing the first ingredient on the product's label, water is ignored.

Examples of creditable commercial grain products

The ingredients statements below show some examples of creditable commercial grain products. Whole grains are indicated in bold and enriched grains are indicated in italics.

- **Example 1:** Ingredients: *Enriched wheat flour (flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid),* canola and/or sunflower oil, salt, contains 2% or less of: yeast, nonfat milk, sugar, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, paprika, spices, celery, onion powder.

  This product is creditable because enriched wheat flour (creditable grain) is the first ingredient.

- **Example 2:** Ingredients: Water, *enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, vitamin B1 [thiamin mononitrate], vitamin B2 [riboflavin], folic acid)*, **whole-wheat flour**, vegetable oil (soybean, palm, and/or canola oil), egg whites, *wheat bran*, sugar, contains 2% or less of leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate, monocalcium phosphate), salt, malt flavoring, whey, soy lecithin.

  This product is creditable because enriched wheat flour (creditable grain) is the first ingredient after water.

Commercial grain products with multiple creditable grains

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the commercial grain product contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine crediting information (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1). To credit in CACFP menus, the product's PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains in the product is the greatest ingredient by weight. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting Criteria for Grain Foods Made from Scratch

Grain foods made from scratch and combination foods made from scratch that contain a grain portion have different crediting requirements.

- **Grain foods:** Grain foods made from scratch (such as breads, rolls, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) credit toward the grains component based on the amount of creditable grains in one serving of the CACFP facility's recipe.

- **Combination foods:** Combination foods made from scratch that contain a grain portion (such as pizza, lasagna, and breaded chicken) credit toward the grains component based on the amount of creditable grains in the grain portion of one serving of the recipe.

The CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides examples of how to determine if grain foods made from scratch are creditable.

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file (preferably standardized recipes) to document the crediting information for grain foods prepared from scratch (refer to "Documentation for foods made from scratch" in section 1).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals

Breakfast cereals include RTE breakfast cereals in group I (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola) and cooked breakfast cereals in group H (including instant and regular, such as oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat). Breakfast cereals must meet the two criteria below to credit as the grains component.

1. The first ingredient is a creditable grain, or the cereal is fortified.
    - Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, brans, and germ.
    - Fortified breakfast cereals contain nutrients added by the manufacturer that were not originally present, or that are at higher levels than originally present. A breakfast cereal is fortified if the food is labeled as "fortified" or the ingredients statement lists the vitamins and minerals added to the product. These nutrients are typically listed after "Vitamins and Minerals," as in the example below.
        - **Example:** Ingredients: Milled corn, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. Vitamins and Minerals: Iron, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate, ascorbic acid), niacinamide, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B12.
2. The serving cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. The CSDE recommends reviewing added sugars first, before reviewing the ingredients statement for creditable grains. If a breakfast cereal exceeds the added sugars limit, it cannot credit in CACFP menus, even if it contains creditable grains or is WGR.

The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals served in CACFP menus meet these requirements. Breakfast cereals that do not meet these criteria do not credit in the CACFP.

The CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, provides detailed guidance on the crediting requirements for breakfast cereals and includes examples of how to determine if breakfast cereals are creditable.

CSDE's crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals

The CSDE's crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals help CACFP facilities determine if breakfast cereals meet the CACFP crediting requirements, including the limit for added sugars. Menu planners enter the cereal's added sugars per serving and serving weight (ounces) and the worksheet calculates the grams of added sugars per ounce.

- Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/.sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/worksheet_credit_cooked_breakfast_cereals_cacfp.pdf

- Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/worksheet_credit_rte_breakfast_cereals_cacfp.pdf

These worksheets are available under "Breakfast Cereals" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

> Breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels such as wheat berries, and hard chunks (such as granola) may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what types of breakfast cereals to offer in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention for Grains with Young Children" in this section.

Crediting Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal

Corn ingredients credit as the grains component if they are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. Nixtamalization is the process of soaking and cooking dried corn in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process results in a product with a similar nutrition content to whole-grain corn.

Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Masa harina is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales.

Methods for identifying nixtamalized corn

CACFP facilities may use either of the two methods below to identify commercial products made with nixtamalized corn.

1. **Corn is treated with lime:** If the ingredients statement indicates that the corn is treated with lime (such as "ground corn with trace of lime" and "ground corn treated with lime"), the corn ingredient is nixtamalized. The examples below show some commercial corn products that are nixtamalized and therefore credit as 100 percent whole grains.

    - Ingredients: Corn masa flour, water, contains 2% or less of: cellulose gum, guar gum, amylase, propionic acid, benzoic acid, and phosphoric acid (to maintain freshness).
    - Ingredients: Whole-white corn, vegetable oil (contains soybean, corn, cottonseed, and/or sunflower oil), salt, lime/calcium hydroxide (processing aid).
    - Ingredients: Limed whole-grain white corn, palm oil, salt, TBHQ (preservative).
    - Ingredients: Whole-grain yellow corn, high oleic canola oil, water, corn flour, salt, hydrated lime.

> If the ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information, CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating that the ingredients are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized (refer to "Documentation for commercial processed products" in section1). For example, a PFS is required for a product that contains cornmeal or yellow corn flour.

2. **Product includes FDA-approved whole grain health claim:** If a commercial product made with corn includes one of two FDA-approved whole grain health claims on its packaging, the corn in the product is nixtamalized and the product provides at least 50 percent whole grain. These health claims are not common.

    - **Low-fat claim:** "Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers."

    - **Moderate-fat claim:** "Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease."

Crediting information for corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal is summarized in USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Crediting Hominy as Grains

Hominy is a traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin. Hominy credits as a whole grain.

Hominy is available dried and in a fully cooked canned form. Dried hominy (such as grits) credits as a whole grain. A ½-cup serving of cooked hominy grits or 1 ounce (28 grams) of dry hominy grits credits as 1 oz eq of the grains component.

For information on crediting hominy as the vegetables component, refer to "Crediting Hominy as Vegetables" in section 4.

Crediting Popcorn

Popcorn is a whole-grain food. Three cups (1 ounce) of plain popped popcorn credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. The minimum creditable amount is ¾ cup (¼ ounce), which equals ¼ oz eq. The table below summarizes the grains contribution of popped popcorn.

Table 6-1. Grains contribution of popped popcorn

Cups (popped)	Weight (popped)	Grains contribution
¾ cup	0.25 ounces or 7 grams	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
1½ cups	0.5 ounces or 14 grams	½ oz eq
2¼ cups	0.75 ounces or 21 grams	¾ oz eq
3 cups	1 ounce or 28 grams	1 oz eq

Crediting considerations for popcorn

Menu planners should consider the crediting requirements below when including popcorn in reimbursable meals and snacks.

- Consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of the grains component from popcorn, due to the large volume required for crediting. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller serving of popcorn and supplementing it with another food from the grains component. For example, a snack mix that contains ¾ cup of popcorn (¼ oz eq) mixed with ¼ oz eq of WGR pretzels and ½ oz eq of WGR RTE breakfast cereal credits as 1 oz eq of the grains component.

- Foods that contain popcorn as an ingredient (such as a popcorn snack mix or popcorn balls) require documentation to determine the crediting information. CACFP facilities must have a PFS for commercial foods and a standardized recipe for foods prepared from scratch (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1).

- Popcorn sometimes includes ingredients and toppings like salt, caramel, cheese, and butter. The USDA strongly encourages healthier alternatives, such as seasoning popcorn with herb blends or serving fresh, plain popcorn.

- Popcorn that is an ingredient in grain-based desserts does not credit toward the grains component. Grain-based desserts do not credit in CACFP menus (refer to "Grain-based Desserts Prohibited" in this section).

- Popcorn may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer popcorn in CACFP menus.

Crediting information for popcorn is summarized in USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019, and SFSP 09-2019: *Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Program*.

Noncreditable Foods in the Grains Component

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the grains component include:

- commercial grain products that are not WGR or enriched;
- breakfast cereals that are not WGR, enriched, or fortified;
- breakfast cereals that contain more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce;
- foods made from scratch that are not WGR or enriched; and
- grain-based desserts (refer to "Grain-based Desserts are Prohibited" in this section).

This list is not all-inclusive. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in section 1 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the grains component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

Choking Prevention for Grains with Young Children

Some grains may be a choking hazard for young children. Examples include plain wheat germ; whole-grain kernels such as rice or wheat berries; crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels such as wheat berries; breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels, and hard chunks (such as granola); and popcorn. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what grains to offer in CACFP menus.

Resources for Crediting Grains

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack. For additional crediting resources specific to different types of grains, refer to the crediting topics throughout this section.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns: Module 14: Grains Component Crediting Requirements ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module14

- 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

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

- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

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

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

- Grains 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/grains

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains Ounce Equivalents in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-grains-oz-eq-template.pdf

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains Ounce Equivalents in Child Nutrition Programs: Completed Sample (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-grains-oz-eq-sample.pdf

- USDA Memo CACFP 05-2025: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-qas

- USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program

- USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019, and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs

- USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. Training on the grains component is available in Module 9: Grains Component Crediting Requirements and Module 14: Grains Component Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement of the CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

1%
LOW-FAT
MILK

7 — Whole Grain-rich Requirement

CACFP menus must include at least one WGR serving per day, between all meals and snacks served to participants. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two WGR servings per day.

WGR Definition

"Whole grain-rich" for the CACFP meal patterns means a food that contains at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients are enriched, bran, or germ. All WGR foods credit in the CACFP meal patterns but not all creditable grains are WGR. The WGR criteria are different for commercial products and foods made from scratch. This section summarizes these requirements.

Menu Planning Considerations for Offering WGR Foods

CACFP facilities have the option of deciding when to serve WGR foods in CACFP meals and snacks, but certain requirements apply. Menu planners must consider the menu planning requirements below when determining which meals or snacks will include WGR foods.

- **CACFP facility serves only one meal per day:** If the CACFP facility serves only one meal per day, the grains component served at that meal must be WGR.
- **CACFP facility serves only breakfast:** The breakfast meal pattern allows MMA to substitute for the entire grains component up to three times per week (refer to "MMA Substitutions for Breakfast Menus" in section 3). A WGR food is not required if the CACFP facility serves only breakfast and chooses to substitute MMA for the grains component.
- **CACFP facility serves only snack:** The grains component is not required at snack but may be served as one of the two required meal components. If the CACFP facility serves only snack and offers a grain as one of the two meal components (such as crackers with apples), the grain menu item must be WGR.
- **Different groups of participants at each meal:** The WGR requirement applies to the CACFP, not to each participant. If the CACFP facility serves more than one meal, and two different groups of participants are at each meal (such as one group of participants at breakfast and another group of participants at lunch), only one meal is required to contain a WGR food. For example, a center that serves one group of participants at

breakfast and a different group of participants at lunch must offer a WGR food at either breakfast or lunch.

The USDA strongly encourages CACFP facility to vary the meals and snacks that include WGR foods. For example, the CACFP menu could include whole-grain toast at breakfast on Monday and brown rice at lunch on Tuesday. This helps to ensure that all participants are served a variety of whole grains, and benefit from the important nutrients these foods provide.

Overview of Rule of Three

The USDA allows six methods for determining if grain foods meet the CACFP WGR criteria. The Rule of Three is the most common method for commercial products. This method reviews the product's ingredients statement and looks at the first three grain ingredients. The CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides guidance on each method and includes examples of how to evaluate grain products for compliance with the Rule of Three WGR criteria.

> The ingredients for commercial products are listed in descending order of predominance by weight. The ingredient that weighs the most is listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last. When reviewing the first ingredient on the product's label, water is ignored.

The Rule of Three applies only to commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, and cooked breakfast cereals. The Rule of Three does not apply to RTE breakfast cereals in group I (puffed cereals, flaked or round cereals, and granola).

Rule of three requirements

The Rule of Three requires that the first ingredient (excluding water) is a whole grain, and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable grains. When reviewing a commercial product's ingredients statement for compliance with the Rule of Three criteria, the following requirements apply:

- a whole grain must be the first ingredient, and may be the second or third grain ingredients;
- an enriched grain may be the second or third grain ingredients;
- bran and germ may be the second or third grain ingredients; and
- noncreditable grains cannot be any of the first three grain ingredients. Examples of noncreditable grains for the CACFP meal patterns include vegetable and legume flours

(such as chickpea flour, fava bean flour, pea flour, and potato flour), corn flour, corn grits, farina, malted barley flour, milled corn, nut or seed flours, oat fiber, potato flour, potato starch, rice, soy fiber, soy flakes, wheat flour, and yellow corn flour. For additional examples and more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

If a food meets the Rule of Three, the menu planner does not need to check any other grain ingredients further down on the ingredients statement.

The Rule of Three WGR criteria are different for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and foods made from scratch. These requirements are summarized below.

Rule of Three WGR Criteria for Commercial Grain Products

Under the Rule of Three, commercial grain products in groups A-E (baked goods, such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, waffles, and pancakes) and group H (pasta and cereal grains, such as quinoa, rice, and millet) are WGR if they meet the three criteria below.

1. A whole grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient).
2. The second grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.
3. The third grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

Products that do not meet these criteria are not WGR.

Examples of commercial grain products that meet the Rule of Three

The examples below show some commercial grain products that meet the Rule of Three WGR criteria. Whole grains are indicated in bold and enriched grains are indicated in italics.

- **Example 1**
  Ingredients: **Whole-wheat flour**, sugar, wheat gluten. Contains 2% or less of each of the following: honey, salt, yeast, molasses, diacetyl tartaric acid esters of mono-diglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, mono-and diglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.

  Whole-wheat flour is the first ingredient and the only grain ingredient. This product is 100 percent whole grain and credits as a WGR food.

- **Example 2**
  Ingredients: Water, **whole-wheat flour**, yeast, wheat gluten, contains less than 2% of each of the following: soybean oil, sugar, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), fumaric acid, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate.

  Whole-wheat flour is the first ingredient after water and the only grain ingredient. This product is 100 percent whole grain and credits as a WGR food.

- **Example 3**
  Ingredients: **Whole-wheat flour***, enriched flour (wheat flour, niacinamide, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate [vitamin B1], riboflavin [vitamin B2], folic acid)*, soybean oil with TBHQ for freshness, salt, contains 2% or less of corn syrup, baking soda, yeast, soy lecithin.

  Whole-wheat flour is the first ingredient. Enriched flour is the second and only other grain ingredient. This product credits as a WGR food.

Multiple whole grains in commercial grain products

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain product contains more than one whole grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating the combined weight of all whole grains (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1). The example below shows a grain product that contains more than one whole grain. Whole grains are indicated in bold and enriched grains are indicated in italics.

- **Example**
  Ingredients: *Unbleached enriched wheat flour [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid]*, water, **whole-wheat flour**, **whole oats**, sugar, yeast, soybean oil, salt.

  To meet the WGR criteria, the product's PFS must document that the combined weight of the two whole grains (whole-wheat flour and whole oats) is more than the weight of the first ingredient (unbleached enriched wheat flour).

Rule of Three WGR Criteria for Cooked Breakfast Cereals

Under the Rule of Three, cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular, such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina) are WGR if they meet the three criteria below.

1. The first ingredient is a whole grain.
2. The next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ.
3. The serving cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in section 6).

The example below shows the ingredients statement for a cooked whole-grain breakfast cereal.

- **Example**
  Ingredients: **Whole-grain rolled oats**, sugar, natural flavors, salt.

  This cooked breakfast cereal is 100 percent whole grain because the first and only grain ingredient (whole grain rolled oats) is a whole grain. It credits as a WGR food if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

For examples of how to determine if cooked breakfast cereals are WGR, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. Menu planners may determine if breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars by using the CSDE's *Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

WGR Criteria for RTE Breakfast Cereals

The Rule of Three does not apply to RTE breakfast cereals. RTE breakfast cereals are WGR if they meet the two criteria below.

1. The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain.
2. The serving cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in section 6).

The example below shows the ingredients statement for a WGR fortified RTE breakfast cereal. Whole grains are indicated in bold and the enrichment nutrients are highlighted in yellow.

- **Example**
  Ingredients: **Whole-grain oat flour**, sugar, corn flour, **whole-wheat flour**, rice flour, salt, calcium carbonate, disodium phosphate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, BHT (a preservative), thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid.

  This RTE breakfast cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (calcium carbonate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid). It is WGR because whole-grain oat flour is the first ingredient, and the cereal is fortified. This RTE breakfast cereal credits as a WGR food if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

For examples of how to determine if RTE breakfast cereals are WGR, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. Menu planners may determine if breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars by using the CSDE's *Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Rule of Three WGR Criteria for Commercial Combination Foods

Under the Rule of Three, commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-E (such as pizza crust in pizza and baked fish coated with breadcrumbs) or groups H-I (such as noodles in lasagna and baked chicken coated with crushed cereal flakes) are WGR if they meet the three criteria below.

1. A whole grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient).
2. The second grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.
3. The third grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

The ingredients statement below shows an example for breaded chicken nuggets.

- **Example for breaded chicken nuggets**
  Ingredients: Boneless, skinless chicken breast with rib meat, water, **whole-wheat flour,** contains 2% or less of the following: dried garlic, dried onion, salt, sea salt, soybean oil, spice, sugar, torula yeast, turmeric, yeast, yeast extract. Breading set in vegetable oil.

  This product meets the Rule of Three WGR criteria because whole-wheat flour is the first and only grain ingredient. A PFS is required to determine the oz eq per serving (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1).

Separate grain portion in commercial combination foods

A commercial combination food that lists the ingredients for the grain portion separately is WGR if it meets the three criteria below.

1. A whole grain is the first ingredient in the grain portion (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient).
2. The second grain ingredient in the grain portion (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.
3. The third grain ingredient in the grain portion (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

The ingredients statement below shows an example for a breaded chicken patty that lists the grain portion separately.

- **Example for breaded chicken patty**
  Ingredients: Chicken, water, salt, and natural flavor. **Breaded with: white whole-wheat flour**, water, salt, *enriched yellow corn flour*, dried onion, dried

garlic, dried yeast, brown sugar, extractives of paprika, and spices. Breading set in vegetable oil.

This product meets the Rule of Three WGR criteria because the first grain ingredient (white whole-wheat flour), in the breading (grain portion) is a whole grain and the second and only other grain ingredient is an enriched grain (enriched yellow corn flour). A PFS is required to determine the oz eq per serving (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1).

Multiple whole grains in commercial combination foods

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain portion of the combination food contains more than one whole grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine crediting information (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1). The ingredients statement below shows an example for a breaded chicken patty.

- **Example for breaded chicken patty**
  Ingredients: Chicken, water, salt, and natural flavor. **Breaded with:** *unbleached enriched wheat flour [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid]*, water, **whole-wheat flour**, **whole oats**, dried onion, dried garlic, dried yeast, brown sugar, extractives of paprika, and spices. Breading set in vegetable oil.

  The grain portion (breading) contains enriched flour as the first ingredient and also contains two whole grains (whole-wheat flour and whole oats). To meet the WGR criteria, the product's PFS must document that the combined weight of the two whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion (refer to "Documentation for commercial products" in section 1).

Rule of Three WGR Criteria for Grain Foods Made from Scratch

Grain foods made from scratch (such as breads, rolls, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) are WGR if the combined amount of all whole grains is equal to or more than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the recipe. The examples below show how CACFP facilities can determine if recipes meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

- **Example 1:** A muffin recipe contains 2 pounds of whole-wheat flour and 2 pounds of enriched flour. This recipe is WGR because the weight of the whole grain and enriched flour are equal.

- **Example 2:** A bread recipe contains ¾ pound of whole-grain flour, ½ pound of rolled oats, and 1 pound of enriched flour. This recipe is WGR because the combined weight of the two whole grains (whole-grain flour and rolled oats) is 1¼ pounds, which exceeds the weight of the enriched flour.

For examples of how to determine if grain foods made from scratch are WGR, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Rule of Three WGR Criteria for Combination Foods Made from Scratch

The Rule of Three WGR criteria apply only to the grain portion of combination foods made from scratch. Examples of combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-E include pizza crust in pizza, breaded chicken, and baked fish coated with breadcrumbs. Examples of combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups H-I include noodles in lasagna and baked chicken coated with crushed cereal flakes.

> The grain portion of a recipe for a combination food is WGR if the combined amount of whole grains in the grain portion is equal to or more than the combined amount of all other creditable grains in the grain portion.

Menu planners must review the CACFP facility's recipes to determine if the grain portion credits as WGR or enriched grains.

Required Documentation for Grains

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that commercial grain products and food made from scratch comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR requirements. Acceptable documentation for commercial products includes CN labels (if the grain portion is part of a CN-labeled MMA product) and PFS forms. Recipes (preferably standardized) are required for foods made from scratch. The CSDE will review this documentation as part of the Administrative Review of the CACFP (refer to "Required Crediting Documentation" in section 1).

The CSDE recommends that CACFP menus include information about the type of grain items served for each meal and snack. This helps to document meal pattern compliance and provide information for families. For example, the menu planner could list:

- "whole-wheat bread," "whole grain-rich bread," or "enriched white bread" instead of "bread;
- "brown rice" or "enriched rice" instead of "rice;"
- "enriched spaghetti" instead of "spaghetti;"
- "whole-corn tortilla" instead of "tortilla;" and
- "fortified whole-grain breakfast cereal" instead of "breakfast cereal."

Other acceptable methods for indicating which grains on CACFP menus are WGR include

- using abbreviations, such "WW bread" for whole-wheat bread or "WGR blueberry muffin" for a WGR blueberry muffin;
- using symbols to indicate WGR foods; or
- using a check box to signify that a food is WGR.

Menus that include abbreviations or symbols should also indicate what they mean. For example, the menu could feature a statement such as: "WGR means a food that is whole grain-rich."

CACFP facilities should indicate the crediting and WGR information for the grains component on the daily production record (if used) or provide other menu documentation, such as:

- a binder of nutrition information for commercial products that includes Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients statements;
- a list of all grain products served that indicates which foods are WGR or enriched, or a fortified breakfast cereal;
- recipes (preferably standardized recipes) for foods made from scratch; and
- CN labels and PFS forms for commercial foods.

CACFP facilities must also maintain documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the added sugars limit. Documentation should include the product's Nutrition Facts label and the CACFP facility's calculation showing that the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of

added sugars per dry ounce. Menu planners may determine if breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars by using the CSDE's *Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Resources for WGR Criteria

The resources below assist menu planners with identifying foods that meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns: Module 14: Grains Component ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module14

- Grains 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/grains

- Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/wgr_requirement_cacfp.pdf

- How to Spot Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/spot-whole-grain-rich-foods

- Identifying Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Using the Ingredient List (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/identifying-whole-grain-rich-foods

- Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the Child and Adult Care Food Program? (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/recipe-whole-grain-rich

- When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_cacfp.pdf

- Whole Grain-rich Requirement (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/grains#WGR

For additional resources, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

8 — Grains Component Servings

The required meal pattern servings for the grains component are in oz eq. These servings refer to the required weights for different types of grain groups based on the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (refer to "USDA's Exhibit A Chart" in this section).

The amount of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the number of servings provided by a specific quantity of grain as purchased (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

The grains component is required at breakfast, but menu planners may substitute MMA for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. For more information, refer to "MMA substitutions for breakfast menus" in section 3. The grains component is required at lunch. A serving of grains may be one of the two required meal components at snack.

The table below summarizes the required servings of the grains component for each age group and meal.

Table 8-1. Required meal pattern servings for the grains component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)	Adults
Breakfast	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Lunch and supper	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Snack (may be one of the two required meal components)	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

Minimum Creditable Amount for Grains

The minimum creditable amount is ¼ oz eq. Grains offered in amounts less than ¼ oz eq do not count toward the required meal pattern servings.

When crediting grains toward the meal pattern requirements, menu planners must round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq. For example, a standardized recipe or commercial product that contains 1.49 oz eq of creditable grains per serving credits as 1.25 oz eq of the grains component.

Offering A Combination of Grains

CACFP facilities may choose to serve a combination of several grain menu items to meet the minimum daily requirement for each age group if each serving contains at least ¼ oz eq of grains, i.e., the minimum creditable amount (refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in section 1). For example:

- a lunch or supper menu for ages 6-12 could provide the required 2 oz eq of grains from ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq); and
- a lunch or supper menu for ages 2-5 could provide the required ½ oz eq of grains from ⅛ cup of brown rice (¼ oz eq) and ¼ ounce of a whole-grain roll (¼ oz eq).

The CACFP facility determines these menu planning decisions.

USDA's Exhibit A Chart

The USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (known as the Exhibit A chart) summarizes the grain oz eq for nine groups (A-I) of creditable grain foods. Each group contains products with similar grain content. The serving of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains.

- Groups A-G include baked goods such as crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, pancakes, and grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, cake, granola bars, and pastries. The serving that provides 1 oz eq varies from 22 grams (0.8 ounces) for foods in group A to 125 grams (4.4 ounce) for foods in group G. **Note:** Grain-based desserts do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns (refer to "Grain-based Desserts Prohibited" in section 6).

- Group H includes cereal grains like pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, and other cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat. These foods require ½ cup cooked or 28 grams (1 ounce) dry to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. Cereal grains typically credit based on the cooked serving, but menu planners may choose to credit cereal grains using the dry uncooked weight. Dry cereal grains used as an ingredient in a standardized recipe (like rolled oats in bread) require 16 grams of creditable grains to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component.

- Group I includes ready-to eat (RTE) cold breakfast cereals like puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola These foods require 1 ounce (28 grams) to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. A 1-ounce serving equals 1 cup of flaked or round cereal, 1¼ cups of puffed cereal, and ¼ cup of granola.

The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for the CACFP meal patterns. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

Methods to Determine Grain Oz Eq

The USDA allows two methods for determining the oz eq of creditable grain products and recipes. CACFP facilities may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. These methods are summarized below.

For detailed guidance on both methods, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* and "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the Exhibit A chart to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the food belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for the CACFP meal patterns.

Menu planners can use the USDA's online Exhibit A Grains Tool to determine the oz eq of grains products and the required amount needed for a specific meal pattern contribution. For more information, refer to the USDA's webinar, *How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool*.

The CSDE's resource, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, reviews the steps for using the Exhibit A quantities to determine the meal pattern contribution of commercial products and standardized recipes.

Method 2: Creditable grains

Method 2 determines the oz eq contribution from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products that have a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving. The required grams of creditable grains per oz eq are different for enriched grains and WGR foods.

- **Enriched grains:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 16 grams of creditable grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains.

- **WGR foods:** To credit as 1 oz eq of a WGR food, foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 16 grams of creditable grains (including at least 8 grams of whole grains) and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains (including at least 14 grams of whole grains).

For guidance on evaluating a grain product's PFS, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. Training on the PFS requirements and how to evaluate a PFS is available in Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

When method 2 is required for commercial products

CACFP facilities may need to obtain additional information to determine the crediting information for some commercial grain products. A PFS is required for commercial products when any of the situations below apply.

> These commercial grain products cannot credit in reimbursable meals or snacks if the manufacturer will not supply a PFS, or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation.

1. The first ingredient is not a creditable grain, but the product contains more than one creditable grain. The PFS must indicate that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

2. **Applies only to WGR foods:** The first ingredient is not a whole grain, but the product contains more than one whole grain. The PFS must indicate that the combined weight of all whole grains is the greatest ingredient by weight.

3. **Applies only to WGR foods:** The first ingredient is a whole grain, and the product contains two or more enriched grains. The PFS must indicate that the weight of the whole grain is equal to more than the combined weight of the enriched grains.

4. **Applies only to WGR foods:** The first ingredient is a flour blend of whole and enriched flour. The PFS must indicate one of the following: 1) the whole grain content is at least 8 grams per oz eq (groups A-G); or 2) the weight of the whole grain in the flour blend is more than the first ingredient (excluding water) listed *after* the flour blend.

5. The product contains noncreditable grains that are not listed in any of the following ways: after the statement, "contains 2% or less;" in a non-grain ingredient; or in the non-grain portion of a combination food. The PFS must indicate that the total weight of noncreditable grains does not exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H-I.

6. A combination food that contains a grain portion does not have a CN label. The PFS must indicate the following: 1) the weight (grams) of each creditable grain per serving; 2) how the product provides that amount according to the USDA's FBG or USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies; and 3) if applicable, the total weight of any noncreditable grains.

7. The manufacturer claims that the product's serving size is less than the required weight or volume in the USDA's Exhibit A chart. The PFS must indicate the following: 1) the weight (grams) of each creditable grain per serving; 2) how the product provides that amount according to the FBG or USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies; and 3) if applicable, the total weight of noncreditable grains.

8. The product is not listed in the USDA's Exhibit A chart. The PFS must indicate the following: 1) the weight (grams) of each creditable grain per serving; 2) how the product provides that amount according to the FBG or USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies; and 3) if applicable, the total weight of noncreditable grains.

For specific guidance on these requirements and examples of commercial products that require a PFS, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Determining Oz Eq for Bread Slices

Bread is in group B of the USDA's Exhibit A chart. One slice must weigh 1 ounce (28 grams) to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component.

The weight of one slice of bread varies among manufacturers and different types of bread products. For some types of bread, one slice weighs more or less than 1 ounce. Menu planners must check the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label to determine the bread product's oz eq contribution per slice.

The weight of one slice is determined by dividing the serving weight by the number of slices per serving, then rounding down to the nearest ¼ oz eq (refer to "Rounding requirements for crediting foods" in section 1). The examples below show how to complete this calculation.

Sample calculation for weight per slice

The Nutrition Facts label for a multigrain bread indicates that the serving is 2 slices (44 grams). Bread is in group B and requires 1 ounce (28 grams) to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component.

1. Determine the weight per slice: Divide the serving weight by the number of slices per serving.
    - 44 grams divided by 2 slices = 22 grams per slice. Since 22 grams is less than 28 grams, one slice of this multigrain bread does not credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component.
2. Determine the grain oz eq per slice: Divide the grams per slice by 28 and round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq.
    - 22 grams divided by 28 grams = 0.78 oz eq, which rounds down to 0.75 oz eq.

One slice of this multigrain bread credits as 0.75 oz eq of the grains component.

Sample calculation for two slices of bread

Menu planners should determine the oz eq contribution of menu items made with 2 slices of bread (such as sandwiches) by adding the weight of both slices together before rounding down to the nearest ¼ oz eq.

- **Example:** A sandwich contains two slices of WGR bread. The Nutrition Facts label indicates that each slice weighs 26 grams. Bread is in group B and requires 1 ounce (28 grams) to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component.

    1. Determine the total weight of the bread in the sandwich: Multiply the weight per slice by the number of slices.

        - 26 grams per slice multiplied by 2 slices = 52 grams.

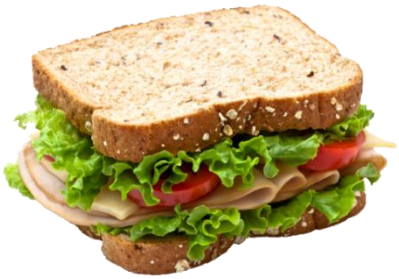
    2. Bread (group B) requires 1 ounce (28 grams) to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. Divide the total weight of the two slices by 28, then round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq.

        - 52 grams divided by 28 grams per oz eq = 1.86 oz eq, which rounds down to 1.75 oz eq.

    This sandwich credits as 1.75 oz eq of the grains component.

If the menu planner rounds down the weight of each slice first, the crediting is less than the 1.75 oz eq provided in the manufacturer's serving.

- **Example:** 26 grams divided by 28 grams per oz eq equals 0.93 oz eq. This rounds down to 0.75 oz eq per slice, which equals 1.5 oz eq of the grains component.



Determining Oz Eq for Graham Cracker Packages

CACFP facilities that offer graham crackers as a 1-oz eq grain menu item must make sure that the serving weighs 1 ounce or 28 grams. Menu planners must follow the rounding rules for oz eq, i.e., round the serving down to the nearest ¼ oz eq (refer to "Rounding requirements for crediting foods" in section 1). Many brands credit as less than 1 oz eq because the individual package does not weigh 1 ounce.

- **Example 1:** A two-count package of graham crackers that weighs 0.49 ounce credits as ¼ oz eq of the grains component due to the rounding rules for oz eq. The menu planner would need to offer four packages to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component.

- **Example 2:** A three-count package of graham crackers that weighs 0.75 or ¾ ounce credits as ¾ oz eq of the grains component due to the rounding rules for oz eq. The menu planner would need to offer two packages to provide at least 1 oz eq of the grains component.

CACFP facilities must review the product's PFS to determine the specific crediting for each brand of graham crackers and if they are WGR or enriched.

Resources for Grain Servings

The resources below assist menu planners with determining the oz eq contribution of grain menu items for the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack.

- Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns: Module 14: Grains Component ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module14

- Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_calculation_cacfp_oz_eq.pdf

- Exhibit A Grains Tool of the Food Buying Guide (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg

- Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/Exhibit_A_Grain_Requirements_For_Child_Nutrition_Programs.pdf

- Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_cacfp.pdf

- How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/how_to_use_ounce_equivalents_chart_cacfp.pdf

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains Ounce Equivalents in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-grains-oz-eq-template.pdf

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains Ounce Equivalents in Child Nutrition Programs: Completed Sample (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-grains-oz-eq-sample.pdf

- Serving Requirements (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/grains#ServingRequirements

- When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_cacfp.pdf

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

8 — Resources

This section includes additional resources and websites to assist CACFP facilities with meeting the crediting requirements for the CACFP. More links to information on the federal and state requirements and guidance for reimbursable meals and snacks are available on the CSDE's Program Guidance for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage and Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. For a list of resources on the meal patterns and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Meal Pattern Requirements

CACFP Meal Pattern Updates (CSDE's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-and-adult-care-food-program#CACFP_Meal_Pattern_Updates

Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program

Menu Forms ("Menu Forms and Production Records" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/menu-forms-and-production-records

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards

Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/summary_final_rule_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

USDA Final Rule Correction: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the HHFKA of 2010 (81 FR 75671):
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/01/2016-26339/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act

USDA Final Rule: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24347):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-042524

USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 25073):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-050826

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/qas-updated-meal-pattern-requirements

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp

USDA Memo CACFP 17-2017: Documenting Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/documenting-meals

Program Guidance

CACFP Afterschool Programs (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool

CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-at-risk-afterschool-care-centers

CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-child-care-centers

CACFP Emergency Shelters (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-emergency-shelters

CACFP Family Day Care Homes (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-family-day-care-homes

CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinars

CACFP Handbooks (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/handbooks

CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets

CACFP Updates (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-updates

Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) Documents and Resources (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/resources

Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs

Forms for CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-child-care-centers/forms

Forms for CACFP Homes (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-family-day-care-homes/forms

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/manuals-and-guides-for-child-nutrition-programs

Operational Memoranda for the CACFP (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/operational-memoranda-for-the-cacfp

Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-cacfp-child

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs

Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program

Training for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/training-for-child-nutrition-programs

Glossary

added sugars: Sugars and syrups added to foods in processing or preparation, as opposed to the naturally occurring sugars found in nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy products. Names for added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup.

Administrative Review (AR): A periodic review of an institution's operations of the Child Nutrition Programs, conducted by the Connecticut State Department of Education to monitor performance and assess compliance with all USDA regulations.

alternate protein products (APPs): APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for crediting APPs in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

artificial sweeteners: A category of nonnutritive sweeteners used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. The six artificial sweeteners approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include acesulfame potassium (Ace-K) (e.g., Sweet One®, Sunett ®, and Sweet & Safe®); advantame; aspartame (e.g., Nutrasweet®, Equal®, and Sugar Twin®; neotame (e.g., Newtame®); saccharin (e.g., Sweet and Low®, Sweet Twin®, and Necta Sweet); and sucralose (Splenda®). These nonnutritive sweeteners are calorie-free except for aspartame, which is very low in calories. For more information, refer to "nonnutritive sweeteners" in this section.

at-risk afterschool care centers: The at-risk afterschool meals component of the CACFP provides reimbursement for snacks and suppers served to children through age 18 who are participating in afterschool programs in eligible (at-risk) areas. The program provides funds to public and private nonprofit (federal tax-exempt) and for-profit organizations, and schools, for nutritious snacks and suppers served as part of organized programs of care, which are known to help reduce or prevent children's involvement in high-risk behaviors. All snacks must meet the requirements of the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, visit the USDA's CACFP Afterschool Programs webpage and the CSDE's CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers webpage.

bean dip: A spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness.

beans, peas, and lentils (pulses): The dried edible seeds of legumes (such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas). Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow beans, peas, and lentils to credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component. For more information, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as MMA" in section 3 and "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables" in section 4.

bran: The seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Examples include oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran. Bran credits the same as enriched grains.

breakfast cereals: Ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola) and instant and regular hot cereals (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). RTE breakfast cereals can be eaten as sold and are typically fortified with vitamins and minerals.

CACFP adult meal patterns: The required meal components and minimum serving sizes that adult day care centers participating in the CACFP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals (breakfast, lunch, and supper) and snacks served to participants. For more information, visit the "CACFP Adult Meal Patterns" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

CACFP facilities: Child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool programs, and adult day care centers that participate in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program.

CACFP meal patterns for children: The required meal components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. The CACFP meal patterns apply to children ages 1-12; children ages 15 and younger of migrant workers; children of any age with disabilities; and children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool care centers and emergency shelters. For more information, visit the "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

CACFP meal patterns for infants: The required meal components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to infants from birth through 11 months to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to infants. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *CACFP Infant Meal Pattern*, and the USDA's guide, *Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the CSDE's Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

CACFP sponsor: A public or private nonprofit organization that is entirely responsible for the administration of the CACFP in one or more day care homes, child care centers, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, or adult day care centers. In some situations, for-profit institutions may also be eligible to participate in the CACFP. For more information, refer to the section 7 CFR 226.2 of the CACFP regulations.

carbohydrates: A category of nutrients that includes sugars (simple carbohydrates) and starch and fiber (complex carbohydrates). Carbohydrates are easily converted by the body to energy (calories). Foods that provide carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, breads, cereals, grains, milk, and dairy products) are important sources of many nutrients. However, foods containing large amounts of added sugars provide calories but few, if any, nutrients. For more information, refer to "added sugars" and "simple carbohydrates" in this section.

cereal grains: The seeds that come from grasses. Cereal grains can be whole grain (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rolled wheat, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and wheat berries) or enriched (such as enriched cornmeal, corn grits, and farina).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program providing nutritious meals and snacks to children in child care centers, family day care homes, and emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to children participating in eligible at-risk afterschool care programs. The CACFP also provides meals and snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. For more information, visit the USDA's CACFP webpage and the CSDE's CACFP webpage.

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement approved by the USDA that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Child Nutrition Labels" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA's federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE's Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

combination food: A menu item that contains more than one meal component, such as pizza, sandwiches, burritos, tacos, lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and smoothies made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains two meal components from the pasta (grains component) and cheese (MMA component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza and burritos) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

corn masa: Dough made from masa harina that is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Corn masa is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to "nixtamalization" in this section.

cornmeal: Meal made from ground, dried corn.

creditable food: A food or beverage that counts toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and snacks in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

creditable grains: The ingredients in a commercial grain product or standardized recipe that credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

cycle menu: A series of menus planned for a specific period, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help Child Nutrition Programs comply with the meal pattern requirements, control food cost, control inventory, improve staff efficiency, and save time and labor costs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the "Cycle Menus" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

deep-fat frying: Cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat. The CACFP prohibits deep-fat frying foods on site.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans: A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education, and information programs. For more information, visit the Dietary Guidelines for Americans webpage.

disability: A condition in which a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Modifications for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

edible portion: The portion of a food that can be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed. Examples include cooked, lean meat without bone, and fruits without seeds or pits.

endosperm: The soft, white inside portion of the whole-grain kernel. The endosperm contains starch, protein, and small amounts of B vitamins.

enriched grains: Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B_1), riboflavin (B_2), niacin (B_3), folic acid, and iron. For more information, refer the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

enrichment: Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, refer to "enriched grains" in this section.

entree: Refer to "main dish" in this section.

Exhibit A chart: A USDA chart that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for different types of grain foods to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, lists the Exhibit A grain oz eq that apply to the CACFP. This chart may be used to determine the grain oz eq for commercial grain products and for recipes that indicate the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. For more information, refer to the USDA's resource, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*.

flour: Finely ground and sifted wheat or other grains such as rye, corn, rice, or buckwheat.

fluid milk substitutes: Plant-based beverages like fortified soy milk that are intended to replace cow's milk. CACFP facilities may choose to offer allowable fluid milk substitutes to participants who do not consume milk due to non-disability reasons. Fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Adult Participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

food item: A specific food offered within the required meal components for reimbursable meals and snacks in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. A food item may contain one or more meal components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, an entree could provide 1 oz eq of the grains component and 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

food-based menu planning: A type of menu planning for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs that uses a meal pattern with specific meal components in certain amounts based on specific age groups. For more information, refer to "meal components" in this section.

fortification: Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage, or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (such as fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body's absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., fortifying "energy" bars made from processed flour with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

fruits component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that includes fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juices. For more information, refer to section 5 and visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

full meal component: The daily quantity designated by the menu planner (no less than the established minimum) to meet the required weekly ranges.

full serving: Refer to "full meal component" in this section.

full-strength fruit or vegetable juice: An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state or as an ingredient in a standardized recipe. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: "full-strength juice," "single-strength juice," "100 percent juice," "reconstituted juice," or "juice from concentrate." For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

germ: The vitamin-rich sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel. Germ credits the same as enriched grains.

grain-based desserts: Desserts made of grains, such as brownies, cookies, sweet crackers (e.g., graham crackers and animal crackers), cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, orange cranberry, and chocolate chip), sweet croissants (e.g., chocolate or almond filled), sweet rice puddings (e.g., cinnamon and vanilla), sweet bread puddings (e.g., made with cinnamon, fruits, chocolate, or icing), and sweet pita chips (e.g., cinnamon sugar). For more information, refer to "Grain-based Desserts" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. **Note:** Except for sweet crackers like graham crackers and animal crackers, grain-based desserts do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

grains component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that includes cereal grains and products made from their flours. Creditable grain foods include products and recipes that are WGR or enriched. Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified For more information, refer to section 6 and visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

grains: Plants in the grass family that produce a dry, edible fruit commonly called a kernel, grain, or berry.

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP): A preventative food safety program to control food safety hazards during all aspects of food service operations. HACCP reduces the risk of foodborne hazards by focusing on each step of the food preparation process from receiving to service.

hominy: A traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin. For crediting information, refer to "Crediting Hominy as Vegetables" in section 4 and "Crediting Hominy as Grains" in section 5.

juice drink: A product resembling juice that contains full-strength juice along with added water and possibly other ingredients, such as sweeteners, spices, or flavorings. Juice drinks do not credit toward the meal pattern requirements.

lactose: The naturally occurring sugar found in milk. Lactose contains glucose and galactose. For more information, refer to "simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

lean meat and poultry: Defined by the USDA as meat and poultry that contains less than 10 grams of fat, no more than 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 grams and per labeled serving size, based on the USDA's definitions for food label use. Examples include 95 percent lean cooked ground beef, beef top round steak or roast, beef tenderloin, pork top loin chop or roast, pork tenderloin, ham or turkey deli slices, skinless chicken breast, and skinless turkey breast.

legumes: A type of plant that includes pods, e.g., soybeans, peanuts, fresh peas, fresh beans, and pulses (beans, peas, and lentils). For more information, refer to "beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)" and "pulses" in this section.

main dish: The main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. Examples of main dish items include pizza, chicken stir-fry, and chef's salad with ham, hard-boiled egg, and cheese.

masa harina: Corn flour used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Masa harina is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to "nixtamalization" in this section and "Crediting Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal" in section 6.

meal components: The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates. For information on the individual meal components, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

meal pattern: The required meal components and minimum servings that schools and institutions participating in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to participants. For more information, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

meal: A grain made by coarsely grinding corn, oats, wheat, or other grains. Whole grain, enriched, or fortified meal credits toward the grains component of the USDA's meal patterns.

meals: Refer to "reimbursable meals" in this section.

meat alternates: Foods that provide a similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), yogurt, soy yogurt, commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein in a ¼-cup (2.2 ounces) serving, and tempeh. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

meats/meat alternates (MMA) component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, nuts, and seeds. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

medical statement: A document signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate dietary accommodations for participants with special dietary needs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Modifications for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

menu item: Any single food or combination food offered on the menu. A menu item may contain one or more meal components. For example, vegetable lasagna is a menu item that contains three meal components: vegetables, grains (pasta noodles), and MMA (cheese).

milk component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that includes pasteurized fluid milk that meets federal and state regulations. The milk component also includes fluid milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to "fluid milk substitutes" and "nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes" in this section, and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to children each school day. The NSLP was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE's National School Lunch Program webpage.

natural cheese: Cheese that is produced directly from milk. Examples include cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, Muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheeses do not include pasteurized processed cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, or pasteurized process cheese products. For more information, refer to "Crediting Cheeses" in section 3.

nixtamalization: A process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients and results in a product with a similar nutrition content to whole-grain corn. Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Nixtamalized corn credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to "Crediting Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal" in section 6.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward the meal patterns for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods and beverages are either in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverages that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a meal component) or they do not meet the crediting requirements of the meal components. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients that do not contribute to the grains component. Examples include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

nonnutritive sweeteners: Ingredients without calories that are hundreds of times sweeter than sugars and that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners include the six FDA-approved artificial sweeteners (acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), advantame, aspartame, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose) and three plant-based sweeteners (stevia, monk fruit, and thaumatin) that are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) by the FDA. For guidance on the FDA approved nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to the FDA's Aspartame and Other Sweeteners in Food webpage.

nutrient-dense foods: Foods and beverages that provide vitamins, minerals, and other substances that contribute to adequate nutrient intakes or may have positive health effects, and contain little or no solid fats, added sugars, refined starches, or sodium. Ideally, these foods and beverages are also in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. Examples include all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry (when prepared with little or no added solid fats, sugars, refined starches, and sodium). The term "nutrient dense" indicates the nutrients and other beneficial substances in a food have not been "diluted" by the addition of calories from added solid fats, sugars, or refined starches, or by the solid fats naturally present in the food.

nutrient-rich foods: Refer to "nutrient-dense foods" in this section.

nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The USDA's nutrition requirements for plant-based beverages like soy milk that are used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and meet the following nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalents (RAE) of vitamin A; 2.5 mcg of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Adult Participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

nutritive sweeteners: Sugars and sweeteners that contain calories and are used to sweeten foods and beverages. Examples include brown rice syrup, brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, corn syrup solids, dextrin, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, maple syrup, nectars (e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar), raw sugar, sorghum syrup, sucrose, and syrup. For more information, refer to "added sugars" and "simple carbohydrates (sugars)" in this section.

ounce equivalent (oz eq): A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and MMA component in the meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. Oz eq accounts for dry versus cooked grains and variations in MMA. One oz eq of the MMA component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutritional content. One oz eq of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., pretzels, breadsticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., muffins and pancakes). For more information, refer to "Exhibit A chart" in this section and the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

point-of-service meal count: The moment in the meal service where staff can accurately determine that the child has been served all required meal components for a reimbursable meal or snack. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

potable water: Water that is safe for human consumption.

pre-fried foods: Commercially prepared foods such as meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables that are fried by the manufacturer during preparation. These foods are usually cooked by the food service operation in the oven or microwave. Pre-fried foods include refrigerated or frozen items that are breaded or battered, most frozen potato products, and most frozen products described as "crispy" or "crunchy." Examples include chicken nuggets, chicken patties, fish sticks, french fries, tater tots, hash browns, and onion rings.

primary grain ingredient: The greatest grain ingredient by weight. For commercial grain foods, this is the first ingredient (excluding water) listed in the product's ingredients statement. For commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion, this is the first grain ingredient (excluding water) listed in the product's ingredients statement. For commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion listed separately, this is the first ingredient (excluding water) listed in the grain portion of the product's ingredients statement.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. A PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The USDA requires a PFS for commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the FBG. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

production record: A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare CACFP meals and snacks. Production records demonstrate how meals contribute to the required meal components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. Production records are required for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern and are strongly encouraged for all CACFP sponsors. For more information, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

pulses: The edible dry seeds from legumes, such as beans, peas, and lentils. For more information, refer to "beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)" and "legumes" in this section.

recognizable food item: A food that is visible in the offered breakfast or lunch and allows students to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies (refer to "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in Section 3), pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies (refer to "Crediting Pureed Vegetables in Smoothies" in section 4 and "Crediting Fruit Juices and Pureed Fruits in Smoothies" in section 5), and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flour (refer to "Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour" in section 4).

refined grains: Grains that have been processed to remove the bran and germ, making the product less nutritious than whole grains. Refined grains may or may not be enriched. For more information, refer to "enriched grains" in this section.

registered dietitian (RD) or registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN): An individual who meets the following requirements: 1) completed a minimum of a graduate degree at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND); 2) completed an ACEND®-accredited supervised practice program at a health-care facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies; 3) passed a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); and 4) completed continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration. For more information, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' (AND) Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Fact Sheet website.

reimbursable meals and snacks: Meals and snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the USDA regulations and are eligible for USDA funds. Reimbursable meals and snacks contain the minimum serving of each required meal component.

saturated fat: A type of fat that raises blood cholesterol, which is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Major sources of saturated fat include coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils, butter, and beef fats. Saturated fat is also found in other animal fats, such as pork and chicken fats, and in other plant fats, such as nuts. For more information, refer to "solid fats" in this section.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, number of pieces, or slices of a food or beverage. CACFP facilities must provide the minimum serving sizes specified in the USDA meal patterns for meals and snacks to be reimbursable.

simple carbohydrates (sugars): Carbohydrates consisting of one sugar (e.g., fructose and galactose) or two sugars (e.g., lactose, maltose, and sucrose). Sugars can be naturally present in foods (such as fructose in fruit or lactose in milk) or added to foods (such as sucrose or table sugar). Foods that naturally contain simple carbohydrates (such as fruits, milk, and milk products, and some vegetables) also contain vitamins and minerals. Foods that contain large amounts of added sugars (such as cookies, candy, pastries, sweetened baked goods, regular soft drinks, and other sweetened drinks) provide calories with few, if any, nutrients. For more information, refer to "added sugars" in this section.

sodium: A mineral that helps maintain the body's fluid balance and blood pressure. Diets that are high in sodium can increase the risk of high blood pressure in individuals who are sodium sensitive.

solid fats: Fats that are usually not liquid at room temperature. Solid fats are found in most animal foods but also can be made from vegetable oils through hydrogenation. Some common solid fats include butter, beef fat (tallow, suet), chicken fat, pork fat (lard), stick margarine, coconut oil, palm oil, and shortening. Foods high in solid fats include full-fat (regular) cheese, cream, whole milk, ice cream, well-marbled cuts of meats, regular ground beef, bacon, sausages, poultry skin, and many baked goods (such as cookies, crackers, donuts, pastries, and croissants). Solid fats contain more saturated fats. For more information, refer to "saturated fats" in this section.

standard of identity: A legal or regulatory definition that specifies the required ingredients, composition, and sometimes processing methods for a particular food product. These standards ensure that products labeled with a certain name meet specific criteria for quality and content, helping to protect consumers and maintain consistency in the marketplace. The USDA develops standards for meat and poultry products. The FDA develops standards for other food products. For more information, visit the FDA's Standards of Identity for Food webpage.

standardized recipe: A recipe that a food service operation has 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. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, 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.

state licensed healthcare professional: An individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law and is recognized by the State Department of Public Health (DPH). In Connecticut, this includes physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Modifications for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

sucrose: Another name for table sugar. Sucrose contains glucose and fructose. For more information, refer to "simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

sugar alcohols (polyols): A type of carbohydrate used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Sugar alcohols are incompletely absorbed and metabolized by the body and contribute fewer calories than most sugars. They also perform other functions such as adding bulk and texture to foods. Common sugar alcohols include sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, maltitol syrup, lactitol, erythritol, isomalt, and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH). Products with sugar alcohols are often labeled "sugar free." Large amounts of sugar alcohols may cause bloating, gas, or diarrhea. For more information, refer to "nonnutritive sweeteners" in this section.

sugars: Refer to "added sugars" and "simple carbohydrates" in this section.

surimi: Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. CACFP facility must obtain a PFS for tempeh products that contain different ingredients.

USDA Foods: Foods available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE's Food Distribution Program. USDA Foods are available in several ways, including Direct Delivery USDA Foods, Further Processed USDA Foods, the USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Pilot, and the SFSP USDA DoD Pilot. For more information, visit the USDA's USDA Foods Programs webpage and the CSDE's Food Distribution Program webpage.

vegetable subgroups: The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables food group that are recommended by the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These subgroups include dark green, red/ orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. The CACFP meal patterns do not require the vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend providing at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup per week. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

vegetables component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that includes vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice; and includes five subgroups. Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings at lunch or breakfast. For more information, visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

wheat bread: Bread that often has wheat flour or enriched wheat flour (not whole-wheat flour) as an ingredient. Wheat bread is not whole grain unless it is labeled "whole-wheat bread."

whole foods: Foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, or sodium.

whole fruits and vegetables: Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, and sodium.

whole grain-rich: Foods that contain between 50 and 100 percent whole grains, any remaining grains are enriched. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

whole grains: Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

whole-grain flour: Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Flour or meal that does not contain all parts of the grain is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour.

whole-wheat bread: Bread that contains the whole grain, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. Whole-wheat flour will be listed as the first grain ingredient.

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