Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs

Child Care Centers • Family Day Care Homes

Emergency Shelters • At-risk Afterschool Care Centers

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450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504
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Project Director: Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator

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About this Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs* contains comprehensive guidance and resources to assist child care sponsors of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) with planning menus to meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CACFP meal patterns for children. The requirements in this guide apply to all CACFP child care facilities including child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes.

This guide does not apply to meals and snacks for infants (birth through 11 months), which must follow the CACFP infant meal patterns (7 CFR 226.20(b)(4)). For more information, visit the CSDE's Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

The USDA provides guidance for implementing the CACFP through the policy memos on the USDA's FNS Documents & Resources webpage. Links to the USDA's regulations and final rules for the Child Nutrition Programs are available on the CSDE's Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage. Visit the CSDE's Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage for links to information and guidance on the federal and state requirements for the CACFP.

> The contents of this guide are based on the current USDA regulations and policy as of the date of this publication. This information is subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance regarding the CACFP meal patterns for children. Please check the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage for the most current version.

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.

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.

Child Care Centers	Family Day Care Homes
Bernice Amponsah 860-807-2117 bernice.amponsah@ct.gov Susan Boyle 860-807-2074 susan.boyle@ct.gov Benedict Onye 860-807-2080 benedict.onye@ct.gov	Flor Sprouse 860-713-6849 flor.sprouse@ct.gov

For information on the CACFP, visit the CSDE's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) webpage.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

APP	alternate protein product
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCCNS	Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards
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
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service, 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
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SOP	standard operating procedure
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WGR	whole grain-rich
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

1 — CACFP Meal Patterns for Children

The goal of the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs is to improve and maintain children's health and nutrition while promoting the development of good eating habits. The CACFP meal patterns for children are designed to meet children's needs for calories and key nutrients, and apply to the following age groups:

- ages 1-12,
- ages 15 and younger of migrant workers,
- children of any age with disabilities, and
- through age 18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

To receive reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children, CACFP facilities must provide the required meal components and minimum servings for each age group.

CACFP Meal Pattern Legislation

The CACFP meal patterns for children are defined in 7 CFR 226.20(c) of the CACFP regulations. The current meal patterns were effective October 1, 2017, as legislated by the USDA Final Rule (81 FR 24347), *CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*. This final rule updated the CACFP meal patterns to align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* by including more whole grains and a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, and reducing added sugars and solid fats in CACFP meals and snacks.

Changes to CACFP Meal Patterns

On April 25, 2024, the USDA published the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (89 FR 31962),. This final rule implements gradual updates to the Child Nutrition Programs in several key areas, including the CACFP meal patterns for children. These changes are summarized below and highlighted throughout this guide as applicable.

> The final rule also requires other changes that are not related to the CACFP adult meal patterns. For more information, refer to USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024. *Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Meal pattern changes effective July 1, 2024

Effective July 1, 2024, the final rule implements the terminology updates and menu planning flexibility below.

- Changes all previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from “food component” to “meal component.”
- Allows nuts and seeds to credit for the full meats/meat alternates (MMA) component in all meals and snacks, removing the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch and supper.
- Changes all previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from “legumes (beans and peas)” to “beans, peas, and lentils.”
- Updates the previous MMA quantities from ounces to ounce equivalents (oz eq). The amount of MMA that credits as 1 ounce or 1 oz eq is the same.

These updates do not require CACFP facilities to change menus or operations. However, the change to the crediting requirement for nuts and seed provides flexibility for menu planners.

Meal pattern changes effective October 1, 2025

Effective October 1, 2025, the final rule changes the CACFP meal pattern's product-based limits for yogurt and breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars.

- Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

For more information on the final rule changes, refer to the CSDE's *Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the "Meal Pattern Updates" section of the CSDE's CACFP webpage.

Required Age Groups

The CACFP meal patterns for children include four age groups:

- ages 1-2;
- ages 3-5;
- ages 6-12; and
- ages 13-18 (applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters).

For information on the CACFP meal patterns, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Reimbursable Meals

The CACFP meal patterns for children consist of minimum servings of specific meal components for each age group. Meals and snacks served to children 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).

Meal Components

Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the previous terminology for "food component" to "meal component." A meal component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals and snacks, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (MMA). Table 1-1 indicates the required meal components in the CACFP meal patterns for children. The required serving for each meal component is the specified amount for each age group in the CACFP meal patterns.

Each meal component has specific crediting requirements. All foods must meet these requirements to credit as a meal component of reimbursable meals and snacks. This includes commercial products, foods made from scratch by the CACFP facility, and foods prepared by vendors. For more information on the crediting requirements, refer to section 3.

Table 1-1. Required meal components for the CACFP meal patterns for children

Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
3 meal components • Milk • Vegetables, fruits, or both • Grains [1]	**5 meal components** • Milk • MMA • Vegetables [2] • Fruits • Grains	**Choose 2 of 5 meal components** • Milk • MMA • Vegetables • Fruits • Grains

[1] MMA may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week (refer to "MMA at breakfast" in section 3).

[2] Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch and supper. The two servings of vegetables must be different kinds (refer to "Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch and supper" in section 3).

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.

Required Servings

The CACFP meal patterns for children require minimum servings of each meal component. Meals and snacks that contain less than the minimum serving of any meal component do not meet the meal patterns and are not reimbursable. For example, the breakfast meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both. If the breakfast menu contains less than ½ cup, these meals are not reimbursable.

Additional Foods

CACFP menus may include additional foods or larger servings beyond the minimum meal pattern requirements. 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.

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of additional foods based on the nutritional needs of each age group. Young children have small appetites and might not consume the nutritious meal components if the CACFP menu includes additional foods.

Some additional foods do not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children and cannot be served or should be served only in moderation (refer to “Noncreditable Foods” in section 3).

Nutrition Standards

The CACFP meal patterns for children require nutrition standards for some specific foods. These include limits for sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals and a minimum protein requirement for tofu. For more information, refer to “Crediting Yogurt and Soy Yogurt,” “Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals,” and “Crediting Commercial Tofu and Tofu Products” in section 3. The CACFP meal patterns for children also prohibit deep-fat drying foods on site.

CACFP Meal Patterns for Children

The charts below show the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast (table 1-2), lunch (table 1-3), and snack (table 1-4). Menu planning notes for each meal component are provided in the online versions of the CACFP meal patterns, which are available on the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Training on the CACFP meal patterns is available in the CSDE's recorded training modules, Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children.

Table 1-2. CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children

Breakfast meal components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Milk, fluid Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored Ages 2-5: Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored	4 fluid ounces (fl oz) (½ cup)	6 fl oz (¾ cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains, ounce equivalents (oz eq)	**½ oz eq =**	**½ oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup	1¼ cups	1¼ cups
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper pattern for children

Lunch meal components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Milk, fluid Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored Ages 2-5: Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored	4 fl oz (½ cup)	6 fl oz (¾ cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
MMA, oz eq	**1 oz eq =**	**1½ oz eq =**	**2 oz eq =**	**2 oz eq =**
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; APPs; or tempeh	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Surimi	3 ounces	4.4 ounces	6 ounces	6 ounces
Tofu	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)	3.3 ounces (⅜ cup)	4.4 ounces (½ cup)	4.4 ounces (½ cup)
Cottage cheese	2 ounces (¼ cup)	3 ounces (⅜ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)
Egg, large	½	¾	1	1
Beans, peas, and lentils	¼ cup	⅜ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut/seed butters	2 Tablespoons (Tbsp)	3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 ounces (½ cup)	6 ounces (¾ cup)	8 ounces (1 cup)	8 ounces (1 cup)
Vegetables, cups	⅛ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits, cups	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Grains, oz eq	**½ oz eq =**	**½ oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**
WGR or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup	1¼ cups	1¼ cups
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

Table 1-4. CACFP snack pattern for children

Snack meal components ***Serve any two***	**Ages 1-2**	**Ages 3-5**	**Ages 6-12**	**Ages 13-18**
Milk, fluid Age 1: Whole milk, unflavored Ages 2-5: Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored	4 fl oz (½ cup)	4 fl oz (½ cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
MMA, oz eq	**½ oz eq =**	**½ oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; APPs; or tempeh	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Surimi	2 ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces	3 ounces
Tofu	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	2.2 ounces (¼ cup	2.2 ounces (¼ cup
Cottage cheese	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Egg, large	½	½	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut/seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)	4 ounces (½ cup)
Vegetables, cups	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Fruits, cups	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Grains, oz eq	**½ oz eq =**	**½ oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**	**1 oz eq =**
WGR or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup	1¼ cups	1¼ cups
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

Overview of CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements

This section summarizes the requirements for the CACFP meal patterns for children. For information on the required records for documenting meal pattern compliance, refer to section 2. For detailed guidance on the crediting requirements for each meal component, refer to section 3.

Breakfast requirements

Breakfast menus must meet the requirements below.

- **Required meal components:** Breakfasts must include three meal components: one serving of the milk component; one serving of vegetables, fruits, or both; and one serving of the grains component. The serving offered for each meal component must be at least the minimum quantity for each age group in the CACFP breakfast meal pattern (refer to table 1-2 in this section).

- **Breakfast cereals:** CACFP facilities must document whether cooked and RTE breakfast cereals are WGR, enriched, or fortified. This information may be listed on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all cereals served in CACFP meals and snacks. For more information, refer to "Required Documentation for Grains" in "Part B: WGR Requirement" of section 3.

- **Cereal with milk:** The menu must list the specific type of cereal as one component (e.g., "whole-grain granola") and the specific type of fluid milk as another (e.g., "unflavored low-fat milk"). "Cereal with milk" does not indicate that the breakfast menu provides the required amount of cereal or the required amount and appropriate type of milk.

- **Juice and fruit:** CACFP facilities must document the specific types of juices and fruits served. For example, indicate "orange juice" instead of "juice," and "banana or diced peaches" instead of "fresh fruit choice." This information may be listed on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of juices and fruits served in CACFP meals and snacks.

- **Juice limit:** If the breakfast menu credits juice as the vegetables and fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack that same day (refer to "Juice limit" in section 3).

- **Substituting MMA for grains:** The MMA component may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A ½-oz eq serving of the MMA component substitutes for ½ oz eq of the grains component (refer to "MMA at Breakfast" in section 3).

- **Water availability:** CACFP facilities must make water available during the meal service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components (refer to "Water Availability" in section 4).

For additional guidance and breakfast menu ideas, refer to the USDA's *It's Breakfast Time! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age* and visit the "Breakfast" section in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Lunch and supper requirements

Lunch and supper menus must meet the requirements below.

- **Required meal components:** Lunches and suppers must include five meal components: one serving of the milk component; one serving of the MMA component; one serving of the vegetables component; one serving of the fruits component (or vegetable substitutions); and one serving of the grains component. The serving offered for each meal component must be at least the minimum quantity in the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern (refer to table 1-3 in this section).

- **Substituting vegetables for fruits:** The vegetables component may substitute for the fruits component at any lunch or supper (refer to "Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper" in section 3). Lunch and supper menus must include one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component, or two different servings of the vegetables component. Lunches and suppers cannot contain two servings of only the fruits component.

- **Vegetables and fruits:** CACFP facilities must document the specific types of vegetables and fruits served. For example, indicate "garden salad with lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes" instead of "salad," and "fresh fruit salad (apples, oranges, bananas, and strawberries)" instead of "fruit salad." This information may be listed on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of vegetables and fruits served in CACFP meals and snacks.

- **Water availability:** CACFP facilities must make water available during the meal service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components (refer to "Water Availability" in section 4).

For additional guidance and lunch/supper menu ideas, visit the "Lunch and Supper" section in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Snack requirements

Snack menus must meet the requirements below.

- **Required meal components:** Snacks must include any two of the five meal components. A snack that contains two foods from the same meal component is not reimbursable. For example, orange juice and applesauce are both from the fruits component. However, a snack that contains orange juice (fruits component) and carrot sticks (vegetables component) is reimbursable because it contains two different components. The serving offered for each meal component must be at least the minimum quantity in the CACFP snack meal pattern (refer to table 1-4 in this section).

- **Best practice for vegetables and fruits:** Snack menus should include a vegetable or fruit as often as possible. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend making at least one of the two required snack meal components a vegetable or fruit.

- **Beverage limit:** If the snack menu includes a creditable beverage (milk or juice), the other meal component cannot be a beverage. The snack menu cannot include juice when milk is the only other meal component.

- **Offering milk with yogurt:** If the snack menu includes milk, the other meal component should not be yogurt. The CSDE recommends this practice to increase nutrient variety.

- **Offering more than two food items:** If the snack menu includes more than two different food items, at least two food items must meet the required meal components and servings. An example is a snack that contains yogurt (MMA component), strawberries (fruits component), and granola (grains component). The snack menu or other documentation must clearly indicate the serving size of each menu item and which items contribute to the CACFP snack meal pattern.

- **Water availability:** CACFP facilities must make water available during the snack service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components (refer to "Water Availability" in section 4). Water should be offered as a beverage when the snack menu does not include milk or juice.

For additional guidance and snack menu ideas, refer to the USDA's *Let's Make a Snack! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age* and visit the USDA's Serving Snacks in the CACFP webpage. For more snack menu ideas, visit the "Snacks" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Meal pattern documentation

CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate documentation to indicate that CACFP meals and snacks meet the meal pattern and crediting requirements.

- **Menu:** All sites must have a written menu to document that CACFP meals and snacks provide the required meal components and quantities for each age group (refer to "Menus" in section 2).

- **Production records:** The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use production records (refer to "Production Records" in section 2). Daily production records are required for CACFP child care centers that operate under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

- **Commercial foods:** CACFP facilities must maintain Child Nutrition (CN) labels or production formulation statement (PFS) forms on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial foods served in CACFP menus, such as entrees like pizza and chicken nuggets and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients (e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad). CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the MMA component, but they usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products, such as grains, vegetables, and fruits. For more information, refer to "Child Nutrition (CN) Labels" and "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2.

- **Foods made from scratch:** CACFP facilities must maintain recipes (preferably standardized) on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods prepared from scratch. Vendors that prepare foods for CACFP facilities must also be able to document the CACFP meal pattern contribution of their recipes. Examples of foods prepared from scratch include entrees (such as pizza, macaroni and cheese, and sandwiches), grains (such as pancakes, muffins, and breads), and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients (e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad). For more information, refer to "Standardized Recipes" in section 2.

- **Alternate protein products (APPs):** CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that APPs meet the requirements in appendix A of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). For more information, refer to "Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Breakfast cereals:** CACFP facilities documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the sugars limit and that the menu planner determined compliance using one of the USDA's three allowable methods. For more information, refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Tofu and tofu products:** CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that tofu and tofu products contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, refer to "Crediting Commercial Tofu and Tofu Products" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

- **WGR foods:** CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that WGR foods were identified using one of the USDA's six allowable methods for determining compliance with the WGR criteria. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Yogurt:** CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that all yogurt and soy yogurt products meet the sugars limit. For more information, refer to "Crediting Yogurt and Soy Yogurt" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

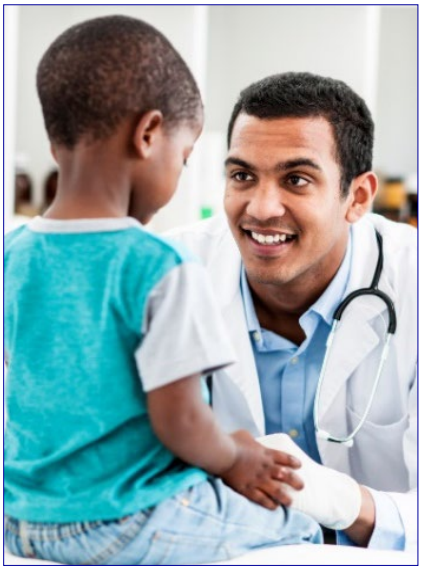
CACFP facilities must maintain all meal pattern documentation on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Meal Modifications for Children with Special Dietary Needs

CACFP facilities must comply with the federal nondiscrimination laws and requirements for meal modifications for children with special dietary needs. These requirements are summarized below. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Children with a disability

The USDA requires reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. "Case-by-case basis" means that the meal modifications are specific to the individual medical condition and dietary needs of each child.



The Connecticut State Department of Public Health defines a state-licensed healthcare professional as an individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. This includes licensed physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN).

The CSDE's medical statements and accompanying instructions and guidance are available in the "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Effective with school year 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024), the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the previous references in the regulations from "medical authority" to "state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian" and revises the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs to specify that state licensed healthcare professionals and registered dietitians may write medical statements to request meal modifications for children with disabilities. The final rule requires CACFP facilities to accept medical statements from registered dietitians by October 1, 2025. CACFP facilities may choose to implement this change prior to this deadline.

Children without a disability

The USDA allows, but does not require, meal modifications for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Examples of optional modifications include requests related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences, such as parents who prefer that their children eat a gluten-free diet or organic foods because they believe it is healthier.

CACFP facilities may choose to provide meal modifications within the CACFP meal patterns on a case-by-case basis for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Some examples include meals modified only for texture (e.g., chopped, ground, or pureed foods) and meals that substitute food items from the same meal component, such as substituting a banana for strawberries (fruits component) or substituting chicken for cheese (MMA component).

CACFP facilities may also choose to provide meal modifications outside the CACFP meal patterns on a case-by-case basis for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. To be reimbursable, modified meals outside the CACFP meal patterns for children require a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

Choking Prevention for Young Children

Children younger than age 4 are at the highest risk of choking while eating. CACFP facilities should consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer in CACFP menus and modify menus as appropriate.

Avoid foods that are choking hazards (such as small marble-sized, sticky, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole). Prepare foods so they are easy for young children to chew and swallow (such as changing the shape, size, and texture of foods). For additional guidance, refer to the USDA's resource, *Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes,* and visit the "Choking Prevention" section of the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Menu Planning Resources

The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on planning meals and snacks to meet the CACFP meal patterns for children. For detailed information on crediting foods in the CACFP meal patterns, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. For a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the CACFP meal pattern and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns*.

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE training webinars): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinar-series
- CACFP Meal Pattern Posters (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/meal-pattern-posters-cacfp
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Slides (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/meal-pattern-training-slides-cacfp
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/meal-pattern-training-worksheets-cacfp
- CACFP Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks
- CACFP Training Tools (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/training-tools-cacfp
- Choking Prevention (CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs/documents#ChokingPrevention
- Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs
- Crediting Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-handbook-child-and-adult-care-food-program
- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

- Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/resources/1575/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers/118740/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers.pdf
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs
- It's Breakfast Time! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/its-breakfast-time
- Let's Make a Snack! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/lets-make-snack
- Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs
- Menu Planning Basics: A Guide for CACFP Operators in Child Care (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menu-planning-basics-cacfp/
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf
- Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf
- Snacks ("How To" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Snacks
- Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs
- USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/questions-and-answers-updated-meal-pattern-requirements

- USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp

For information on recipes, refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Resources for standardized recipes" in section 2. For additional resources, refer to section 5.

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2 — Menu Records

CACFP facilities must be able to document that CACFP meals and snacks provide the required meal components and quantities. Without appropriate documentation, foods and beverages cannot credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. The CSDE will disallow reimbursement for noncompliant meals and snacks.

CACFP facilities should ensure that all appropriate staff are aware of the documents needed to demonstrate that all breakfast, lunch/supper, and snack menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Staff must also understand how to complete and maintain appropriate meal pattern documentation.

Table 2-1 summarizes the required documentation for CACFP meal pattern compliance. CACFP facilities must maintain these records on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Table 2-1. Required documentation for CACFP meal pattern compliance

Commercial foods	Foods made from scratch
• Menus • Production records [1] • Child Nutrition (CN) labels • Product formulation statement (PFS) forms • Nutrition information (Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients) [2]	• Menus • Production records [1] • Recipes (preferably standardized) [3] • Nutrition information (Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients) [2]

[1] Production records are not required in the CACFP except for child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern. The CSDE encourages the use of production records because they provide appropriate documentation that meals and snacks comply with the CACFP meal patterns (refer to "Production Records" in this section).

[2] Nutrition information is required to determine the crediting information for many commercial products any may be needed for ingredients in recipes (refer to "Nutrition Information" in this section).

[3] The CSDE encourages the use of standardized recipes to ensure that menus provide the correct CACFP meal components and servings (refer to "Standardized Recipes" in this section).

CACFP Menus

CACFP facilities must develop menus that represent the actual meal components served for each meal and snack claimed for CACFP reimbursement. The menu must identify the date of the meal service and all meal components and food items served, including the type of milk and which grain products are WGR.

Cycle menus or menus developed in advance of the meal service must specify the month and day and indicate any menu substitutions that occur (refer to "Using cycle menus" in this section).

Each CACFP facility must have a written "menu of record" on file to document the specific meal components served to all enrolled children each day. The CACFP facility must maintain all menus on file with other required CACFP records in accordance with the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.10(d)).

Menu forms

The menu form is an important tool to help CACFP facilities comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Using an appropriate menu form helps to ensure that meals and snacks include the minimum amount of each required meal component. When reviewing CACFP menus for meal pattern compliance, CSDE staff cannot determine if the required meal components are offered unless they are indicated on the menu.

The CSDE strongly discourages CACFP facilities from using a blank calendar as a menu form because the menu planner might omit meal components or provide insufficient servings. This could result in noncompliant menus. Meals with missing meal components or insufficient servings are not reimbursable in the CACFP.

The CSDE's sample CACFP weekly menu forms below help menu planners include the required meal components and servings.

At-risk supper and snack

- At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18
- Two weeks of At-risk Snack for Ages 6-18
- Two-weeks of At-risk Supper for Ages 6-18

Breakfast, lunch, and snack

- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 1-2
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 3-5
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 6-12

Breakfast and snack

- Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5
- Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 3-5
- Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 6-12

Emergency shelters

- AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters
- AM Snack, PM Snack, and Evening Snack for Ages 1-2, 3-5, and 6-18 in Emergency Shelters
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Ages 1-2, 3-5, and 6-18 in Emergency Shelters
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters

Lunch and snack

- AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5

Snack

- AM and PM Snack for Ages 1-2
- AM and PM Snack for Ages 3-5
- Two weeks of AM or PM Snack for Ages 3-5

These menu forms are available under "Menu Forms for CACFP Child Care Programs" in the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to meet individual program needs. Different menu formats should contain appropriate guidance regarding the required meal components and servings for each meal and snack served to each age group.

Using cycle menus

The CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to use cycle menus for CACFP meals and snacks. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a specific period (such as four weeks) with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help CACFP facilities comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time.

The CSDE recommends that cycle menus include at least four weeks. This increases the variety of CACFP meals and snacks offered and ensures that children are not served the same combination of foods too often.

The Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) *Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers* features four seasonal four-week cycle menus for preschoolers. ICN also offers an online learning course, *CARE Connection – Planning Cycle Menus in Child Care*. For more information, visit the "Cycle Menus" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage and

refer to the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*.

Sample CACFP menus

The CSDE's sample breakfast, lunch, and snack menus provide meal and snack ideas for children in child care programs. These sample menus are available in the "Sample Menus" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. The servings in these menus are for ages 3-5 and can be adjusted for other ages. Each menu contains at least the minimum required meal components and servings. Some menus include additional components or exceed the minimum serving requirements.

Whether local child care menus meet the CACFP meal patterns is determined by the types of foods purchased, and the standardized recipes and preparation techniques used by the CACFP facility. CACFP facilities should use the FBG to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the required serving for each meal component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section).

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to evaluate menus for compliance with the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CCCNS). For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.* For resources on menu planning, refer to "Menu Planning Resources" in this section and the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*. Additional resources are available in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Production Records

The USDA regulations require that CACFP facilities must document that menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children and maintain records of food purchases. Production records are not required, except for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages all CACFP facilities to use production records because they provide appropriate documentation that meals and snacks meet the CACFP meal patterns.

A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. Production records document that CACFP sites serve reimbursable meals and snacks. They also provide valuable information to help CACFP facilities with menu planning, forecasting products and amounts, purchasing foods, controlling waste, identifying acceptable menu items, and conducting a nutrient analysis of menus.

> CACFP facilities that do not use production records should develop an alternate system to document the amount of purchased foods and serving sizes provided for each meal and snack. Menu planners should use the FBG to determine how many servings of a meal component a specific quantity of food will provide. In addition, all CACFP facilities must maintain the required CACFP crediting documentation for commercial products and foods made from scratch. This includes the planned menu, recipes, CN labels, PFS forms, and documentation to reflect any substitutions to the planned menu.

Table 2-2 summarizes what production records should include and when food service staff should complete the information.

Table 2-2. Information to include on production records

Complete before meal service	Complete after meal service
• Name of site • Meal date • Meal type (breakfast or lunch) • All planned menu items including the specific type and amount of all meal choices, meal components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods • Recipe name and number or product name and code • Planned serving size and number of servings for reimbursable meals for each age group, and if applicable, nonreimbursable meals, e.g., meals for CACFP staff and incomplete meals served to children	• Temperatures (complete throughout meal service) [1] • Total amount/quantity of food prepared (based on the FBG) for each food item or menu item, e.g., number of servings, pounds, cans, and pieces • Amount of leftover food for each food item or menu item • Total amount of food served • Number of reimbursable meals served to each age group • Number of nonreimbursable meals served, e.g., meals for CACFP staff and incomplete meals served to children

[1] Food service staff should record temperatures throughout the meal service to ensure that hot foods are held at 135 °F or above and cold foods are held at 41 °F or below. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Sample production records

The CSDE's sample production records below help CACFP facilities document compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children.

- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM and PM Snack
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Emergency Shelters
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Any Meal
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for At-Risk Snack and Supper
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast and PM Snack
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Emergency Shelters
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack

These forms are available in the "Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to meet individual program needs.

Guidance for completing production records

Production records must indicate the specific type and amount of each food item and must be completed correctly to provide accurate documentation of reimbursable meals and snacks. When using production records, CACFP facilities should ensure that staff follow the guidance below.

- Use a physical written production for each site, including satellite locations.
- Complete all information. Check that information is not missing or incomplete.
- Record the information legibly (handwriting can be read).
- Use the proper weight or volume measure for each food item. For example, use cups for fruits and vegetables instead of ounces (refer to "Volume versus weight").
- Enter the number of servings, pounds, cans, or pieces (not the number of portions prepared) in the column for the total quantity of food used.
- List the specific type and amount of each food item separately. Do not indicate foods as assorted choices. For example, instead of "assorted juices," list apple juice, orange juice, and pineapple juice. Instead of "assorted fruits and vegetables," fruit choices," or "vegetable choices," list each type of fruit and vegetable.
- List each type of milk served, e.g., low-fat milk, skim milk, and nonfat chocolate milk.
- List all condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing.

- List portion sizes accurately. Ensure that the listed portion sizes are the same as the amount being served to children.
- List all items prepared for the meal including daily items and alternate meal choices.
- Accurately record the “planned” servings for each age group.
- List nonreimbursable meals and snacks (e.g., meals for CACFP staff and incomplete meals served to children) separately from reimbursable meals and snacks.
- Add any extra amounts of food needed during the meal service period.
- Indicate if any substitutions are made to the planned menu items.
- Indicate if leftovers are used.

CACFP facilities should maintain production records on file with other required documentation. The CSDE will review menu documentation during the Administrative Review of the CACFP. For additional guidance on production records, refer to the CSDE’s *Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Volume versus weight

The amounts listed in production records must reflect the servings required by the CACFP meals patterns for children. The meal patterns indicate the servings of the meal components by weight (ounces) or volume (fluid ounces). For example, the servings for the vegetables component and fruits component are indicated by volume (cups). The required servings for most foods in the MMA component are indicated by weight (ounces), but volume is required for some foods, such as peanut butter (tablespoons), cottage cheese (cups), and beans, peas, and lentils (cups).

Volume and weight measurements are not the same. Volume is the amount of space an ingredient occupies in a measuring container. Volume measures include teaspoon, tablespoon, fluid ounce, cup, pint, quart, and gallon.

Listing incorrect serving sizes on production records is a common compliance issue. An example is listing the serving for a fruit or vegetable as “4 ounces” instead of “½ cup.” This does not document that the fruit or vegetable serving meets the meal pattern requirements because these two measurements are not the same. A serving of 4 ounces by weight may or may not equal ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

The weight of a specific volume of food varies depending on the density of the food. For example, ½ cup of lettuce weighs less than ½ cup of cooked butternut squash. A 1-cup serving of whole-grain flaked cereal weighs less than 1 cup of baked beans.

For many foods, a specific measure of volume does not equal the same measure of weight. There are some exceptions, such as yogurt (½ cup of yogurt equals 4 ounces by weight) and certain types of canned fruits and vegetables. For information on the weight equivalent of servings measured by volume, refer to the USDA's FBG.

> Menu planners should use the USDA's FBG to determine the amount of a food that meets the required meal pattern serving. Production records or other menu documentation must reflect this amount. For example, vegetables, fruits, peanut butter, and beans, peas, and lentils must be listed by volume, not weight. For more information, refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section.

For information on weights and measures, refer to the ICN's handout, *Basics at a Glance*, and visit the "Weights and Measures" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Resources for production records

The websites and resources below provide guidance on developing and using production records.

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN): https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/
- Production Records ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#ProductionRecords
- Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/prodrecord/using_production_records_cacfp.pdf
- Weights and Measures ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#WeightsMeasures

Standardized Recipes

CACFP facilities that serve foods made from scratch must have a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) available to document the amount of each meal component per serving. For example, if the lunch menu for ages 3-5 offers macaroni and cheese as the MMA component and grains component, the CACFP facility's recipe must document that each serving contains 1½ ounces of cheese and ¼ cup of whole-grain or enriched pasta.

Recipes are required for all foods prepared on site by the CACFP facility and all foods made from scratch that are purchased by the CACFP facility through a contract with a food service vendor or food service management company. Some examples of foods made from scratch include entrees (such as lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and macaroni and cheese), soup, cornbread, coleslaw, and potato salad.

> The CSDE strongly encourages the use of standardized recipes to ensure that menus provide the correct CACFP meal components and portions. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation 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.

Detailed guidance on developing standardized recipes is available in the ICN's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Benefits of standardized recipes

Standardized recipes document the specific meal pattern contribution of one serving. For example, a standardized recipe for lasagna might indicate that one serving credits as 1½ oz eq of the MMA component, ¼ cup of the vegetables component, and 1 oz eq of the grains component.

In addition to documenting the meal pattern contribution, standardized recipes provide many other benefits. Standardized recipes help ensure:

- consistent food quality;
- predictable yield;
- consistent nutrient content;
- customer satisfaction;
- food cost control;

- efficient purchasing procedures;
- inventory control;
- labor cost control;
- increased employee confidence;
- reduced recordkeeping; and
- successful completion of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Information to include on standardized recipes

CACFP facilities may standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA's recipes. Standardized recipes should include the following:

- recipe name that describes the recipe;
- recipe number that is unique to each recipe;
- recipe category classification, e.g., main dish, grains, and vegetables;
- recipe yield (weight and/or volume and number of servings), i.e., the amount produced when production is complete;
- ingredients used;
- ingredient amounts per yield, i.e., the quantity (weight or volume) of all ingredients for each yield, such as 50 servings or 100 servings;
- preparation equipment and utensil, such as pans, steamers and mixers;
- food safety Critical Control Points (CCPs), i.e., time and temperature critical limits for each step of preparing, holding, serving, and storing (visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage);
- cooking time and temperature, as required (visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage);
- serving size (the weight and/or volume of the single portion size);
- serving utensils such as scoops, ladles, and spoodles; and
- meal component contributions per serving, e.g., fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA.

The CSDE's *Standardized Recipe Form for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides a template for creating standardized recipes. For more information, refer to "Determining Food Yields and Crediting" and "Resources for standardized recipes" in this section, and visit the "Crediting Foods Made from Scratch" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Vendor-prepared foods

Vendors that prepare foods for CACFP facilities must have recipes (preferably standardized recipes) that document the meal pattern contribution per serving. CACFP facilities are responsible for reviewing the crediting information to ensure that it is accurate.

Verifying meal pattern compliance of recipes from other sources

CACFP facilities must ensure that local menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. When using recipes and menus from sources other than the USDA (such as websites, organizations, and other CACFP child care programs), menu planners should check these resources for compliance with the CACFP meal patterns and adapt as needed.

Resources for standardized recipes

The websites and resources below assist CACFP facilities with developing and using standardized recipes.

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):
  https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (ICN):
  https://theicn.org/cnrb/
- Crediting Foods Made from Scratch ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage:
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#ScratchFoods
- Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) of the FBG (USDA):
  https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes
- Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (ICN and USDA):
  https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/step-by-step-recipe-standardization-guide-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf
- Standardized Recipe Form for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_cacfp.docx

- Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#StandardizedRecipes
- Weights and Measures (CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#WeightsMeasures
- Why Use Standardized Recipes? Fact Sheet (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/resources/527/food-service-management-skills/107291/why-use-standardized-recipes.pdf

For more information, visit the "Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Crediting Documentation for Commercial Products

CACFP facilities must be able to document the meal pattern contribution of commercial processed foods served in CACFP menus. For example, to credit a commercial breaded chicken patty as the MMA component and grains component for ages 3-5 at lunch and supper, the manufacturer's documentation must indicate that one serving of the product contains 1½ ounces of cooked chicken and ½ oz eq (11 grams or 0.4 ounce) of WGR or enriched breading. The acceptable types of documentation for commercial processed foods include:

- the original CN label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal component contained in one serving of the product.

The CSDE will review product documentation during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

> Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

Table 2-3 compares the criteria for CN labels and PFS forms. Only CN labels provide a guarantee of the product's contribution to the USDA's meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. CACFP facilities must check the crediting information on the PFS form for accuracy prior to using the product in reimbursable meals and snacks.

Table 2-3. Comparison of CN labels and PFS forms

Criteria	CN label	PFS
Standard information required	X	
Reviewed, approved, and monitored by the USDA	X	
Includes USDA guarantee of meal component contribution for Child Nutrition Programs	X	
Distinct six-digit product identification number	X	
CACFP facilities must check crediting information for accuracy prior to use		X

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 "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Child Nutrition (CN) Labels

The USDA's CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs. A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements, as printed on the label.

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq for the MMA component of the USDA's meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions.

CN labels will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled pizza may list contributions to the MMA, grains, and vegetables components; and CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the MMA and grains components.

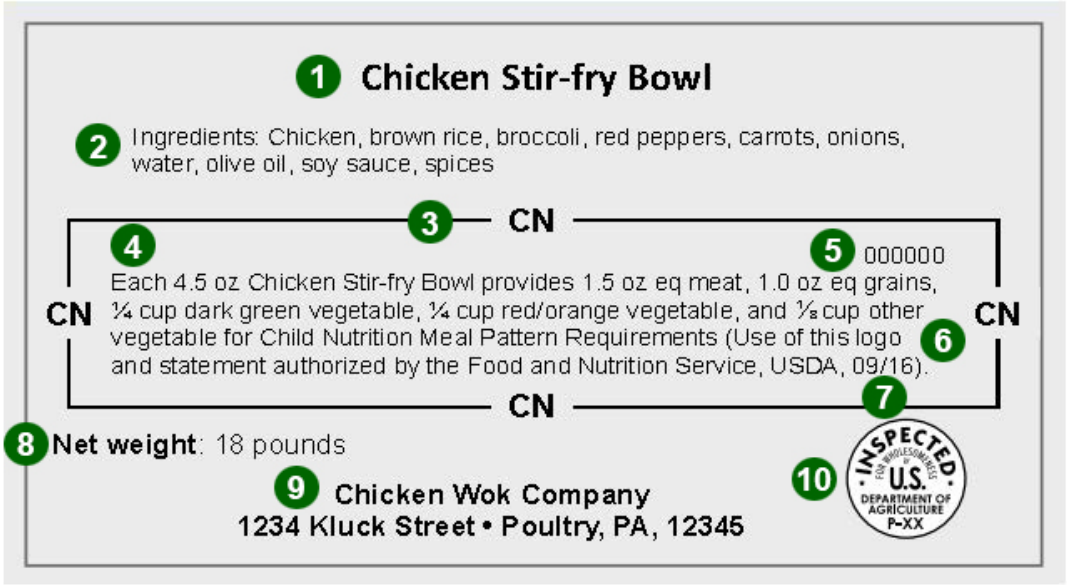
Required information for CN labels

The CN label is found on the product packaging and will contain the following:

- the CN logo, which is a distinct border with "CN" on each side, surrounding the meal pattern contribution statement;
- the meal pattern contribution statement; which provides the specific crediting information for the serving;
- a six-digit product identification number, which is assigned by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA;
- the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) authorization statement;
- the month and year of AMS approval; and
- other required label features, including product name, ingredients statement, inspection legend, company signature/address line, and net weight.

Figure 2-1 shows an example of a CN label and the required components.

Figure 2-1. Sample CN label



1. Product name
2. Ingredients statement
3. CN logo
4. Meal pattern contribution statement
5. Six-digit product identification number
6. FNS authorization statement
7. Month and year of AMS approval
8. Net weight
9. Company signature/address line
10. Inspection legend

Acceptable documentation

Acceptable and valid documentation for a CN label includes 1) the original CN label from the product carton; or 2) a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton. CN labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible.

Manufacturers may use a CN label with a watermark when the CN logo and contribution statement are on product information other than the actual product carton. A watermarked CN label is also acceptable documentation for the Administrative Review of the CACFP when it is attached to a Bill of Lading (invoice) containing the product name. Original CN labels on product cartons will not have a watermark.

CACFP facilities must maintain CN labels on file with all other menu records. The CSDE recommends maintaining original CN labels in a designated binder or folder for easy reference, and storing digital photos and scans of CN labels in an easily accessible electronic folder.

Resources for CN labels

The resources below provide additional information on CN labels.

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 2: Documentation (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- Child Nutrition (CN) Labels ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#CNlabels
- CN Labeling Program (USDA website): https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program
- USDA Memo SP 11-2015 (v2), CACFP 10-2015, and SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation
- USDA Memo SP 27-2015, CACFP 09-2015, and SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement: https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and
- Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_cn_labels_cacfp.pdf

The USDA's Authorized Labels and Manufacturers webpage lists approved CN-labeled products and manufacturers. Additional crediting documentation resources are available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Product Formulation Statements

A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. Unlike CN labels, the information on PFS forms can vary among manufacturers because these forms are not reviewed, approved, or monitored by the USDA. Figure 2-2 shows a sample PFS for a commercial MMA product.

Required information for PFS forms

A PFS is an official certified document of the company. It must be on company letterhead and signed by a person of authority in the company, such as the quality control manager or the appropriate staff in nutrition or research and development. To be acceptable as crediting documentation for the CACFP, a PFS must include the information below.

1. Product name, which must match or have a similar description to the name on the product label.
2. Product code, which is unique identifier assigned by the manufacturer and may include numbers, letters, or a combination of both.
3. Serving or portion size, which must represent the amount of the product as purchased or ready for serving.
4. Creditable ingredients, which must match or have a similar description to the ingredients listed on the product's label and a food item in the FBG.
5. Information to demonstrate how the creditable ingredients contribute toward the meal pattern based on the FBG.

If the PFS does not meet these requirements, the CACFP facility cannot accept it and the product cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

> CACFP facilities must verify the PFS for accuracy before including the commercial product in reimbursable meals and, if needed, request supporting documentation from the manufacturer. CACFP facilities must maintain PFS forms and crediting documentation on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

For guidance on how to review a PFS, 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 grain 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*.

Figure 2-2. Sample PFS for a commercial MMA product

ABC Chicken Company

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs

Program operators should include a copy of the label from the purchased product package in addition to the following information on letterhead signed by an official company representative.

Product Name: Grilled Chicken Nuggets Code No.: 123456

Manufacturer: ABC Chicken Company Serving Size: 4 nuggets (2.6 ounces)

I. Meats

Fill out the chart below to determine the creditable amount of Meats.

DESCRIPTION OF CREDITABLE MEAT INGREDIENT PER FOOD BUYING GUIDE (FBG)	OUNCES PER RAW PORTION OF CREDITABLE MEAT INGREDIENT A	MULTIPLY	FBG YIELD[1] B	CREDITABLE AMOUNT A x B
Boneless chicken	2.88 ounces	x	.7	2.016
		x		
		x		
			C. Total Creditable Meats Amount[5]	2.016

[1] FBG yield = Additional Information column.

Total weight (per portion) of product as purchased 2.6 ounces

Total creditable amount of product (per portion). (Reminder: total creditable amount (per portion) cannot exceed the total weight (per portion).) 2 ounce equivalents

I certify that the above information is true and correct and that a 2.6 ounce serving of the above product (ready for serving) contains 2 ounces of equivalent meat/meat alternate when prepared according to directions.

I further certify that any APP used in the product conforms to the Food and Nutrition Service Regulations (7 CFR Parts 210, 220, 225, 226, Appendix A) as demonstrated by the attached supplier documentation.

John Smith President

Signature Title

John Smith 12/09/2022 (800) 123-4567

Printed Name Date Phone Number

USDA's PFS forms for the CACFP meal patterns

The USDA's Food Manufacturers/Industry website provides sample PFS templates for the MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. The PFS forms that apply to the CACFP meal patterns are listed below.

- **Grains:** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf

- **Grains (completed sample):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Example_Grains_Oz_Eq.pdf

- **MMA:** Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf

- **Vegetables and 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.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Total_Veg_Fruits_Fillable_508.pdf

Manufacturers are not required to use the USDA forms. However, alternate PFS forms must include all required information from the USDA forms.

Resources for verifying accuracy of PFS forms

CACFP facilities must verify PFS forms for accuracy before including commercial products in reimbursable meals. The resources below provide guidance on reviewing a PFS.

- FBG Module 3: Product Formulation Statements (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/139/fbg-module-3-product-formulation-statements-pfs
- Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement: Is it Acceptable? (ICN and USDA): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtUo70IP9cc
- Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement: Is it Acceptable? Presentation Slides (ICN and USDA): https://theicn.org/resources/930/march-2016/109876/manufacturers-product-formulation-statement-pfs03-31-16.pdf
- Product Formulation Statements ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#PFS
- Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_product_formulation_statements_cacfp.pdf
- Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meats/Meat Alternates (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf
- Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf
- When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_cacfp.pdf

Additional crediting documentation resources are available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Nutrition Information

CACFP facilities must obtain nutrition information for all commercially prepared foods used to prepare reimbursable meals and snacks. If a processed product does not have a Nutrition Facts panel, the CACFP facility is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the manufacturer.

In addition to CN labels and PFS forms, nutrition information helps menu planners to determine if certain commercial products credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. Nutrition information is also required to meet the USDA requirements to provide reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet (refer to "Meal Modifications for Children with Special Dietary Needs" in section 1).

Determining crediting information

For many commercial products, crediting information is determined by reviewing the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients. Some examples of when nutrition information is required are listed below. These examples are not all-inclusive.

- **Crediting breakfast cereals and yogurt:** The CACFP meal patterns for children require a sugars limit for breakfast cereals and yogurt. Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label for these foods to determine whether the sugars per serving complies with the sugars limit. For more information, refer to "Sugars limit for yogurt" and "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in section 3.

- **Crediting deli meats and hotdogs:** Deli meats, hotdogs, and similar foods that contain binders and extenders (and are not CN labeled) require a PFS to determine crediting information (refer to "Liquids, binders, and extenders" in section 3). The ingredients statement indicates if a product contains added liquids, binders, and extenders. This alerts the menu planner that a PFS is required to determine the correct crediting information for the product.

- **Crediting tempeh:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, tempeh ingredients must be limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), 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. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if tempeh products contain additional ingredients. For more information, refer to "Crediting Tempeh" in section 3.

- **Crediting commercial tofu products:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, commercial tofu products must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine the amount of protein per serving. For more information, refer to "Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products" in section 3.

- **Crediting commercial grain products:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, a commercial grain product must meet the specific weight for the appropriate grain group in the USDA Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program)*. Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine the manufacturer's serving weight, which is required to determine the oz eq contribution of the serving. For more information, refer to "Part C: Grain Ounce Equivalents" in section 3.

- **Crediting WGR commercial grain products:** To credit as a WGR food, commercial grain products must contain a whole grain as the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if commercial products meet this requirement. For more information, refer to "Part B: Whole Grain-rich Criteria" in section 3.

- **Crediting 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 in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if commercial smoothies contain these ingredients. For more information, refer to "Commercial smoothies" in section 3.

For guidance on Nutrition Facts labels for commercial products, refer to the USDA's resource, *Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Making meal modifications

CACFP facilities will need to review nutrition information when planning meal modifications for children with special dietary concerns, such as food allergies, lactose intolerance, and celiac disease. In addition, the USDA considers providing nutrition information for foods served in CACFP meals and snacks to be part of reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet. CACFP facilities are responsible for making nutrition information available to children (when age appropriate), families, nurses and other medical professionals, and appropriate child care staff, as needed. For information on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Determining Food Yields and Crediting

Yield refers to the of a product at the completion of the preparation process, such as weight, volume, or number of servings. For example:

- 10 pounds of raw ground beef might yield 8 pounds after cooking;
- 5 pounds of fresh carrots might yield 3½ pounds after peeling and trimming;
- a vegetable soup recipe might yield 2 gallons after cooking, and
- a muffin recipe might yield 24 servings after baking.

Yield affects how a product or recipe credits toward the CACFP meal patterns for children.

The yield of a product or recipe depends on the type of food and the preparation process. Processed fruits and vegetables yield less than the purchased amount due to peeling and trimming. Raw meats yield less than the purchased amount because moisture and fat are lost in the cooking process. Rice and pasta yield more than the purchased (dry) amount because water is absorbed during the cooking process.

The USDA's FBG is the definitive resource for determining yields and crediting information for the Child Nutrition Programs. CACFP facilities should ensure that menu planners use this resource to plan reimbursable meals and snacks in the CACFP.

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

The USDA's FBG 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 recipe; and
- how much food to buy.

The FBG helps menu planners determine how recipes and purchased foods contribute to the CACFP patterns for children. For example, menu planners can use the FBG to determine how much raw broccoli provides 50 servings of ½ cup of cooked vegetable or how much uncooked brown rice provides 100 servings of ½ cup of cooked rice. This information is essential for documenting compliance with the meal patterns.

FBG resources

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. The FBG webpage also includes training modules and recorded webinars.

The resources below provide guidance on using the FBG.

- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-training-resources
- Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue! (USDA webinar): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue
- Food Buying Guide Goes Digital! (USDA webinar): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-goes-digital
- Navigating the Food Buying Guide FBG Calculator (USDA webinar): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/navigating-food-buying-guide-fbg-calculator

For additional resources, visit the "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Determining in-house product yields

The yield information provided in the FBG represents average yields based on research conducted by the USDA. Many factors affect yield, including:

- the quality and condition of the food purchased;
- storage conditions and handling;
- the equipment used in preparation;
- cooking method and time;
- the form in which the food is served, e.g., mashed, fried, or baked potatoes; and
- the serving utensils and portion control methods used.

If a food service operation consistently obtains a higher or lower yield for a product than the yield listed in the FBG, the CACFP facility should conduct an in-house yield study to determine the actual number of portions of a specified size that the product provides. In-house yields are

also required for products not listed in the FBG. The CSDE allows CACFP facilities to use in-house yields if they are properly documented and follow the CSDE's yield study procedures.

Yield study procedures

CACFP facilities can use the procedures below to determine and document in-house yields for food products.

1. Select a day when the product is served on the menu. Use at least four separate samples of the product to determine yields. A "sample" is the product pack unit, such as number 10 cans or 5-pound bags. If the food service operation uses more samples, the yield data will be more accurate.

2. For the best yield estimate, at least two people should independently portion and count the samples. Each person completes half of the samples. For example, with a sample of four cans, each person works alone to measure and count the servings from two cans.

3. Select the appropriate measuring utensil for the portion size being served, such as a number 16 scoop/disher or ½-cup measuring spoon. For information on measuring utensils, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* and visit the "Weights and Measures" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

4. Fill the measuring utensil level to the top of the measure.

5. Carefully count and document the number of portions in each sample.

6. Add the total number of servings from each of the samples.

7. Divide the total number of servings by the number of samples to get the average number of servings per sample.

8. Complete the CSDE's *Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs* and maintain on file for review by the CSDE staff during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

For additional assistance with yield studies, contact the CSDE's CACFP staff.

3 — Meal Components

Each meal component of the USDA's CACFP meal patterns for children has specific criteria for determining how foods and beverages credit toward reimbursable meals and snacks. All foods and beverages (commercial products, foods made from scratch, and foods prepared by vendors) must meet these requirements to credit as a meal component of reimbursable meals and snacks.

> Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "food component" to "meal component," and defines meal component as one of the food groups that comprise reimbursable meals. The meal components are fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk.

The menu planning guidance in this section assists CACFP facilities with meeting the crediting requirements for the five meal components of the CACFP meal patterns for children. For additional guidance on crediting foods, visit the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Creditable Foods

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

- nutrient content;
- function in a meal;
- regulations concerning the USDA 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 FBG and communicated through the policy memos on the USDA's FNS Documents & Resources webpage.

Minimum creditable amounts

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

- **Milk component:** The minimum creditable amount is the full serving of fluid milk. For smoothies only, the minimum creditable amount is ¼ cup. If the amount of milk in a smoothie is less than the full serving, the meal or snack must include the additional amount of milk required to provide the full serving for each age group (refer to "Crediting Fruits in Smoothies" in this section).

- **MMA component:** The minimum creditable amount is ¼ oz eq. At lunch and supper, the MMA component must be served in a main dish, or in a main dish and one other food item. For more information, refer to "Main Dish Requirement for Lunch" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

- **Vegetables component:** The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. Smaller amounts of vegetables used for flavorings or garnishes do not credit. CACFP menus may include 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.

- **Fruits component:** The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. Smaller amounts of fruits used for flavorings or garnishes do not credit. CACFP menus may include 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.

- **Grains component:** The minimum creditable amount is ¼ oz eq. CACFP menus may include 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.

If a food item provides less than the full serving, the CACFP menu must include additional foods from that 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 ⅛ cup of vegetables to provide the full vegetables component for ages 3-5.

Requirement for visible components

The USDA requires that foods must be visible (recognizable) to credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. For example, CACFP facilities cannot credit peanut butter in smoothies, pureed tofu in soups, applesauce in muffins, and pureed fruits and vegetables in entrees and other foods. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP menus offer MMA in a form that is recognizable to children (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3).

The USDA allows exceptions to this requirement for the following foods:

- yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies (refer to "Yogurt in smoothies" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section);
- pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies (refer to "Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies" and "Crediting Pureed Fruits" in the "Fruits Component" section); and
- pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flour (refer to "Crediting Legume Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section and "Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour" in the "Vegetables Component" section).

In addition, CACFP facilities may credit foods made with pureed vegetables if they also contain at least ⅛ cup of visible creditable vegetables. 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 vegetables (refer to "Unrecognizable pureed vegetables" in the "Vegetables Component" section).

Resources for creditable foods

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

- Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs
- Crediting Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-handbook-child-and-adult-care-food-program
- Crediting Summary Charts for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp_cacfp.pdf

- Crediting Updates for Child Nutrition Programs: Be in the Know! Webinar Series (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-updates-child-nutrition-programs-be-know-webinar-series
- CSDE Operational Memos for the CACFP: https://portal.ct.gov/sde/lists/operational-memoranda-for-the-cacfp
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs
- Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs
- Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf
- USDA CACFP Policy Memos: https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources
- USDA CACFP Regulations (7 CFR 226): https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-226
- USDA FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs: https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/fns-instructions-for-child-nutrition-programs

For additional guidance on the USDA's requirements for the CACFP, visit the CSDE's Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Noncreditable Foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the five meal components required by the CACFP meal patterns for children. Noncreditable foods include foods and beverages in amounts that are too small to credit (i.e., less than the minimum creditable amount required by the CACFP meal patterns), such as 1 tablespoon of applesauce or ⅛ ounce of cheese (refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in this section).

Noncreditable foods also include foods and beverages that do not belong to the five meal components. Some examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. Examples of noncreditable foods are listed at the end of each meal component section. For more examples, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Allowable noncreditable foods

CACFP facilities may serve noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens, and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees.

> To ensure that CACFP meals and snacks meet children's nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.

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

CACFP funds cannot purchase 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.

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 CACFP meal patterns for children 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 Servings for Milk

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of fluid milk at breakfast, lunch, and 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.

Table 3-1 summarizes the required servings of the milk component for each age group and meal. The age group for ages 13-18 applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

Table 3-1. Required servings of the milk component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Breakfast	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Lunch	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Snack	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup

Allowable Types of Milk

The CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1, and unflavored low-fat (1%) milk or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 2 and older. Flavored low-fat or fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older but the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk. Other allowable types of milk include pasteurized:

- lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk;
- acidified milk;
- cultured milk;
- cultured buttermilk; and
- Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.

CACFP facilities may serve any of these types of milk that meet the required fat content for each age group.

CACFP facilities cannot serve milk that does not comply with the required fat content for each age group. For example, low-fat milk, fat-free milk, and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to 1-year-olds. Whole milk and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to ages 2-5.

If a child has a disability that requires milk with a different fat content, the CACFP facility must make the substitution prescribed in the medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian (refer to "Meal Modifications for Children with Special Dietary Needs" in section 1).

Table 3-2 summarizes the allowable types of milk for each age group. For additional guidance, visit the USDA's Serving Milk in the CACFP webpage.

Table 3-2. Allowable types of milk in the CACFP meal patterns for children

Type of milk	Age 1	Age 2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Whole, unflavored	X	X [1]			
Whole, flavored					
Reduced-fat (2%), unflavored		X [1]			
Reduced-fat (2%), flavored					
Low-fat (1%), unflavored		X	X	X	X
Low-fat (1%), flavored				X [3]	X [3]
Fat-free, unflavored		X	X	X	X
Fat-free, flavored				X [2]	X [2]

[1] Unflavored whole milk and unflavored reduced-fat milk can be served only during a one-month transition period when switching a 24-month-old child from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk (refer to "Transitioning from Whole Milk to Low-fat or Fat-free Milk" in this section).

[2] Flavored low-fat or fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older but the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk.

Additional Milk Requirements for Child Care Programs in Public Schools

Public schools must meet additional state requirements for the milk component. Milk available for sale to children anywhere on school premises in Connecticut public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). The state beverage requirements apply to milk sold as part of, and separately from, reimbursable meals and snacks.

The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce. Commercial products that meet the federal and state requirements for milk are in list 16 on the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage, which includes brand-specific lists of foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that meet the requirements of the state beverage statute. For more information on the state beverage statute, visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

Transitioning from Breastmilk 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 breastmilk) 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.

For example, the CACFP breakfast meal pattern requires ½ cup of unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk for age 2. If a mother provides ¼ cup of expressed breastmilk, the CACFP facility must serve ¼ cup of unflavored low-fat or fat-free 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.

Transitioning from Whole Milk to Low-fat or Fat-free Milk

The USDA allows CACFP facilities to serve unflavored reduced-fat milk and unflavored whole milk during a one-month transition period when a 24-month-old child is switching from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk. The steps below can help ease a child's transition to low-fat or fat-free milk.

1. Add a small amount of reduced-fat milk to whole milk.
2. Gradually change to low-fat or fat-free milk mixed with whole milk.
3. Decrease the amount of whole milk over time so the entire serving is low-fat or fat-free milk by the end of the one-month transition period.

The CACFP meal patterns for children do not allow whole milk for ages 2 and older.

Menu Documentation for Milk

CACFP menus must document the type of milk served to each age group. The examples below show how to indicate the type of milk on preschool menus.

- The menu for age 1 should state "unflavored whole milk" instead of "whole milk."
- The menu for ages 2-5 should state "unflavored low-fat milk" instead of "low-fat milk" and "unflavored fat-free milk" instead of "fat-free milk."
- The menu for ages 6-12 (and ages 6-18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters) should state "unflavored low-fat milk" or "flavored low-fat milk" instead of "low-fat milk" and "unflavored fat-free milk" or "flavored fat-free milk" instead of "fat-free milk."

This ensures that CACFP menus reflect the appropriate type of milk being served to children.

Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities

CACFP facilities may choose, but are not required, to offer one or more allowable milk substitutes for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The USDA allows two types of allowable substitutes for children without disabilities.

1. Lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk with the appropriate fat content, i.e., unflavored whole milk for age 1, unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk for ages 2-5, and unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk for ages 5 and older (refer to "lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk" in this section).

2. Nondairy milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk (refer to "USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes" in this section).

> CACFP facilities cannot offer any other beverages (including water and juice) as a choice instead of milk for reimbursable meals. Juice and water are never allowable milk substitutes for children without disabilities.

If a child's dietary restriction is not related to a disability, CACFP facilities cannot substitute any other beverages for milk, even with a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. Examples of beverages that cannot be substituted for milk include juice, water, nutrition supplement beverages, and milk substitutes that do not comply with the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, e.g., almond milk, rice milk, cashew milk, some brands of soy milk, and most brands of oat milk. These beverages cannot replace milk unless the child has a medically documented disability that specifically requires this substitution.

Required documentation for milk substitutes

Nondairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk) require a written request from the parent or guardian that identifies the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet. A medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian is not required.

For detailed guidance on the requirements for milk substitutes, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs.*

USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes

CACFP facilities that choose to offer a milk substitute as part of reimbursable meals and snacks for children without disabilities must use products that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (refer to table 3-3). CACFP facilities cannot offer any other nondairy milk substitutes.

Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans,* updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements (FDA final rule 81 FR 33742, *Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels*).

- For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces.
- For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces.

The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements.

Table 3-3. USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes

Nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces)	% DV Unrounded [1]	% DV Rounded [2]
Calcium: 276 milligrams (mg)	21.23%	20%
Protein: 8 grams (g)	16%	16%
Vitamin A: 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalent (RAE)	16.67%	20%
Vitamin D: 2.5 micrograms (mcg)	12.5%	15%
Magnesium: 24 mg	5.71%	6%
Phosphorus: 222 mg	17.76%	20%
Potassium: 349 mg	7.43%	10%
Riboflavin: 0.44 mg	33.85%	35%
Vitamin B12: 1.1 mcg	45.83%	45%

[1] The unrounded % DV is the minimum nutrients per cup (column 1) divided by the current daily value for each nutrient (refer to the FDA's *Reference Guide: Daily Values for Nutrients*).

[2] The rounded % DV is based on the FDA labeling laws and is listed on the Nutrition Facts label (refer to Appendix H of the FDA's *A Food Labeling Guide: Guidance for Industry*).

Identyifng compliant fluid milk substitutes

Menu planners cannot determine if a product meets the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes by reading the product's packaging. The Nutrition Facts label lists only a few of the nine nutrients required by the USDA for allowable fluid milk substitutes.

To determine if a product meets the USDA's nutrition standards, CACFP facilities must obtain documentation from the manufacturer that includes the nutrition information for the nine required nutrients. Product information might list nutrient values, % Daily Value (DV) (unrounded or rounded), or both. If any nutrient values are missing, the CACFP facility must obtain this information from the manufacturer.

Guidance on identifying compliant fluid milk substitutes is available in the CSDE's *Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Additional nondairy milk substitute requirements for child care programs in public schools

In addition to meeting the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, nondairy milk substitutes served by child care programs that operate in public schools must meet the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. The state beverage statute requires that nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugars per ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. The CSDE's resource, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, includes a list of nondairy milk substitutes that meet the USDA and state requirements.

Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk

Children who cannot digest the lactose found in regular milk may be able to drink lactose-free milk (e.g., Lactaid) or lactose-reduced milk. These types of milk are regular fluid milk modified by the addition of lactase enzymes to reduce or eliminate lactose (milk sugar). Lactose-reduced milk has part of the lactose removed, while lactose-free milk has all lactose removed.

> Lactose-free milk and lactose-reduced milk credit as the milk component in the CACFP meal patterns for children. CACFP facilities may offer lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk as a substitute for regular fluid milk at any meal or snack.

A written request from parents or guardians is not required for lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk. The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to make lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk available to children as needed.

In addition to meeting the requirements for fluid milk in the CACFP meal patterns, all lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk served by child care programs that operate in public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements for milk (refer to "Additional Milk Requirements for Child Care Programs in Public Schools" in this section). List 16 of the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage includes lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that meets the federal and state requirements.

Crediting Milk in Smoothies

Milk credits as the milk component when served in smoothies if it meets the required fat content for each age group (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 full serving of milk, the CACFP menu must include the additional amount of milk to provide the full milk component.

For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to "Crediting Fruit in Smoothies" in the "Fruits Component" section, "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in the "Milk Component" section, and "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

Milk in Prepared Foods

Milk in Prepared Foods
Only fluid milk meets the USDA's definition for milk and the FDA's standard of identity for milk. The CACFP meal patterns for children 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) cannot credit as the milk component.

For information on crediting cheese and yogurt as MMA, refer to the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

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). The U.S. Dairy's *Milk Quality Checklist* helps evaluate to current practices and implement procedures for keeping milk cold.

Noncreditable Foods in the Milk Component

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

- for age 1, reduced fat (2%) milk (unflavored or flavored); low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored or flavored), and fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored);
- for ages 2-5, whole milk (unflavored or flavored), reduced fat (2%) milk (unflavored or flavored), flavored fat-free milk, and flavored low-fat (1%) milk;
- for ages 6 and older whole milk (unflavored or flavored) and reduced fat (2%) milk (unflavored or flavored);
- 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 "USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes" in this section);
- milk that is cooked or baked in prepared foods, such as cereals, puddings, cream sauces, and macaroni and cheese;
- foods made from milk, such as cheese, yogurt, and ice cream;
- nutrition supplement beverages, such as Abbott's Pediasure;
- powdered milk beverages, such as Nestle's NIDO; and
- for child care programs in public schools only, milk and nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the state beverage requirements (refer to "Additional Milk Requirements for Child Care Programs in Public Schools" and "Additional nondairy milk substitute requirements for child care programs in public schools" in this section).

For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in the beginning of section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs 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.

- Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities 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 CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 3: Milk Component (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- Crediting Fluid Milk in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-milk-child-nutrition-programs-tip-sheet
- 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 Section 5: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Milk Component (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section5_Milk.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 5: Yield Table for Milk (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section5_MilkYieldTable.pdf
- Milk Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Milk
- Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-milk-cacfp
- USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010, and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions: https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-milk-substitution-children-medical-or-special-dietary-needs-non-disability

- USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Milk Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Meats/Meat Alternates Component

The meats/meat alternates (MMA) component includes meats and meat alternates. Meats include cooked lean meat, poultry, and fish. Meat alternates are foods that provide a similar protein content to meat, such as alternate protein products (APPs), cheese, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, nuts and seeds and their butters, yogurt, soy yogurt, tofu, and tempeh. Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the vegetables component or the MMA component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack.

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 Servings for MMA

Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, updates the MMA quantities in the CACFP meal patterns from ounces to ounce equivalents (oz eq). The amount of MMA that credits as 1 ounce or 1 oz eq is the same.

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of the MMA component at lunch and supper. The MMA component is not required at breakfast but may substitute for the entire grains component up to three times per week (refer to "MMA at Breakfast" in this section). A serving of MMA may be one of the two required meal components at snack.

Table 3-4 summarizes the required servings of the MMA component for each age group and meal. The age group for ages 13-18 applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

Table 3-4. Required servings of the MMA component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Breakfast	None	None	None	None
Lunch	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Snack	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

Minimum creditable amount for MMA

The minimum creditable amount for the MMA component is ¼ oz eq. Meats and meat alternates offered in amounts less than ¼ oz eq do not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in the beginning of section 3.

> When crediting menu items toward the MMA component, menu planners must round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq. For example, a CACFP recipe or commercial product that contains 0.9 oz eq of cooked chicken per serving credits as 0.75 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. 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 process cheese, e.g., American (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- ¼ cup of cottage cheese (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- 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) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (3.83 grams per ounce);
- 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 APP that meets the USDA's APP requirements.

This section contains specific crediting guidance for each type of MMA. Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the crediting information for foods in the MMA component (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

> The serving must contain the appropriate edible portion of MMA, excluding any other ingredients. For example, to credit as 1½ oz eq of the MMA component, tuna salad must contain 1½ ounces of tuna fish, before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, celery, and seasonings.

MMA versus Protein

The CACFP meal patterns for children 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 the MMA component 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).

To credit as the MMA component, commercial products that are processed or contain added ingredients (such as pizza, chicken nuggets, veggie burgers, and cheese ravioli) require a CN label or PFS to document the oz eq of the MMA component per serving. For more information, refer to "Crediting MMA in Commercial Products" in this section.

Choking Prevention with MMA

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 or spoonfuls of peanut butter or other nut and 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 and seed butters thinly on other foods (such as toast and crackers). For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Crediting Documentation for Commercial Processed Products

CACFP facilities must obtain crediting documentation for commercial products that are processed or contain added ingredients, 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 slice of commercially prepared cheese pizza as 1½ oz eq of the MMA component, the product's CN label or PFS must indicate that the serving contains 1½ ounces of cheese. For more information, refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2 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 MMA component at lunch or supper must be served in a main dish, or in a 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 5 could provide the required 1½ oz eq of the MMA component from:

- a sandwich containing 1½ ounces of tuna (1½ oz eq); or
- a sandwich containing 1 ounce of tuna (1 oz eq) served with vegetable soup that contains ⅛ cup of kidney beans (½ oz eq).

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

Requirement for recognizable main dish

Foods that are not a recognizable main dish do not credit toward the MMA component. For example, CACFP facilities cannot credit peanut butter in a muffin or smoothie, pureed beans in a muffin, or blended soft tofu in soup. 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. Other MMA (such as peanut butter) do not credit when they are served in smoothies. For more information, refer to "Yogurt in smoothies" in this section and "Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies" in the "Fruits Component" section.

- 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. For more information, refer to "Crediting Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in this section.

For more information, refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3.

MMA at Breakfast

The MMA component is not required at breakfast. The menu planner may choose to substitute the MMA component for the entire grains component up to three times per week. 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.

A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component. For example, the menu planner could substitute 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 ounce of cheese, half of a large egg, or ½ cup of yogurt for 1 oz eq of the grains component.

The USDA's Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast webpage contains handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish with additional guidance on serving the MMA component in CACFP breakfast menus.

Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)

APPs credit as meat alternates in the CACFP patterns for children. A 1-oz eq serving of a creditable APP credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The total MMA contribution cannot exceed the weight of product.

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.

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 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 an APP product meets 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. Therefore, manufacturers must provide the appropriate crediting documentation.

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. Without appropriate documentation, APPs cannot credit in the CACFP.

Acceptable documentation is a CN label, or a PFS from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements. Sample APP documentation is on page 6 of the USDA's *Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products.*

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 product lists APP ingredients that are being credited as the MMA component, the manufacturer must provide supporting documentation to indicate that the APP ingredients meet the USDA's APP requirements. APP ingredients without this supporting documentation cannot credit in the CACFP patterns for children.

The USDA's *Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP)* provides additional guidance on documenting the APP requirements. For information on CN labels and PFS forms, to "Child Nutrition (CN)" labels and "Product formulation statements" in section 2. 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 meat alternates. Examples include cooked dry beans and peas, such as black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), edamame (soybeans), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soybeans, split peas, and white beans.

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. Menu planners must determine in advance how to credit beans, peas, and lentils in CACFP menus.

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

If a meal 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, a lunch or supper menu includes chili with kidney beans and a salad with garbanzo beans. The menu planner may credit the garbanzo beans as the vegetables component and the kidney beans as the MMA component.

Serving size

Beans, peas, and lentils credit as the MMA component 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.

Table 3-5 shows the MMA contribution for different amounts of cooked beans, peas, and lentils. For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables" in the "Vegetables Component" section.

> The serving size refers to the amount of cooked beans, peas, and lentils without other ingredients, such as the 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.

Table 3-5. 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

Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as MMA in recipes

CACFP facilities must have recipes (preferably standardized recipes) on file to document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch, such as lentil soup, bean burritos, hummus, and chili. These foods credit based on the volume (cups) of beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe's serving. A recipe must provide at least 1 tablespoon (¼ oz eq) of beans, peas, or lentils per serving to credit toward the MMA component.

The menu planner must determine the recipe's crediting information for the MMA component by dividing the cups of 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 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 as the MMA component 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.

> 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" in section 1.

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 the "Vegetables Component" section.

Resources for beans, peas, and lentils

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

- Beans and Peas are Unique Foods (USDA): https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/vegetables/vegetables-beans-and-peas
- CACFP Recipes for Child Care Homes and Adult Day Care (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/standardized-recipes-cacfp
- Pulses in Schools (USDA Pulses): https://www.usapulses.org/schools/school-nutrition
- Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-child-care-centers

For additional resources, refer to "Recipe Resources" in section 2 and "Beans, Peas, and Lentils" in the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*.

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 the MMA component. However, the pasta must be 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 children (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3).

Table 3-6 shows the MMA contribution for different amounts of pasta products made of 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flours. A ¼-cup cooked serving credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Table 3-6. MMA contribution of cooked 100 percent bean/pea/lentil flour pasta products

Serving size	MMA contribution
1 tablespoon	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
⅛ cup	½ oz eq
⅜ cup	¾ oz eq
¼ cup	**1 oz eq**
½ cup	2 oz eq

Alternatively, manufacturers and CACFP facilities may credit bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta using the bean flour yield information on page C-1 of the FBG's Appendix C, or with appropriate documentation on the manufacturer's PFS. For more information, refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2 and the USDA's resources, *Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs* and *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement*.

> Pasta made of 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flours may also credit as the vegetables component but cannot credit as both the vegetables component and MMA component in the same meal. For more information, refer to "100 percent vegetable flours crediting as a vegetable" in the Vegetables section.

The requirements for crediting pasta products made of vegetable flours 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 in the CACFP meal patterns for children. The USDA recommends serving low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses (for ages 2 and older) and choosing 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 do not include pasteurized process cheeses such as American cheese, pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, and pasteurized process cheese products.

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

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

Table 3-7 shows the amount of different types of cheeses required to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

Table 3-7. Required quantity of cheese for 1 oz eq of MMA

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)
Process cheese, e.g., American	1 ounce
Cottage or ricotta cheese	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

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, or macaroni and cheese. This documentation must indicate the meal pattern contribution per serving. Commercial products require a or PFS (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). Foods made from scratch require a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the amount of cheese per serving based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

> Large chunks of cheese (such as cheese cubes or string cheese) may be a choking hazard for young chidlren. Grate or thinly slice cheese to reduce the risk of choking. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Noncreditable cheeses

Imitation cheese and cheese products do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

Crediting Deli Meats, Hot Dogs, and Sausages

Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna), hot dogs, and sausages credit as the MMA component in the CACFP meal patterns for children. CACFP facilities must ensure that the serving of a commercial meat product provides the amount of the MMA component being credited.

> 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" in section 1.

The serving of deli meat or sausage that provides 1 oz eq of the MMA component depends on the product's ingredients. This varies greatly between different brands and types of deli meats.

- **100 percent meat:** Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (such as water or broth), binders, or extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, 1 ounce of deli meat that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

- **Added liquids, binders, and extenders:** Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. 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 to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

CACFP facilities must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all meats with added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation includes a CN label or a manufacturer's PFS stating the amount of the MMA component contained in one serving of the product (refer to "Crediting Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2).

The USDA's Authorized Labels and Manufacturers webpage lists approved CN-labeled products and manufacturers. CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS for all commercial processed products that are not CN labeled.

Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if commercial products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. Products that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS stating the amount of the MMA component per serving.

Liquids, binders, and extenders

Commercial meat products like deli meats, hot dogs, sausages, and other processed meats often contain added liquids, 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). Table 3-8 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders.

Table 3-8. Examples of binders and extenders

Agar-agar	Isolated soy protein (APP) [1]
Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)	Locust bean gum
Bread	Methyl cellulose
Calcium-reduced dried skim milk	Modified food starch
Carrageenan	Reduced lactose whey
Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)	Reduced minerals
Cereal	Sodium caseinate
Dried milk	Soy flour (APP) [1]
Dry or dried whey	Soy protein concentrate (APP) [1]
Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate	Starchy vegetable flour
Gums, vegetable	Tapioca dextrin
	Vegetable starch
	Wheat gluten
	Whey
	Whey protein concentrate (APP) [1]
	Xanthan gum

[1] Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA's APP requirements (refer to "Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)" in this section).

Commercial meat products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS that states the amount of the MMA component per serving. 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.

For more information, refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2 and the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* and *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Developing recipes for deli meats

Different brands and types of deli meats credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, CACFP facilities should develop recipes (preferably standardized recipes) for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees (refer to "Standardized Recipes" in section 2).

These recipes should indicate the deli meat's contribution to the MMA component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. To make portioning simple 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. For example, if a child care center makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, their 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 CACFP facility could also choose to develop a separate turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat.

Crediting Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products

Shelf-stable, dried, and semi-dried meat, poultry, and seafood (such as jerky or summer sausage) credit as the MMA component. The USDA indicates that these products are most useful in meals served off-site, such as during field trips or picnics. However, CACFP facilities may also credit these products in meals served on site.

Crediting of dried meat, poultry, and seafood products must follow the same crediting principles used for all other products made from meat, poultry, or seafood. CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS to document the product's meal pattern contribution. The FBG does not include crediting information for dried meat, poultry, or seafood products because industry production standards for these products vary widely.

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 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.

      Since this dried beef stick product lists "Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)" as the first ingredient, the product's PFS must also list the crediting information for "Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)."

2. The creditable meat 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" on page 1-17 of the FBG.

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.

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 Child Nutrition Programs, 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 ingredients (pork) do 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*.

Dried meat products (such as jerky) may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer dried meat products in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Crediting Eggs

Eggs credit as meat alternates in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Only whole eggs are creditable. 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.

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

Menu items that contain eggs

CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate crediting documentation for menu items that contain eggs as an ingredient, such as quiche, scrambled eggs, frittatas, breakfast sandwiches, pre-cooked egg patties, and scrambled egg breakfast burritos. This documentation must indicate the meal pattern contribution per serving.

Commercial products require a CN label or a PFS stating the amount of eggs per serving (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). Menu items made from scratch must have a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the amount of eggs per serving based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

Crediting Hummus as MMA

Hummus 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. 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).

- **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:** Tahini credits the same as nut/seed butters. Two tablespoons of tahini 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 that indicates the amount of beans, peas, or lentils and tahini per serving. Commercial products require a CN label or a PFS stating the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). Hummus made from scratch requires 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 "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

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

Crediting MMA in Combination Entrees

Combination entrees (such as tacos, lasagna, and chicken stir-fry) contain more than one meal component. For example, beef lasagna contains the grains component (pasta), MMA component (ground beef and cheese), and vegetables component (tomato sauce). Most combination entrees cannot be separated (such as pizza or a burrito) or are not intended to be separated (such as hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

Commercial products require a CN label or a PFS stating the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). Menu items made from scratch must have a (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the amount of the MMA component per serving based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

Crediting MMA in Commercial Products

To credit as the MMA component, commercial products that are processed or contain added ingredients (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 1½ oz eq of the MMA component, the product's CN label or PFS must state that one serving of the product contains 1½ ounces of cooked chicken. Commercial products cannot credit as the MMA component without this documentation.

> CACFP facilities must have a CN label or PFS to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial MMA products used in CACFP menus. Commercial products without this documentation cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). CACFP facilities are responsible for checking the manufacturer's PFS for accuracy before including any commercial products in CACFP meals and snacks

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 credit as meat alternates in the CACFP meal patterns for children. 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 credit as meat alternates. However, fresh soybeans (edamame) are legumes and credit only as the vegetables component.

> Nuts and seeds 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. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food and are ground or finely chopped. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

A 1-ounce serving of nuts or seeds credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. Refer to the crediting guidance below and in the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Change to limit for nuts and seeds at lunch and supper

Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, removes the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch and supper. Nuts and seeds may credit for the full MMA component at any meal or snack.

Crediting Nut and Seed Butters

Nut and seed butters credit as meat alternates in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Examples of creditable nut and 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.

Table 3-9 shows the MMA contribution for different amounts of nut and seed butters. The serving for nut and seed butters is based on volume (tablespoons). Two tablespoons credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This crediting is the same for all types of nut and seed butters, such as smooth, crunchy, and natural.

Table 3-9. MMA contribution of nut and seed butters

Serving size	MMA contribution
½ tablespoon	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
1 tablespoon	½ oz eq
1½ tablespoons	¾ oz eq
2 tablespoons (⅛ cup)	**1 oz eq**
3 tablespoons	1½ oz eq
4 tablespoons (¼ cup)	2 oz eq

The required volume measure (tablespoons) for nut and seed butters is not the same as weight (ounces). A 1-ounce serving (weight) of a nut or seed butter does not provide 1 oz eq of the MMA component. Nut and seed butters that are portioned by weight instead of volume must use the appropriate weight conversion in the USDA's FBG.

> The FBG indicates that 2 tablespoons (1.1 ounces) of a nut or seed butter credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

For more information, refer to "Volume versus weight" in section 2.

Serving size considerations

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the required serving for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of a nut or seed butter in one menu item, such as a peanut butter sandwich.

The CSDE recommends providing a smaller portion of peanut butter and supplementing it with another MMA to provide the full serving. For example, the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires 1½ oz eq of the MMA component, which equals 3 tablespoons of peanut butter. A lunch menu could provide 1½ oz eq of MMA from a sandwich containing 1½ tablespoons of peanut butter (¾ oz eq) served with ⅜ cup of yogurt (¾ oz eq).

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

CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS for commercial processed products such as pre-made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or trail mix with nuts and dried fruits. This documentation must state the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to "Documentation for Commercial 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 toward the CACFP meal patterns for children (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3). The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP facilities offer foods from the MMA component in a form that is recognizable to children.

Commercial products that are not easily recognizable as meat substitutes cannot credit as the MMA component. Some examples include peanut butter blended into other foods (such as muffins or smoothies) and chopped nuts in muffins.

> 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 nut or seed butters in CACFP menus. Use only creamy peanut butter (not chunky) and spread thinly to reduce the risk of choking. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Noncreditable nuts and seeds

Acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts do not credit as the MMA component.

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.

Table 3-10 shows the MMA 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.

Table 3-10. MMA contribution of surimi seafood

Serving size	MMA contribution
1 ounce	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
2 ounces	½ oz eq
3 ounces	**1 oz eq**
4.4 ounces	1½ oz eq
6 ounces	2 oz eq

CACFP facilities must have recipes (preferably standardized recipes) on file to document the amount of MMA per serving based on the yields above (refer to "Standardized Recipes" in section 2).

To credit surimi seafood differently from the amounts above, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS that documents how the crediting is determined (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). For example, a manufacturer's PFS might document that 1 ounce of a surimi seafood product credits as ½ 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.

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 adult day care center's recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) must document the amount of MMA 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 beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If a tempeh product contains other ingredients adult day care centers must obtain a CN label or PFS to document crediting (refer to "Documentation for Commercial 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 as the MMA component, grains component, and vegetables component. To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, this type of tempeh product must provide the minimum creditable quantities, such as ¼ oz eq of MMA, ¼ oz eq of grains, and ¼ cup of vegetables. CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS to document how much tempeh and other creditable foods these products contain.

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.*

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products

Tofu does not have an FDA standard of identity. To credit as a meat alternate in the CACFP patterns for children, 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." In addition, tofu and tofu products must meet the two crediting criteria below.

1. **Must be easily recognizable:** The tofu or tofu product must be easily recognizable as a meat substitute to credit as the MMA component (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3). 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 cannot credit as the MMA component. 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.

2. **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 3-11 shows the MMA contribution for different amounts of tofu and the minimum grams of protein required to credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

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.*

For foods made from scratch that contain tofu, the CACFP facility's recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) must document the amount of MMA per serving based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

Table 3-11. 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 Yogurt and Soy Yogurt

Commercial yogurt and soy yogurt must meet the USDA's sugars limit to credit as meat alternates in the CACFP meal patterns (refer to "Sugars limit for Yogurt" in this section). Yogurt may be:

- unflavored or flavored;
- sweetened or unsweetened;
- whole-fat, low-fat, or nonfat; and
- may contain added fruit, either blended or on the bottom.

Yogurt must meet the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for yogurt (21 CFR 131.200).

Serving size for yogurt

The required serving size 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 in the CACFP meal patterns for children. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup or 1 ounce.

Table 3-12 shows the MMA contribution for different amounts of yogurt.

Table 3-12. 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

Sugars limit for yogurt

Yogurt and soy yogurt must meet the sugars limit of no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce). Yogurt and soy yogurt used as an ingredient in smoothies must also meet this requirement.

> Effective with program year 2025-26 (beginning October 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the product-based limit for yogurt from total sugars to added sugars. Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). With state agency approval, CACFP facilities may choose to implement the added sugars limit prior to October 1, 2025.

The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that yogurt and soy yogurt served in CACFP meals and snacks comply with the sugars limit. For guidance on how to determine if a product complies with the sugars limit, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and "Resources for crediting yogurt" in this section.

Crediting yogurt made with fruit

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

Crediting yogurt in smoothies

Yogurt or soy yogurt that meets the sugars limit 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 the MMA component.

> The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk. Fluid milk must be offered at breakfast, lunch, and supper to meet the milk component requirement of the CACFP meal patterns for children.

CACFP facilities must document the amount of yogurt per serving with a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) for smoothies made from scratch, and a CN label or PFS for commercial products. For example, to credit a smoothie as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, the CACFP facility's recipe or the commercial product's CN label or PFS must indicate that each serving contains ½ cup of yogurt. For more information, refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2.

> The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk. Fluid milk must be offered at breakfast, lunch, and supper to meet the milk component requirement of the CACFP meal patterns for children.

For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to "Crediting Fruit in Smoothies" in the "Fruits Component" section, "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in the "Vegetables Component" section, and "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in the "Milk Component" section.

Nutrition guidance

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to read labels and consider fat content when purchasing yogurt for meals and snacks. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends low-fat or fat-free yogurt for ages 2 and older. These types of yogurt provide the same nutrients as whole milk yogurt but contain less saturated fat and fewer calories.

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

Noncreditable yogurt

Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and frozen yogurt do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children. The FDA's definition and standard of identity requires that yogurt must be "coagulated," not liquid. The FDA does not have a standard of identity for frozen yogurt. Homemade yogurt does not credit for food safety reasons. 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, and do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

Resources for crediting yogurt

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting yogurt as the MMA component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt-cacfp
- Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Sugars (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/choose-yogurts-are-lower-sugar
- 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 Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_yogurt_cacfp.pdf
- USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, and SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs, CACFP, and SFSP: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp
- USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

Links to these resources are also available under "Yogurt" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Noncreditable Foods in the MMA Component

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

- 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;
- pork fat;
- scrapple;
- sour cream;
- tofu that contains less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2-ounce serving by weight;
- tofu products that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes; and
- yogurt or soy yogurt that contains more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce.

For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in the beginning of section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the MMA component. For more information, refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section.

Resources for Crediting MMA

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the MMA component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- 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
- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 4: Meats/Meat Alternates Component (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- 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_commerical_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 Meats/Meat Alternates in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-meats-meat-alternates-child-nutrition-tip-sheet
- 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 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
- Food Buying Guide Section 1: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Meats/Meat Alternates Component (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section1_MeatsAndMeatAlternates.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 1: Yield Table for Meats/Meat Alternates (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section1_MeatsAndMeatAlternatesYieldTable.pdf

- Meats/Meat Alternates Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#MMA
- Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app
- 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
- 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.fns.usda.gov/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.fns.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.fns.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.fns.usda.gov/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.fns.usda.gov/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp
- USDA Webinar: Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products: https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/moving-forward-update-food-crediting-dried-meat-products

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

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 child care meals and snacks. For information on farm to school, 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 Servings for Vegetables

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of the vegetables component at lunch and supper. Vegetables and fruits are one meal component at breakfast and may and may include a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. A serving of vegetables may be one of the two required meal components at snack.

Table 3-13 summarizes the required servings of the vegetables component for each age group and meal. The age group for ages 13-18 applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

Table 3-13. Required servings of the vegetables component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Breakfast	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Lunch and supper	⅛ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Snack	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup

The amounts for the vegetables component 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:** Raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served (refer to "Crediting Raw Leafy Greens" in this section).
- **Dried or dehydrated vegetables:** Dried or dehydrated vegetables such as potato flakes and dried soup mix credit based on the amount of vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume (refer to "Crediting Dried Vegetables" in this section).

Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the number of servings provided by a specific quantity of vegetables (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

Meeting the required vegetable servings

CACFP facilities may choose to serve a combination of several vegetables to meet the minimum requirement. Each serving must contain at least ⅛ cup of vegetables (refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in the beginning of section 3). 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. Servings that contain less than ⅛ cup of vegetables do not credit.

If a menu item contains less than the full 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 ¼ cup of the vegetables component for ages 3-5. If a menu item contains ⅛ cup of vegetables, the menu planner must include another menu item with at least ⅛ cup of vegetables to provide the full serving for ages 3-5.

> When crediting menus items toward the vegetables component, menu planners must round down to the nearest ⅛ cup. For example, a CACFP recipe or commercial product that contains 2½ tablespoons of corn per serving credits as 2 tablespoons (⅛ cup) of the vegetables component.

Choking Prevention with Vegetables

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. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper

Vegetables may replace the fruits component at any lunch or supper. Lunches and suppers may contain either:

- one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component; or
- two different servings of the vegetables component.

For example, menu planners may choose to substitute vegetables for the fruits component on Monday and Friday, or every day of the week. Lunches and suppers cannot contain two servings of only the fruits component.

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, a ½-cup serving of canned peas cannot include the water in which it is packed, and a 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 (such as 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 in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

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 (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). The PFS must provide specific documentation on the amount of

vegetables per serving in the rehydrated volume. Menu planners should check the accuracy of the PFS prior to including foods with dehydrated vegetables in CACFP meals and snacks.

Determining rehydrated volume

The rehydration volume of dried vegetables often varies from brand to brand. 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 "Determining in-house product yields" in section 2.

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. For example, ¼ cup of canned drained hominy credits as ¼ cup of the starchy vegetables subgroup.

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

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables

Beans, peas, and lentils credit as either the vegetables component or the MMA component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. The menu planner must determine in advance how to credit beans, peas, and lentils in CACFP menus.

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

> A serving of cooked beans, peas, or lentils must contain the minimum required amount of beans, peas, or lentils without 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. If the amount is less than the full serving, the meal or snack must include additional vegetables to meet the full serving for each age group. For more information, refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in the beginning of section 3 and "Required Servings for Vegetables" in this section.

For information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as the MMA component, refer to "Crediting Beans, peas, and lentils as MMA" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

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 volume (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 beans, peas, and lentils (such as individually wrapped soy nuts) as part of reimbursable meals, due to their perception as snack foods. While these types of products credit in the CACFP meal patterns, they may be better suited for meals served off site, such as bagged lunches for field trips.

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 these foods in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

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 the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

Crediting hummus as vegetables

Beans, peas, or lentils in hummus (such as chickpeas/garbanzo beans) 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 amount 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 is ⅛ cup.

CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation that indicates the amount of beans, peas, and lentils per serving. Commercial products require a CN label (if available) or PFS (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). Hummus made from scratch requires 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 "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

For information on crediting hummus as the MMA component, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as MMA" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

Crediting beans, peas, and lentils in recipes as vegetables

CACFP facilities must have recipes (preferably standardized recipes) on file to document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch, such as lentil soup, bean burritos, and chili. The CACFP facility's recipe must provide at least ⅛ cup of beans, peas, or lentils per serving to credit toward the vegetables component.

The menu planner must determine the amount of the vegetables component per recipe serving by dividing the total volume (cups) of beans, peas, or 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 recipe, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Crediting documentation for commercial products

Commercial processed products that contain beans, peas, and lentils (such as black bean burritos and vegetarian chili) require documentation stating the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2).

Crediting Mixed Vegetables at Lunch and Supper

Vegetable mixtures credit toward the vegetables component. Some examples of vegetable mixtures include carrots, peas, and corn; three-bean salad; and a California mix of broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots. The crediting of mixed vegetables depends on whether the menu planner knows the amount of each type of vegetable in the mixture.

Known quantities of vegetables

A vegetable mixture may credit as two servings of vegetables (and may credit toward both the vegetables component and the fruits component) if the menu planner knows the quantities of the different vegetables and each vegetable is at least ⅛ cup. For example, a lunch 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 lunch and supper, the menu planner may choose to credit the broccoli as the full vegetables component (¼ cup), and use the cauliflower to replace the full fruits component (¼ cup). The cauliflower provides the minimum ¼-cup serving for 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 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.

Pasta made of 100 percent bean, pea, or lentil flours credits as the MMA component or the vegetables component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. For more information, refer to "Crediting Legume Flour Pasta Products as MMA" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

Crediting vegetable flours as vegetables

Pasta made of one or more 100 percent vegetable flours credits toward the vegetables component, even when it is not served with another recognizable vegetable. 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 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.

Crediting vegetable flours with other non-vegetable ingredients

Pasta products made of vegetable flour with other non-vegetable ingredients may credit toward the vegetables component (or for 100 percent bean, pea, or lentil flour pasta, the MMA component) 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 the ingredients statements for some 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 dies not credit toward the vegetables component. The amount of dried spinach is used for coloring and 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 children understand what foods are in their meals and snacks. For example, if a lunch or supper 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 serving 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

Pureed vegetables must be visible to credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3). 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. For more information, refer to "Determining in-house product yields" in section 2.

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.

Pureed vegetables do not credit when used to improve the nutrient profile of a food. 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 children easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

Pureed vegetables in smoothies

Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice toward the vegetables component and count toward the juice limit (refer to "Juice limit" in the "Fruits Component" 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 the "Fruits Component" section.

For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to "Crediting Fruit in Smoothies" in the "Fruits Component" section, "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in the "Milk Component" section, and "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section.

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 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. As a reminder, dried fruits credit as twice the volume served (refer to "Crediting Dried Fruits" in the "Fruits Component" section).

Crediting Soups

Vegetable soups made from scratch credit based on the amount of vegetables per serving. CACFP facilities must document this information with a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

Only certain types of commercial vegetable soups credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children (refer to table 3-14). The FBG indicates that 1 cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as ½ cup of vegetables, and 1 cup of commercial vegetable soup credits as ¼ cup of vegetables. The serving refers to the amount of cooked soup, e.g., heated canned or frozen ready-to-serve soup, reconstituted dried soup, and reconstituted condensed soup.

To credit a commercial soup that is not listed in the FBG, CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS stating the specific contribution of vegetables per serving (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). A CN label might be available for some commercial vegetable soups that contain at least ½ oz eq of the MMA (refer to "Child Nutrition (CN) Labels" in section 2).

Table 3-14. Creditable commercial vegetable soups

Vegetable soups 1 cup = ¼ cup of additional vegetables	**Bean, pea, and lentil soups** 1 cup = ½ cup of beans, peas, and lentils subgroup
Minestrone soup Tomato soup Tomato soup with other basic components such as rice Vegetable soup (contains only vegetables) Vegetable soup with other basic components such as meat or poultry	Bean soup, e.g., black bean, navy bean, and mixed bean Pea soup, e.g., split pea Lentil soup

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

Serving size considerations for commercial soups

The served portion of soup must be sufficient to provide the amount of vegetables being credited in CACFP menus. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for different ages and the container size 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 required serving for the vegetables component at snack is ½ cup. This requires 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 avoid spilling and ensure that the served portion meets the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving size 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.

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 in CACFP meals and snacks.

Crediting Vegetable Juice

Vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice or a combination of vegetable and fruit juices. It can be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. The name of the full-strength juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.”

> Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day.

Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to “Pureed vegetables in smoothies” in this section). For more information, refer to “Juice limit” in the “Fruits Component” section and the CSDE’s resource, *Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Crediting Vegetables in Combination Foods

Combination foods that contain vegetables credit based on the amount of the visible portion of vegetables per serving (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3). Combination foods contain more than one meal component. Some examples include pizza, lasagna, chili, vegetable egg rolls, hummus, and chicken-vegetable stir-fry. For example, cheese pizza contains the grains component (crust), the MMA component (cheese), and the vegetables component (tomato sauce).

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on the amount 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 (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). 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 (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

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 toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. Some examples of vegetables with added ingredients include tossed salad with dressing and croutons, potato salad, mashed potatoes made with butter and milk, baked beans with sauce, carrot-raisin salad, breaded vegetables like eggplant and onion ring, and vegetables with cheese.

For 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 maintain documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving. Commercial products require a CN label (if the vegetables are part of a main dish entree that contributes to the MMA component) or PFS (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2). Foods made from scratch require a recipe a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that documents the cups of vegetables per serving based on the yields in the FBG (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

> Recipes and PFS forms are not required 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 staff members understand how to prepare produce safely. The ICN's Produce Safety Resources webpage includes resources that describe best practices for receiving, storing, handling, and purchasing fresh and fresh-cut produce. For additional resources, refer to the CSDE's *Resource List for Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Noncreditable Foods in the Vegetables Component

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; and
- snack-type foods made from vegetables, such as potato chips and corn chips.

For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in the beginning of section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the vegetables component. For more information, refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section.

Resources for Crediting Vegetables

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the vegetables component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 6: Vegetables Component (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- 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 Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_juice_cacfp.pdf
- Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in the Child Nutrition Programs (USDA Webinar:): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetable-noodles-and-coconut-child-nutrition-programs
- 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 Vegetables in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetables-child-nutrition-programs-tip-sheet
- Food Buying Guide Section 2: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Vegetables Component (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section2_Vegetables.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 2**:** Yield Table for Vegetables (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section2_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf
- Serving Vegetables in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish)*:* https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-vegetables-cacfp
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-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.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs
- USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs
- 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 ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Vegetables

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Vegetables Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Fruits Component

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits; and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend that CACFP facilities:

- serve a variety of fruits and choose whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice;
- make at least one of the two required meal components at snack a vegetable or fruit, and
- incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods into meals.

For information on farm to school, 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 Servings for Fruits

The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of the fruits component at lunch and supper. Vegetables may substitute for the fruits component at any lunch or supper (refer to "Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper" in the "Vegetables Component" section).

Vegetables and fruits are one meal component at breakfast and may include a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both.

A serving of fruit may be one of the two required meal components at snack. cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component at snack. Only one meal component at snack can be a creditable beverage such as juice, a fruit smoothie, or milk.

Table 3-15 summarizes the required servings of the fruits component for each age group and meal. The age group for ages 13-18 applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

Table 3-15. Required servings of the fruits component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Breakfast	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Lunch and supper	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Snack	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup

The amounts for the fruits component refer to the edible portion 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 (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

Meeting the required fruit servings

CACFP facilities may choose to serve a combination of several fruits to meet the meal pattern requirement. Each serving must contain at least ⅛ cup of fruit (refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in the beginning of section 3). 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.

If a menu item contains less than the full 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 lunch and supper meal pattern requires ¼ cup of the fruits component for ages 3-5. If a menu item contains ⅛ cup of fruit, the menu planner must include another menu item with at least ⅛ cup of fruit to provide the full serving for ages 3-5.

> When crediting menu items toward the fruits component, menu planners must round down to the nearest ⅛ cup. For example, a CACFP recipe or commercial product that contains 2½ tablespoons of strawberries per serving credits as 2 tablespoons (⅛ cup) of the fruits component.

Choking Prevention with Fruits

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. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Crediting Canned Fruits

The CACFP meal patterns allow canned fruit in juice, water, or syrup. The USDA recommends choosing canned fruits in juice, water, or light syrup. Canned fruits in heavy syrup have a higher added sugars content than other types of canned fruits.

A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup. For example, ½ cup of canned peaches in juice credits as ½ cup of the fruits component but ½ cup of canned peaches in syrup does not. The menu planner can credit only the amount of peaches without the syrup.

> The juice from canned fruit counts toward the juice limit if the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component (refer to "Juice limit" in this section). For example, if canned pears in juice credit as the fruits component at lunch and supper, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at any other CACFP meal or snack that same day.

Juice from canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit if the juice is planned as an extra noncreditable food. For example, the juice from canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit if staff portion ½ cup of canned fruit in a 5½-ounce container, and then add the juice after measuring the full ½-cup serving of fruit.

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 (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.

Juices labeled as 100 percent juice, including coconut water, credit toward the fruits component based on the volume served. Menu planners must count coconut water with all other juices toward the juice limit. For more information, refer to "Coconut water" and "Juice limit" in this section.

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 requirement 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.

> 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" in section 1.

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.

Crediting Fresh Fruits

The crediting contribution of one piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut up) varies depending on the type and size, and ranges from ¼ cup to 1¼ cups. 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 CACFP meal and snack. If the amount is less than the full serving, the meal or snack must include additional fruit to meet the full serving. The examples below illustrate this requirement.

- **Example 1:** The breakfast meal pattern for ages 3-5 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 2:** The snack meal pattern for ages 1-2 and 3-5 requires ½ cup of the fruits component. 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.

Table 3-16 lists the FBG's meal pattern contribution of some fresh fruits, and the additional amount needed to provide a ½-cup serving. A ½-cup serving of fruits is required for ages 3 and older at breakfast and for ages 6 and older at snack (if fruit is offered as one of the two required meal components at snack).

> 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.

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Table 3-16. Meal pattern contribution of fresh fruits

Fruit (one piece, whole or cut up)	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount needed for ½ cup
Apple, 125-138 count	1 cup	0
Apricot, medium (1 ⅜-inch diameter)	¼ cup	¼ cup
Banana, 150 count (7 to 7⁷/₈ inch)	½ cup	0
Banana, 100-120 count, regular	½ cup	0
Clementine, whole, peeled	⅜ cup	⅛ cup
Grapefruit, 27-32 count, large	1 cup	0
Kiwi, 33-39 count	¼ cup	¼ cup
Nectarine, size 88-96 (2 ¼-inch diameter)	½ cup	0
Nectarine, size 56-64 (2 ¾-inch diameter)	¾ cup	0
Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count	⅝ cup	0
Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count	⅝ cup	0
Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count	½ cup	0
Peach, size 88 and 84 (2 ⅛-inch diameter)	⅜ cup	⅛ cup
Peach, size 64 and 60 (2 ½-inch diameter)	⅔ cup	0
Peach, size 80	½ cup	0
Peach, size 56	¾ cup	0
Peach, size 56	¾ cup	0
Pear, 150 count	½ cup	0
Pear, 120 count	¾ cup	0
Pear, D'Anjou, Bosc, or Bartlett, 100 count	1¼ cups	0

Fruit (one piece, whole or cut up)	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount needed for ½ cup
Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)	½ cup	0
Plum, purple, red, or black, 2 ½-inch diameter	⅝ cup	0
Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65	⅜ cup	⅛ cup
Tangerine, 120 count	⅜ cup	⅛ cup

Crediting Frozen Fruits

Frozen fruits credit based on the volume served. For some frozen fruits (such as frozen sliced strawberries and frozen apricots), the serving includes the thawed liquid. For other frozen fruits (such as 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.

Choose frozen fruits without added sugars. The USDA recommends limiting sweetened fruits to help reduce children's consumption of added sugars and help children 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 mixed berries in a yogurt-fruit parfait) credit based on the amount (cups) of fruit per serving (refer to "Requirement for visible components" in the beginning of section 3). Commercial products must have a CN label or PFS that documents the amount of fruits per serving (refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2).

Crediting Fruits in Grain-Based Desserts

Grain-based desserts do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children. However, the visible fruit portion of grain-based desserts (such as fruit crisp, fruit pies, and fruit turnovers) credits based on the amount of fruit in the serving (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3). For example, a fruit turnover that contains ½ cup of apples credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. Keep in mind that the large amount of a grain-

based dessert needed to provide the required serving of fruit might be unreasonable, especially for younger children.

> The grain portion of grain-based desserts (such as piecrust and cobbler or crisp topping) does not credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns (refer to "Grain-based desserts" in the "Grains Component" section). The USDA recommends limiting sweetened fruit to help reduce children's consumption of added sugars and help children develop a taste preference for unsweetened fruit.

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on the amount of fruits per serving. Commercial products require a PFS (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). 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 (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

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 CACFP meal patterns for children. Some examples of fruits with added ingredients include yogurt-fruit parfaits, carrot-raisin salad, Waldorf salad, cottage cheese mixed with crushed pineapple, and baked apples.

For example, to credit Waldorf salad as ¼ cup of the fruits component, the serving must contain ¼ cup of fruit (e.g., diced apples, sliced grapes, and raisins), before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, sugar, and spices.

CACFP facilities maintain documentation on the amount of fruits per serving. Commercial products require a or PFS (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). 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 (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

> Recipes and PFS forms are not required 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 Juice

Juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice or a combination of fruit and vegetable juices. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” The statements “natural” and “organic” do not indicate that a juice is full strength.

Juice may be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate and may be served liquid or frozen, e.g., full-strength frozen juice pops. For more information, refer to “Frozen juice products” in this section and the CSDE’s resources, *Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

> The USDA recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice. Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables.

Juice concentrates

Juice concentrates credit only when they are reconstituted with water to 100 percent full-strength juice and served in the form of juice. Foods made with juice concentrate, such as gelatin or sherbet, do not credit as juice because they are no longer in the form of juice.

Juice made from concentrate is reconstituted with a volume of water that is several times the amount of the 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.” Juice made from concentrate that is labeled “100 percent juice” credits 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, full-strength vegetable juices, or full-strength fruit and vegetable juices. At lunch and supper, fruit and vegetable 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.

Frozen juice products

Frozen 100 percent fruit juice products (such as full-strength frozen juice pops) credit based on the fluid volume prior to freezing. CACFP facilities must request a PFS from the manufacturer to document this information (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). Frozen fruit juice must meet the same requirements as juice and counts toward the juice limit (refer to "Juice limit" in this section).

Apple cider

Apple cider must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice to credit toward the fruits component. 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 apple cider or any other type of juice that is not pasteurized. Apple cider counts toward the juice limit (refer to "Juice limit" in this section).

Coconut water

Fruit juices labeled as 100 percent juice, including coconut water, credit 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 "Juice limit" 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 with added ingredients to be labeled "100% juice." This means that 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 product ingredients statements and choose 100 percent juice without these added ingredients.

Juice limit

Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. The daily juice limit includes all sources of 100 percent juice, such as:

- fruit and vegetable juice;
- frozen pops made from 100 percent juice;
- pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies;
- and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice.

Drained canned fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the juice limit (refer to "Crediting Canned Fruits" in this section).

> 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.

- The CACFP 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).
- If the CACFP lunch menu includes canned fruit in juice as the fruits component (and the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component), juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, supper, or snack that same day.
- 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.
- 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 toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. However, the USDA encourages CACFP facilities to limit juice in CACFP menus to ensure that meals and snacks meet children's nutrition 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 Pureed Fruits in Smoothies

Fruit juice and pureed fruits in smoothies credit only as juice toward the fruits component. Crediting is based on the volume (cups) of juice 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

Juice and pureed fruits in smoothies count with all other juices toward the juice limit. For example, if the menu planner credits pureed fruit in a smoothie as the fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack that same day. For more information, refer to "Juice limit" in this section and the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting 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.

> Concentrated fruit puree and concentrated juice are added sugars. They do not credit in smoothies unless they are reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice.

The product label must include a statement regarding the "percent juice content," which is required by the FDA for beverages made with fruit/vegetable juice or puree. For example, an 8-fluid ounce commercial 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 fruit in the product.

Mixed 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. They 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 standardized recipe. They credit as the vegetables component if vegetable juice or vegetable puree is the greatest juice ingredient in the CACFP facility's recipe.

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

Crediting other components in smoothies

Other creditable ingredients in smoothies include vegetable juice and pureed vegetables (refer to "Crediting Vegetables in Smoothies" in the "Vegetables Component" section), milk (refer to "Crediting Milk in Smoothies" in the "Milk Component" section), and yogurt (refer to "Crediting yogurt in smoothies" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section).

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, juice, 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 smoothies require a PFS. A CN label might be available for some commercial smoothie products that contain at least ½ oz eq of yogurt (refer to "Child Nutrition (CN) Labels" in section 2). 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 (refer to "Standardized Recipes" and "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 2).

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 in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Noncreditable commercial smoothies also include probiotic dairy drinks, drinkable yogurt, and yogurt drinks.

Crediting considerations for smoothies

Menu planners should consider the crediting requirements below when including smoothies in CACFP meals and snacks.

- **Breakfast:** Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies may credit as juice toward the entire vegetables and fruits component at breakfast, if the serving provides the minimum meal pattern amount. For example, a smoothie that contains ½ cup of pureed mangoes and peaches credits as the full fruits component for ages 3-5 at breakfast. If the smoothie contains less than the required amount, the breakfast menu must include additional vegetables and fruits to meet the full requirement.

- **Lunch and supper:** The CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern requires a serving of vegetables and a serving of fruits. Menu planners cannot offer a smoothie and juice as the only two servings of vegetables and fruits at lunch and supper. Since both foods credit as juice, this would exceed the juice limit. At least one of the required lunch/supper servings of the vegetables component and fruits component at lunch and supper must be a whole fruit or vegetable (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried).

- **Snack:** The CACFP snack meal pattern requires any two of the five meal components. Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies may credit as either the entire fruits component or the entire vegetables component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same snack. Smoothies containing juice and milk may credit as either the fruits component or the milk component but cannot credit as both meal components in the same snack. If the amount of milk or juice in the smoothie is less than the full serving, the snack menu must include additional foods to provide the full component. The snack menu cannot include juice (including pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies) when milk is the only other meal component.

The USDA recommends not offering smoothies at more than one meal or snack per day.

Crediting examples for smoothies at snack

The examples below show how smoothies could credit at snack. The CACFP snack meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires any two of the five meal components: ½ cup of unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk; ½ oz eq of MMA; ½ cup of vegetables; ½ cup of fruits; and ½ oz eq of grains.

- **Example 1:** A smoothie recipe contains ½ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and ½ cup of unflavored low-fat milk per serving.

  The menu planner may choose to credit this smoothie as either the full fruits component or the full milk component, but not both meal components in the same snack. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second meal component that is not juice, fruit, or milk (i.e., MMA, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include a 1-ounce whole-grain corn muffin (grains component) as the second meal component.

- **Example 2:** A smoothie recipe contains ½ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and ¼ cup of unflavored low-fat milk per serving.

  The pureed fruit credits as the full fruits component. However, the milk does not credit as the full milk component because it is less than ½ cup. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second meal component that is not juice, fruit, or milk (i.e., MMA, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include ½ cup of diced cucumbers (vegetables component) as the second meal component.

> The smoothies in these examples cannot credit as the milk component for age 1 because the CACFP meal patterns for children require whole milk for age 1.

The CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, summarizes the requirements for crediting smoothies in CACFP meals and snacks. For additional guidance, refer to USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: *Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Pureed Fruits in Other Foods

Except for smoothies, foods made with pureed fruits cannot credit as the fruits component (refer to "Requirement for visible components" at the beginning of section 3). Some examples include pureed prunes or applesauce in muffins, and pureed bananas in banana bread.

Noncreditable Foods in the Fruits Component

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

- banana chips;
- 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
- commercial fruit smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements.

For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in the beginning of section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the fruits component. For more information, refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section.

Resources for Crediting Fruits

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the fruits component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- 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
- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 5: Fruits Component (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- Crediting Fruits in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-fruits-child-nutrition-programs-tip-sheet
- Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_juice_cacfp.pdf
- Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_smoothies_cacfp.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 3: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Fruits Component (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section3_Fruits.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 3: Yield Table for Fruits (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section3_FruitsYieldTable.pdf
- Fruits Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Fruits
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas
- USDA Memo SP 10-2014, CACFP 05-2014, and SFSP 10-2014 (v3): Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fns.usda.gov/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

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

For additional crediting resources, visit the "Fruits Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Grains Component

To credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns, grain menu items must be WGR or enriched. Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains

The grains component includes a variety of WGR and enriched foods, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including sweet crackers, such as animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard breadsticks, tortilla chips; and popcorn;
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- RTE breakfast cereals, such as puffed cereals, whole-grain round or flaked cereal, and granola;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as 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, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.

CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children. 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.

Overview of Crediting Requirements

Menu planners must complete two steps to determine if grain menu items credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

1. Determine if the grain menu item meets the CACFP crediting criteria. To credit as the grains component, the grain menu item must be WGR or enriched. For guidance on the crediting and WGR criteria, refer to "Part A: Crediting Requirements" and "Part B: WGR Criteria."

2. Determine the oz eq contribution of the planned serving. For guidance on determining a grain menu item's oz eq contribution, refer to "Part C: Serving Size."

These steps apply to all grain menu items, including commercial grain products and foods prepared from scratch.

Choking Prevention with Grains

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. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Grain-based Desserts

Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns for children. 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.

Identifying grain-based desserts

The USDA's *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 or served as a dessert?
- Is it frosted, iced, or dessert-flavored, like chocolate, caramel, or butterscotch?
- Does it contain custard filling or candy?
- Is it 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 (such as 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 (such as 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 children.

Serving grain-based desserts served as extra foods

CACFP facilities may choose to serve grain-based desserts as an additional food item that does not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns for children. Examples include serving cake or cookies at special celebrations. However, to ensure that children's nutritional needs are met, the USDA and CSDE encourage CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods and beverages (refer to "Noncreditable foods" at the beginning of section 3). In addition, grain-based desserts cannot be purchased with CACFP funds (refer to "CACFP funds cannot purchase noncreditable foods" in section 3).

Resources for grain-based desserts

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

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 7A: Grains Component Crediting Requirements (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.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.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers

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

Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

This section addresses the crediting requirements for the grains component of the CACFP meal patterns for children. All grain items served in CACFP menus must comply with these requirements, including commercial grain products and grain foods made from scratch.

Creditable Grains

To credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns, grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains. Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified; and must meet the sugars limit (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in this section).

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

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

The CACFP meal patterns for children have different crediting requirements for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and grain foods made from scratch. These crediting requirements are summarized in this section.

Part A: Crediting Requirements

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 "Part C: Required Servings for Grains" 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.

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 grain product credits as an enriched grain. Enriched wheat flour is the first ingredient and the only grain ingredient.

- **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.

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

Part A: Crediting Requirements

- **Example 3**

  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 grain product as an enriched grain. Enriched wheat flour is the first ingredient after water. This product Is not WGR because the amount of whole wheat flour is less than the amount of enriched flour.

The CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides more examples of how to determine if commercial grain products are creditable. Menu planners may use the CSDE's Excel worksheet, *Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* to determine if commercial grain products comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria. For more information, refer to "Grain Crediting Worksheets" in this section.

Multiple creditable grains in commercial grain products

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 "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, 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.*

Part A: Crediting Requirements

Crediting Criteria for 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 credit as the grains component if:

- the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and
- the cereal meets the sugars limit (no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce).

> Effective October 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the product-based limit for breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. With state agency approval, CACFP facilities may choose to implement the added sugars limit prior to October 1, 2025.

Evaluate sugars first

The CSDE recommends that menu planners review the sugars content of breakfast cereals first, before reviewing the ingredients statement for creditable grains. If a breakfast cereal exceeds the sugars limit, it cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns, even if it contains creditable grains or is WGR.

Part A: Crediting Requirements

Crediting guidance for breakfast cereals

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. Menu planners may use the CSDE's Excel worksheets, *Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* to determine if breakfast cereals comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria. For more information, refer to "Grain Crediting Worksheets" in this section.

> 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" in section 1.

Crediting Criteria for Commercial Combination Foods

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) credit as the grains component if the first **grain** ingredient is a creditable grain.

- **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 combination food credits as a WGR food toward the grains component because the first grain ingredient (whole-wheat flour) is a creditable grain. A PFS is required to determine the oz eq per serving (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2).

Separate grain portion in commercial combination foods

Part A: Crediting Requirements

A commercial combination food that lists the ingredients for the grain portion separately credits as the grains component if a creditable grain is the first ingredient in the grain portion, or water is the first ingredient in the grain portion and a whole grain is the second ingredient in the grain portion.

- **Example for cheese ravioli**

  Ingredients: **Filling:** Fat-free ricotta cheese (whey, skim milk [made from nonfat dry milk powder], vinegar, xanthan gum, carrageenan), water, egg, low moisture part skim mozzarella cheese (cultured part skim milk, salt, enzymes), whey protein isolate, sodium caseinate, Romano cheese made from cow's milk (cultured milk, salt, enzymes), bleached wheat flour, garlic salt (salt, dehydrated garlic), salt, corn starch, sugar, dehydrated garlic. **Pasta: Whole-wheat flour***,* enriched durum wheat flour (wheat flour, niacin, ferrous sulfate, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), water, egg.

  This combination food credits as a WGR food toward the grains component because the first ingredient (whole-wheat flour) in the pasta (grain portion) is a creditable grain. A PFS is required to determine the oz eq per serving (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2).

Multiple creditable grains in commercial combination foods

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain portion of a combination food contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine crediting information (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, the product's PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains in the grain portion of the product is the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion. 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.*

Part A: Crediting Requirements

Crediting Criteria for Grain Foods Made from Scratch

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 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 CACFP facility's 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. Menu planners may use the CSDE's Excel worksheets, *Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* to determine if grain foods made from scratch comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria. For more information, refer to "Grain Crediting Worksheets" in this section.

> CACFP facilities must have recipes (preferably standardized recipes) on file to document the crediting information for grain foods prepared from scratch (refer to "Standardized Recipes" in section 2).

Part A: Crediting Requirements

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 cooked dried corn in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process results in a product with nutrition content similar 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

Menu planners may use 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 nixtamalized corn products. These products 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 (such as “cornmeal” and “yellow corn flour”), CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating that the ingredients are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized (refer to “Product Formulation Statements” in section 2).

Part A: Crediting Requirements

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 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 canned hominy as the vegetables component, refer to "Crediting Hominy as Vegetables" in the "Vegetables Component" section.

Part A: Crediting Requirements

Crediting Popcorn

Popcorn is a whole-grain food. Three cups (a 1-ounce serving) of plain popped popcorn credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. The minimum creditable amount is ¾ cup (¼ oz eq). Table 3-17 summarizes the grains contribution of popped popcorn.

Table 3-17. 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

For developmentally ready children, menu planners should consider the crediting requirements below when including popcorn in CACFP 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 of grains) and ¼ cup of enriched or WGR round cereal (¼ oz eq of grains) credits as ½ oz eq of the grains component.

> 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. For additional guidance, refer to "Choking Prevention" in section 1.

Part A: Crediting Requirements

- 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 obtain a PFS for commercial products (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2) and a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) for foods prepared from scratch (refer to "Standardized Recipes" in section 2).

- Popcorn sometimes includes ingredients and toppings such as salt, caramel, cheese, and butter. The USDA strongly encourages healthier alternatives, such as seasoning the 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 meals and snacks (refer to "Grain-based Desserts" in this section).

The requirements for crediting popcorn are summarized in USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019, and SFSP 09-2019: *Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Noncreditable Foods in the Grains Component

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 sugars per ounce;
- foods made from scratch that are not WGR or enriched; and
- grain-based desserts such as brownies, cookies, cake, coffee cake, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple and pecan), rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding (refer to "Grain-based Desserts" in this section).

For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in the beginning of section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the grains component. For more information, refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in this section.

Part A: Crediting Requirements

Grain Crediting Worksheets

Menu planners may use the CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets to evaluate grain-based foods for compliance with the CACFP crediting, WGR, and serving requirements.

- Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

These crediting worksheets are available in the "CSDE Crediting Worksheets for CACFP Child Care Programs" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Resources for Crediting Grains

The resources below assist menu planners with identifying foods that credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 7A: Grains Component Crediting Requirements (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- 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_grainscacfp.pdf
- Crediting Grains in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet Part 1: Creditable Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/grains_tipsheet_part1.pdf

Part A: Crediting Requirements

- Crediting Grains in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet Part 2: Identifying Grain Products That Are Whole Grain-Rich (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/grains_tipsheet_part2.pdf
- Crediting Grains in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet Part 3: Program Requirements (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/grains_tipsheet_part3.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 Section 4: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Grains Component (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section4_Grains.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 4: Yield Table for Grains (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section4_GrainsYieldTable.pdf
- Grains Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Grains
- How to Identify Creditable Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/identify_creditable_grains_cacfp.pdf
- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf
- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs – Completed Sample (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Example_Grains_Oz_Eq.pdf
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers

Part A: Crediting Requirements

- USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019, and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fns.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.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs
- Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-wic-food-lists-identify-grains-cacfp
- 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 Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Part B: WGR Requirement

"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

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

CACFP facilities may serve a WGR food at any CACFP meal or snack, but menu planners must consider the menu planning requirements below.

- **Only one meal per day is served:** If the CACFP facility serves only one CACFP meal per day (breakfast, lunch, or supper), the grain served at that meal must be WGR.
- **Only breakfast is served:** If the CACFP facility serves only breakfast and chooses to substitute MMA for the grains component at breakfast (allowed up to three times per week), a WGR food is not required. For more information on MMA substitutes, refer to "MMA at Breakfast" in section 3.
- **Only snack is served:** 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 snack components, the grain must be WGR.

The WGR requirement applies to the CACFP, not to each child. If the CACFP facility serves more than one meal, and two different groups of children are at each meal (such as one group

of children at breakfast and another group of children at lunch), only one meal is required to contain a WGR food.

The USDA strongly encourages CACFP facilities to vary the meals and snacks that include a WGR item. 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 children 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 reviews the product's ingredients statement and looks at the first three grain ingredients. It is the most used method for commercial products. The CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides guidance on these methods and includes examples of evaluating grain products for compliance with the Rule of Three WGR criteria.

> As a reminder, 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

Part B: WGR Requirement

- 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 following criteria:

- a whole grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient);
- the second grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ; and
- the third grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

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.

Part B: WGR Requirement

- **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 "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). 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).

Part B: WGR Requirement

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 following criteria:

- the first ingredient is a whole grain;
- the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ; and 3) the cereal meets the sugars limit (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in "Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements").

The example below shows a 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. To credit as the grains component, this breakfast cereal must also comply with the sugars limit (refer to "Sugars limit for breakfast cereals" in "Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements").

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 use the CSDE's Excel worksheet, *Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* to determine if cooked breakfast cereals comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria. For more information, refer to "Grain Crediting Worksheets" in this section.

Part B: WGR Requirement

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 two criteria: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) total sugars do not exceed 6 grams per dry ounce (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in "Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements").

The example below shows a whole-grain fortified RTE breakfast cereal that meets the WGR criteria. 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. 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 meets the sugars limit (refer to "Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals" in "Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements").

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 use the CSDE's Excel worksheet, *Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* to determine if RTE breakfast cereals comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria (refer to "Grain Crediting Worksheets" in this section).

Part B: WGR Requirement

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 following criteria:

- a whole grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient);
- the second grain ingredient (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ; and
- 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.

Part B: WGR Requirement

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 following criteria:

- 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);
- the second grain ingredient in the grain portion (if any) is whole, enriched, bran, or germ; and
- 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).

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 "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). 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 "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2).

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 are equal to or more than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the recipe. The examples below show recipes that 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.*

Part B: WGR Requirement

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. For more information, refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" and "Standardized Recipes" in section 2.

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."

Part B: WGR Requirement

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 might include something like the following statement: “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 sugars limit (refer to “Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals” in “Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements”). Documentation should include the products’ Nutrition Facts label and the CACFP facility’s calculation showing that the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce.

Part B: WGR Requirement

Resources for WGR Criteria

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

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 7B: Grains Component Whole Grain-rich Requirement (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- 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
- Grains Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Grains
- How to Spot Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/how-spot-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp
- Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/identifying-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp
- Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the CACFP? (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/my-recipe-whole-grain-rich-cacfp
- 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/creditingwhen_commercial_grain_/products_require_pfs_cacfp.pdf

For additional resources, visit the "Grains Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Part C: Required Servings

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. The CACFP meal patterns for children require a serving of the grains component at breakfast, lunch, and supper. A serving of the grains component may be one of the two required meal components at snack.

Table 3-18 summarizes the required servings of the grains component for each age group and meal. The age group for ages 13-18 applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

Table 3-18. Required servings of the grains component

Meal	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Breakfast	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Lunch and supper	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Snack	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

Meeting the Required Grain Servings

Menu planners may choose to serve one grain menu item or a combination of several grain menu items to meet the minimum requirement. Each serving must contain at least ¼ oz eq of grains (refer to "Minimum creditable amounts" in the beginning of section 3). For example, a lunch or supper menu for ages 3-5 could provide the required ½ oz eq of the grains component from:

- ¼ cup of brown rice (½ oz eq); or
- ⅛ cup of brown rice (¼ oz eq) and a ¼-ounce serving of a whole-grain roll (¼ oz eq).

Servings that contain less than ⅛ oz eq of grains do not credit.

> When crediting menu items toward the grains component, menu planners must round down to the nearest ¼ oz eq. For example, a CACFP recipe or commercial product that contains 0.49 oz eq of grains per serving credits as 0.25 oz eq of the grains component.

Part C: Required Servings

If a menu item contains less than the full serving of the grains component, the meal must include additional grains to meet the full serving for each age group. For example, the breakfast meal pattern requires ½ oz eq of the grains component. If a menu item contains ¼ oz eq of grains, the menu planner must include another menu item with at least ¼ oz eq of grains to provide the full serving.

USDA's Exhibit A Chart

The USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* summarizes the grain oz eq for nine groups (A-I) of creditable grain foods. Each group contains products with similar grain content.

The Exhibit A grain quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* lists the Exhibit A grain oz eq that apply to the CACFP meal patterns for children. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component (refer to "Grain-based desserts" in "Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements").

The amount of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. A summary of the required quantities for each Exhibit A group is below. For more information, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Groups A-E: Baked goods

Groups A-E include baked goods, such as crackers, animal and graham crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, and pancakes. The amount that provides 1 oz eq ranges from 22 grams (0.8 ounce) for foods in group A to 69 grams (2.4 ounces) for foods in group E.

> Foods in groups F and G are grain-based desserts and do not credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

Part C: Required Servings

Group H: Cereal grains

Group H includes cereal grains, such as 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 recipe (such as rolled oats in bread) require 16 grams of creditable grains to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. For guidance on crediting cooked breakfast cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Group H: RTE breakfast cereals

Group I includes RTE cold breakfast cereals. 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, 1½ cups of puffed cereal, and ¼ cup of granola. For guidance on crediting RTE breakfast cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Methods to Determine Oz Eq

The USDA allows two methods for determining the oz eq contribution of creditable grain products and recipes. CACFP facilities may use either method but must document how they determine the crediting information for commercial products and foods made from scratch. These methods are summarized below.

Method 1: Weight or volume (USDA's Exhibit A chart)

Method 1 uses the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (Exhibit A) to determine the required weight (groups A-E) 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 foods made from scratch if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving.

For detailed guidance on determining the oz eq of a grain menu item, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Part C: Required Servings

Method 2: Creditable grains

Method 2 determines oz eq from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products with a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving. The required grams of creditable grains for 1 oz eq depend on whether the grain food is enriched or WGR.

- **Creditable foods:** 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 commercial products, CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that documents the weight of the creditable grains per serving (refer to "Product Formulation Statements" in section 2). 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.*

F Foods made from scratch require a recipe (preferably a standardized recipe) that indicates the weight of each grain ingredient (refer to "Standardized Recipes" in section 2). The grams of creditable grains per serving are determined from the weight of each grain ingredient listed in the recipe. If the recipe lists grain ingredients only by volume (e.g., cups and quarts), the CACFP facility must calculate the equivalent weight (grams) for each grain ingredient (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*).

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. If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS, or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the product cannot credit as the grains component in CACFP meals and snacks.

Part C: Required Servings

A PFS is required for commercial products when any of the situations below apply.

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-E); 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. 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; and 2) how the product provides that amount according to the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) or USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies.

6. 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; and 2) how the product provides that amount according to the FBG or USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies.

7. 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; and 2) how the product provides that amount according to the FBG or USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies.

For specific guidance and examples, 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.* The CSDE will review crediting documentation during the Administrative Review of the CACFP. For more information, refer to "Documentation for Commercial Products" in section 2.

Part C: Required Servings

Grain crediting tools

The tools below help menu planners determine the oz eq contribution of creditable grain products and recipes.

- **USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** This online tool of the USDA's FBG determines the oz eq of commercial grain products. More information is available in USDA's webinars, *Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue* and *How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool.*

- **CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets:** These Excel worksheets determine if grain products and recipes meet the CACFP crediting requirements and WGR criteria (which are the same as the CACFP meal patterns) and calculate the oz eq contribution of the serving.
    - Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
    - Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
    - Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

  The CACFP grain crediting worksheets are available in the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

- **How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the CACFP:** 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 three types of commercial products and recipes. These include grain menu items in groups A-E that contain multiple small pieces per serving (e.g., crackers, hard pretzels, and animal crackers), multiple large pieces per serving (e.g., pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles), and one piece per serving (e.g., muffins, bagels, and rolls).

- **USDA's Recipe Analysis Workbook:** The FBG's online Recipe Analysis Workbook allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the recipe's meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA's FBG website.

For additional guidance, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Part C: Required Servings

Crediting Considerations for Bread

Menu planners should consider the crediting requirements below when determining the appropriate serving size for grain products and recipes.

Crediting one slice of bread

Bread is in group B of the USDA's Exhibit A chart and requires 1 ounce (28 grams) to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component. The weight of one slice of bread varies greatly among manufacturers and different types of bread products. For many types of breads, one slice weighs more or less than 1 ounce. This means that one slice of bread does not always provide 1 oz eq of the grains component. Menu planners must check the serving size on the product's Nutrition Facts label.

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 "Meeting the Required Grain Servings" in this section). The example below shows this calculation.

- **Example of calculation for multigrain bread**

  The Nutrition Facts label for a multigrain bread indicates that the serving sizes 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 equals 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.

Part C: Required Servings

Crediting sandwiches with two slices of bread

The oz eq contribution of a sandwich is determined by adding the weight of both slices together before rounding down to the nearest ¼ oz eq. The example below shows this calculation.

- **Example of oz eq calculation for a sandwich**

  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: Multiply the weight per slice by the number of slices.

     52 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 incorrect.

     26 grams divided by 28 grams per oz eq equals 0.93 oz eq, which rounds down to 0.75 oz eq per slice, which equals 1.5 oz eq of the grains component for the two slices of bread in the sandwich.

Part C: Required Servings

Resources for Oz Eq

The resources below assist menu planners with determining the oz eq contribution of a grain product or recipe.

- Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children – Module 7C: Grains Component Ounce Equivalents (CSDE training webinar): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize
- CACFP Grains Ounce Equivalents Resources USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grains-ounce-equivalents-resources-cacfp
- Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in 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 to the Rescue (USDA webinar): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue
- Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA): https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index
- Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_cacfp.pdf
- Grains Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Grains
- How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA webinar): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/how-maximize-exhibit-grains-tool
- 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

Part C: Required Servings

- Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-ounce-equivalents-grains-cacfp
- 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 resources, visit the "Grains Component for CACFP Child Care Programs" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

4 — Meal Service

This section addresses the meal service requirements for the CACFP, including meal schedules, types of meal service, children's intent to participate in the meal service, water availability, meals consumed off site, offer versus serve (OVS) for at-risk afterschool centers, and family-provided foods for medical or special dietary needs.

Meal Schedules

CACFP facilities should schedule meal services to ensure good nutrition practices and minimize food waste. Generally, most children need to eat within 3 to 4 hours of their last meal. Young children may need to eat more frequently. The CSDE recommends that CACFP programs follow the guidelines below.

- Schedule meal and snack periods at appropriate times that are not too close together or too far apart, e.g., at least two hours apart, but no more than three. When the time span is too short, children will not be hungry. When the time span is too long, children can experience hunger symptoms that can interfere with daily activities and learning, such as fatigue, irritability, inability to concentrate, weakness, and stomach pains.

- Offer food at least every three hours so that children's hunger does not overwhelm their ability to self-regulate food intake.

- To encourage meal consumption and improve children's behavior, schedule mealtimes after structured physical activity or active play.

- Provide adequate time to allow all children to eat and socialize. Scheduled mealtimes should provide children with at least 20 minutes to eat breakfast or snack, and at least 30 minutes to eat lunch or supper, after the children are sitting at the table. CACFP facilities should adjust these times as needed to ensure that all children have enough time to eat until they are no longer hungry.

CACFP facilities should consider the appropriate timing and scheduling of meals and snacks that best meet children's nutrition needs For additional guidance, refer to "Meal Schedules" in the CSDE's *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

Types of Meal Service

The four types of allowable meal service include pre-plated, cafeteria style, family style, and combination style. CACFP facilities may use any type of meal service based on the individual needs and logistics of each child care program.

Pre-plated meal service

With pre-plated meal service, staff pre-plate the minimum portion of each meal component, based on the meal pattern requirements for each age group. For example, staff prepare each child's plate for lunch with the minimum serving of MMA, grains, vegetables, and fruits, and portion each child's cup with the minimum serving of milk.

Cafeteria-style meal service

Cafeteria-style meal service is common in school settings. Children go through the cafeteria serving line and food service staff serve each child the meal components of their meal. Children may also self-serve some foods, such as selecting a carton of milk or a piece of fresh fruit. Some young children may require assistance from a supervising adult to safely carry their tray to a cafeteria table.

Family-style meal service

The USDA recommends family-style meal service for ages 3-5. Family-style meal service allows children to serve themselves from communal platters or bowls of food with assistance, if needed, from supervising adults who sit with the children. This approach allows children to identify and be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus; while developing a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good eating habits. Family-style meal service also helps young children develop motor skills and the dexterity and hand strength needed to serve foods.

Unlike pre-plated meal service or cafeteria-style meal service, family-style meals allow some latitude in the initial serving sizes because additional servings of each food are readily available at each table, and more can be served at any time. When a complete family-style service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer some meal components in a family-style manner, particularly when serving smaller children or introducing a new food item. For more information, refer to "Combination-style meal service" in this section.

Table 4-1 compares the requirements and best practices for pre-plated meals and family-style meals. For additional guidance, refer to "Requirements for Family-style Meal Service" in this section.

Table 4-1. Comparison of pre-plated and family-style meal service

Pre-plated meal service: The minimum portion sizes of all meal components are pre-plated or packaged as a unit.

Requirements

- The meal or snack must provide the minimum portion size of all required meal components at the same time.

Best practices

- Prepare plates and cups before children are seated.
- Measure out portions with appropriate serving utensils, e.g., scoops (dishers) and serving spoons. For more information, visit the "Portion Control" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.
- Provide supervising adults with appropriate training and guidance to ensure portions meet the minimum requirements. Examples of resources include the CACFP meal patterns, crediting guides, completed menu forms, production records, and recipes. Refer to section 5 for resources.

Family-style meal service: Children serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance, if needed, from supervising adults who sit with the participants.

Requirements

- Foods must be served in communal bowls or dishes.
- The minimum portion sizes of prepared foods and milk must be available for each child at the table and supervising adults who eat with the children.
- Children must be allowed to serve the meal components themselves, except for beverages such as milk and juice.
- Supervising adults are responsible for actively encouraging (but not requiring) each child to serve themselves the full-required portion. If a child refuses or takes less than the full-required portion, the supervising adult should offer the meal component to the child again.

Best practices

- Place components in communal bowls or dishes on the table before children are seated.
- Use appropriately sized bowls, dishes, and serving utensils (such as tongs or spoons) for children to serve themselves.
- Serve milk in child-sized pitchers.
- Have staff sit with the children and assist with serving.

Combination-style meal service

Combination-style meal service combines pre-plated meal service and family-style meal service. Some foods in the meal are pre-plated while others are served family style. Combination-style meal service is a good option when a meal contains foods that cannot be easily or safely passed in common serving dishes from one child to another, such as heavy or hot foods and liquids like soup, juice, and milk. The example below shows how a child care program could implement combination-style meal service for a CACFP meal.

- **Example:** The CACFP lunch menu includes a turkey sandwich, vegetable soup, garden salad, diced peaches, and milk. The vegetable soup and milk are pre-plated and the turkey sandwich, garden salad, and diced peaches are served family style. The supervising adult portions the minimum required amount of vegetable soup into each child's bowl and the minimum required amount of milk into each child's cup. The turkey sandwich, garden salad, and diced peaches are offered in common serving dishes that are passed around the table so children may serve themselves.

CACFP facilities that use combination-style meal service must ensure that staff meet the requirements for both types of meal service. For all pre-plated foods, the quantities placed on plates and in cups by the supervising adult must meet the minimum serving size for each age group. For all family-style foods, the quantities available in the common serving dishes provided by the food service staff must provide the minimum serving size for each child seated at the table.

Requirements for Family-style Meal Service

CACFP facilities that implement family-style meal service must follow the guidelines below to ensure compliance and eligibility for reimbursement. For detailed guidance, refer to the USDA's *Family Style Meal Service with Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and "Resources for family-style meal service" in this section

Offering minimum portions

A sufficient amount of prepared food and the appropriate type of milk for each age group must be placed on each table to provide the full serving (minimum meal pattern amount) of each meal for all children at the table. The examples below illustrate this requirement for ages 3-5.

- **Example 1:** The CACFP lunch menu provides the required ¼-cup serving of the fruits component from ¼ cup of sliced apples. If four children sit at the table, the communal serving plate or bowl must contain at least 1 cup of apple slices.

- **Example 2:** The CACFP breakfast and lunch meal patterns require ¾ cup of unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk. If four children sit at the table, the milk pitcher must contain at least 3 cups of milk or that amount must be readily available nearby. If the required amount of milk makes the pitcher too heavy for young children, the pitcher can initially contain less milk if the remaining required quantity is readily available nearby.

For guidance on how to calculate the required amount of food for each age group, refer to the USDA's *Family Style Meal Service with Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Offering meal components or food items

Family-style meal service allows children to make choices in selecting foods and the size of initial servings. Supervising adults should initially offer all children the full serving of each food component. Children should be encouraged to take the full serving but are not required to self-serve or consume the full serving. CACFP facilities may still claim the meal for reimbursement if a child refuses a meal component or takes a smaller amount of a component. Supervising adults should encourage additional portions and selections to meet the full serving, as appropriate.

Role of supervising adults

During the meal, the supervising adults are responsible for actively encouraging each child to accept service of the full serving of each meal component. For example, if a child initially refuses a meal component or does not accept the full serving, the supervising adult should offer the meal component to the child again.

> Meals that follow the guidelines for family-style meal service are reimbursable, even if supervising adults do not eat with the children. However, the CSDE strongly encourages supervising adults to eat with the children. Role modeling at mealtimes is an important component of family-style meal service and assists in the development of healthy eating practices.

The expense of extra creditable food produced for meals for supervising adults during family-style meal service is an allowable cost.

Resources for family-style meal service

The resources below provide information on family-style meal service in the CACFP.

- CACFP and Family Style Meal Service (ICN): https://theicn.org/wpfd_file/cacfp-and-family-style-meal-service/
- CACFP Trainers' Circle: Family Style Meal Service with Children in the CACFP (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/trainers-circle-webinars/family-style-meal-service
- Family Style Meal Service with Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/CACFP-Family-Style-Meal-ServiceOperator-Booklet.pdf
- Family Style Meal Service with Children in the CACFP Training Materials (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/family-style-meal-service-cacfp
- Family Style Meal Service with Children in the CACFP Posters (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-family-style-meals-posters
- Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nibbles
- Serving Meals "Family Style" (USDA Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children): https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/nibbles_familymeals_eng.pdf
- USDA Memo SP 01-2018: Updated Infant and CACFP meal patterns in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/updated-infant-and-CACFP-meal-patterns-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast

For additional resources, visit the "Meal Service in CACFP Child Care Programs" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Offer versus Serve

The option to implement offer versus serve (OVS) applies only to CACFP at-risk afterschool programs. OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS cannot be implemented at snack.

> At-risk afterschool programs that choose to implement OVS must notify the CSDE and receive approval prior to beginning implementation.

Generally, OVS is not appropriate for young children because it may interfere with CACFP nutrition goals and the CACFP facility's efforts to introduce new foods to children. The USDA encourages CACFP institutions to consider using family-style meal service to provide younger children some choice in the types and amounts of food selected (refer to "Family-style Meal Service" in this section).

OVS in CACFP at-risk afterschool centers

Table 4-3 summarizes the OVS requirements for CACFP meals in at-risk afterschool centers.

- For a reimbursable breakfast, the CACFP center must offer at least four food items and the child must select at least three food items.
- For a reimbursable lunch or supper, the CACFP center must offer all five meal components and the child must select at least three meal components.

For more information on OVS, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Offer versus Serve in At-risk Afterschool Centers,* and the USDA's resource, *Offer Versus Serve in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

Table 4-3. OVS requirements for CACFP meals in at-risk afterschool centers

Meal	CACFP facility must offer	Child must select
Breakfast	**A least four food items from three meal components** [1, 2] 1. Milk 2. Vegetables and fruits 3. Grains 4. MMA or one additional serving of fruits, vegetables, or grains	At least three food items (may decline any one food item)
Lunch and supper	**Five meal components** [1] 1. Milk 2. Fruits 3. Vegetables 4. Grains 5. MMA	At least three meal components (may decline any two meal components)

[1] The serving for each meal component or food item must be at least the minimum required quantities in the CACFP meal patterns for children (refer to "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" in section 1.

[2] The four food items cannot include two servings of milk.

Intent to Participate in the Meal Service

For CACFP facilities to claim reimbursement for CACFP meals and snacks, children must participate in the meal service or have the intent to participate in the meal service. A child who makes no attempt (i.e., has no intent) to join other children at the meal or snack cannot be included in the reimbursable meal count, even if they were asked by the supervising adult to participate.

The USDA regulations allow for reimbursement of meals that are served to and eaten by children. They do not allow for reimbursement of ordered or plated meals. If CACFP facilities use pre-plated meals, or supervising adults serve the children, it may be difficult to judge the child's intent to participate in the meal service.

> If a child refuses a meal that is pre-plated or served by a staff member, the CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. The child must show intent to eat, such as coming willingly to the table, helping themself to food or asking to be served, and attempting to eat the meal. The child does not have to eat the meal for the CACFP facility to claim reimbursement, but the child must demonstrate the intent to eat.

When a child who clearly has no intent to participate is forced to come to the table or forced to put food on their plate, the CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. A child might not have the intent to participate in a meal for many reasons, such as behavioral issues or being sick, tired, angry, or upset. The scenarios in table 4-2 illustrate the principle of a child's intent to eat, and when CACFP facilities can claim meals and snacks.

Table 4-2. Examples of child's intent to eat

Scenario	Can the CACFP facility claim the meal?
A child typically chooses not to participate in the meal service. A teacher forces the child to come and sit at the table and serves the child some food. The child does not eat.	**No.** The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has not chosen (i.e., has no intent) to participate in the meal. Since the teacher knows this child typically does not eat, it would be clear that the child did not intend to participate in the meal. If the child willingly comes to the table, chooses to take a serving of food, but then does not eat, the meal is reimbursable. In this case, the child has the intent to eat, even if they did not follow through.
A child who normally participates in the meal service comes to the table then chooses not to take any food.	**No.** The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has chosen not to participate.
At snack time, a child is crying and upset over an altercation with another child. The teacher asks her to come to the table but she refuses.	**No.** The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has chosen not to participate.
A child willingly comes to the table at mealtime. He helps himself to several meal components, takes one bite, and then stops eating because he does not feel well.	**Yes.** The CACFP facility may claim the meal for reimbursement because the child chose to participate and had the intent to eat, even though he changed his mind when he did not feel well.
A child gets sick just before lunch. She is lying on a cot, waiting for her parent to pick her up.	**No.** The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child does not have the intent to participate in the meal.

Water Availability During Meal Service

Section 7 CFR 226.25(i) of the CACFP regulations requires that CACFP facilities must make plain potable water available to children throughout the day. Water must be made available for children to drink upon their request.

CACFP facilities may also choose to make water available for children to self-serve. Some examples include providing disposable cups near sinks that are available to children, with a step stool if children are unable to reach the sink; and providing covered water pitchers and disposable cups if water fountains are not available.

> While drinking water must be made available to children during mealtimes, this does not mean that CACFP facilities must serve water with the meal. CACFP facilities must have water readily available nearby to provide to children upon request; however, water is not required to be on the table. Water is not a meal component and is not part of the reimbursable meal or snack.

If safe water is not readily available in a facility, purchasing water for children is a reasonable and allowable cost for CACFP facilities. However, purchasing water for consumption by adults or CACFP facility employees is not an allowable cost.

Considerations for offering water

There are some important considerations to keep in mind when offering water to children during the meal service.

- Avoid serving young children too much water before and during mealtimes. Excess water may reduce the amount of food and milk that children consume at mealtimes.
- Water is not a meal component and is not part of reimbursable meals or snacks.
- Children are not required to take water.
- When snack menus include juice or milk as one of the two required meal components, CACFP facilities cannot offer water as a choice instead of juice or milk.

- Water should be served at snack if the snack menu does not include milk or juice.
- Outside of mealtimes, offer water instead of sweetened beverages such as juice drinks, soda, and sports drinks. These types of sweetened beverages are not recommended for child care programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.
- CACFP facilities cannot promote or offer water or any other beverage as an alternative

For more information and resources, refer to USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: *Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Water Availability" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Field Trip Meals

Meals offered to children for program-supervised field trips are reimbursable if they meet the meal pattern requirements for each age group and are served and consumed as part of a program-related function.

> CACFP facilities must offer the full quantities of all required meal components for each meal, including fluid milk. CACFP facilities cannot substitute juice or water for milk on field trips. CACFP facilities may want to consider using aseptically packaged milk for field trips. While unopened aseptically packaged milk is safe at room temperature, it will not be acceptable to children unless it is cold. Milk tastes best at 35°F (refer to "Keeping Milk Cold" under "Milk Component" in section 3).

Field trip meals must comply with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). The CACFP facility's SOP for field trip meals must include appropriate food safety procedures (such as ice packs and coolers) to ensure that field trip meals stay at proper temperatures.

Meals Consumed Off-site

The USDA requires that reimbursable meals must be served to and consumed by children on the premises. Meals given to children to take home are not reimbursable. Meals consumed off-site are not reimbursable because children who have left the premises are no longer participating in the activities of the child care program.

> If a child leaves the meal service early, uneaten meal or snack components cannot be packed "to go." By leaving the child care program and consuming the food off site, the child is not participating in the meal or snack service with the rest of the group. CACFP facilities cannot claim these meals and snacks for reimbursement.

The CACFP is a congregate feeding program intended to provide meals that are consumed on-site unless children are on an approved field trip (refer to "Field Trip Meals" in this section). Meals served on field trips are reimbursable if they meet the CACFP meal patterns and are served and consumed as part of a related function of the child care program.

Family-provided Meal Components for Medical or Special Dietary Needs

CACFP facilities may choose whether they will allow families to provide meal components as part of reimbursable meals for children with or without a disability. For guidance on the requirements for each meal component, refer to section 3.

Section 7 CFR 226.20(g) of the CACFP regulations addresses the requirements for family-provided meal components. The requirements for these family-provided meal components depend on whether the child has a disability that restricts their diet.

Children with a disability

The CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.20(g)(1)(ii)) allow parents or guardians to supply one or more meal components of a reimbursable meal for a child with a disability. The CACFP facility must provide at least one required meal component. A meal that meets these requirements is reimbursable.

CACFP facilities cannot require parents or guardians to supply one or more meal components of a reimbursable meal for a child with a disability. CACFP facilities are responsible for providing appropriate meal modifications for children with a disability based on the medical statement from a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

Children without a disability

The CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.20(g)(2)(ii)) allow parents or guardians to supply one meal component of a reimbursable meal for a child without a disability. This substitution may be due to medical needs or special dietary needs, such as food preferences or restrictions due to religious, ethnic, moral, or other reasons.

The term "special dietary needs" is purposely broad to cover an array of possible situations that are not strictly disabilities but may impact or restrict a participant's diet. The requirements for reimbursable meals depend on whether the family-provided substitution is within or outside the CACFP meal patterns.

- **Substitutions within the CACFP meal patterns:** Meals are reimbursable when the family provides one substitution that meets the CACFP meal patterns for children. A medical statement is not required for family-provided substitutions within the CACFP meal patterns for children. An example is substituting one type of fruit for another, such as pears for peaches. For a reimbursable meal, the CACFP facility must provide the child with the remaining required CACFP meal components.

- **Substitutions outside the CACFP meal patterns:** When the family-provided substitution does not meet the CACFP meal patterns, CACFP facilities must obtain a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian for the meal to be reimbursable. For a reimbursable meal, the CACFP facility must provide the child with the remaining required meal components.

If the family-provided substitution does not meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements and the parent or guardian does not provide a medical statement, that food or beverage is a noncreditable food offered in addition to the reimbursable meal (refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in section 3). The CACFP facility must provide the child with all required CACFP meal components for a reimbursable meal.

Required documentation for meals

The CACFP facility must be approved by the CSDE to claim reimbursement for meals with foods or beverages provided by the child's family. The CACFP facility must submit a written request to the CSDE that includes the information below.

1. Detail the child's medical or special dietary need that requires a family-provided meal component. If the substitution does not meet the CACFP meal patterns, attach a copy of the medical statement signed by the child's state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. For guidance on the requirements for medical statements, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs* and visit the

"Medical Statements for CACFP Child Care Programs" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

2. Indicate the specific foods and beverages that will be provided by the parent or guardian and the meal components to which they belong.

> Parents or guardians may supply one or more meal components for a child with a disability but no more than one meal component for a child without a disability.

3. Include a statement of assurance that the CACFP facility will serve all other required meal components of the reimbursable meal.

If the request is approved, the CSDE will issue a written response for the acceptable family-provided meal components. This CSDE approval applies only to the individual child for whom the request has been granted. The CACFP facility must maintain this approval on file with the child's other medical records.

Food safety considerations

When determining whether to allow foods brought from home, CACFP facilities must consider food safety issues and the liability that might arise if a child gets a foodborne illness. The FDA Food Code applies to all foods served in child care centers and emergency shelters, regardless of whether they are prepared on site or brought from home.

The FDA Food Code requires that all foods served in food service establishments must be from an approved source (i.e., commercial supplies under regulatory control) and transported properly at required temperatures. The FDA Food Code applies to child care centers and emergency shelters, but does not apply to family day care homes. However, family day care homes must follow proper procedures to ensure the safety of meals and snacks served to children in the CACFP.

Foods sent into the CACFP facility from a private home have not originated from an approved source. CACFP facilities cannot ensure that foods brought from home are safe from microbial contamination or cross-contact with potential food allergens. There are potential liability issues if CACFP facilities serve foods that have not been directly received from a regulated source (such as an approved food service vendor) or stored, cooked, and served by trained food service personnel.

CACFP facilities that choose to allow family-provided foods should have policies in place to address food safety standards. These policies should include:

- clearly labeling all foods with the child's name, date, and type of food;
- storing foods at an appropriate temperature until they are eaten; and
- prohibiting children from sharing foods with other children.

For guidance on the USDA's requirements for meal modifications in the CACFP, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs* and visit the "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

5 — Resources

This section includes links to resources and websites that assist CACFP facilities with meeting the CACFP meal patterns and crediting requirements. Topics include crediting and meal components, CSDE guides and resource lists, meal patterns and menu planning, and USDA regulations and policy.

More links to information on the federal and state requirements and guidance for the CACFP are available on the CSDE's Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. For a comprehensive list of resources on the CACFP meal patterns and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns*.

Crediting Requirements and Documentation

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

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 2: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

Crediting Updates for Child Nutrition Programs: Be in the Know! Webinar Series (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-updates-child-nutrition-programs-be-know-webinar-series

Crediting Worksheets for CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#CreditingWorksheets

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-training-resources

Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_cacfp.pdf

Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool

Standardized Recipe Form for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_cacfp.docx

Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#StandardizedRecipes

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf

USDA Memo SP 11-2015 v2, CACFP 10-2015, and SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation

USDA Memo SP 27-2015, CACFP 09-2015, and SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and

USDA Memo TA 07-2010 (v.3): Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/TA07-2010v3os.pdf

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_cn_labels_cacfp.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_product_formulation_statements_cacfp.pdf

Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-nutrition-facts-label-cacfp

Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/yield_study_form.pdf

Fruits Component

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 5: Fruits Component (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Crediting Fruits in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA):
http://https//www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-fruits-child-nutrition-programs-tip-sheet

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

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

Fruits Component ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#Fruits

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

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

Grains Component

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/adding-whole-grains-your-cacfp-menu

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 7A: Grains Component Crediting Requirements (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 7B: Grains Component Whole Grain-rich Requirement (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 7C: Grains Component Ounce Equivalents (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Related-Resources#BiteSize

CACFP Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grain in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/cacfp_child_care_worksheet1_crediting_commerical_grains.xlsx

CACFP Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/cacfp_child_care_worksheet2_crediting_rte_breakfast_cereals.xlsx

CACFP Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/cacfp_child_care_worksheet3_crediting_cooked_cereals.xlsx

CACFP Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/cacfp_child_care_worksheet4_crediting_grains_family_size_recipes.xlsx

CACFP Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/cacfp_child_care_worksheet5_crediting_grains_quantity_recipes.xlsx

CACFP Grains Ounce Equivalents Resources (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grains-ounce-equivalents-resources-cacfp

Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-breakfast-cereals-cacfp

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_calculation_cacfp_oz_eq.pdf

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/choose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-sugar

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 Grains in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheets: Part 1: Creditable Grains in Child Nutrition Programs; Part 2: Identifying Grain Products that are Whole Grain-Rich; and Part 3: Program Requirements (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-grains

Crediting Single-Serving Packages of Grains in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-single-serving-packages-grains-cacfp

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

Determining Ounce Equivalents of Grains in CACFP Recipes Sugar (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/determining-ounce-equivalents-grains-cacfp-recipes

Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index

Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue (USDA webinar):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf

Food Buying Guide Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index

Food Buying Guide Section 4: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Grains Component (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section4_Grains.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 4: Yield Table for Grains (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section4_GrainsYieldTable.pdf

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_cacfp.pdf

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp

Grains Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#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 Identify Creditable Grains for the CACFP (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/identify_creditable_grains_cacfp.pdf

How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA webinar): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/how-maximize-exhibit-grains-tool

How to Spot Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/how-spot-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp

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_ Handout in English and Spanish equivalents_chart_cacfp.pdf.

Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/identifying-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp

Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the CACFP? (USDA handouts in English and Spanish): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/my-recipe-whole-grain-rich-cacfp

Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool

USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers

USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fns.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.fns.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.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs

Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-ounce-equivalents-grains-cacfp

Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-wic-food-lists-identify-grains-cacfp

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

Meal Modifications

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_cacfp.pdf

Guidance and Instructions for the Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/medical_statement_cacfp_instructions.pdf

Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/guide_meal_modifications_cacfp.pdf

Medical Statements for CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#MedicalStatements

Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-cacfp-child-care-programs

Summary of Requirements for Meal Modifications for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/summary_chart_meal_modifications_cacfp.pdf

Meal Patterns and Menu Planning

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE training modules):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs

Menu Forms for CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#MenuForms

Menu Planning for CACFP Child Care Programs ("How To" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#MenuPlanning

Methods for Healthy Cooking (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/methods-healthy-cooking

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA webpage):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-versus-serve-cacfp

Production Records for CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#ProductionRecords

Sample Menus for CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#SampleMenus

Serving Snacks in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-snacks-cacfp

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/offer-versus-serve-and-family-style-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/questions-and-answers-updated-meal-pattern-requirements-child-and-adult-care-food-program

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern: https://www.fns.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.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/documenting-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program

USDA Memo SP 01-2019 and CACFP 01-2019: Guidance for FY19: Updated CACFP Meal Patterns and Updated NSLP and SBP Infant and Preschool Meal Patterns: https://www.fns.usda.gov/guidance-fy19-updated-cacfp-meal-patterns-and-updated-nslp-and-sbp-infant-and-preschool-meal

USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer vs. Serve and Family Style Meal Service: https://www.fns.usda.gov/clarification-use-offer-vs-serve-and-family-style-meal-service

Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/prodrecord/using_production_records_cacfp.pdf

Meal Service

Meal Service in CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#MealService

Offer versus Serve in At-risk Afterschool Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/atrisk/ovs_at_risk_cacfp.pdf

Meats/Meat Alternates Component

Additional Meat/Meat Alternates Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi (USDA Webinar):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/additional-meat-meat-alternate-tempeh-and-surimi

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 4: Meats/Meat Alternates Component (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils n 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 Meats/Meat Alternates in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/MMA_TipSheet.pdf

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 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

Meats/Meat Alternates Component ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#MMA

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

Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP) (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app

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

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meats/Meat Alternates (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-meats-and-meat-alternates-breakfast

Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Lunch and Supper in the USDA CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-meats-meat-alternates-lunch-supper-cacfp

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf

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.fns.usda.gov/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.fns.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.fns.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.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

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

Milk Component

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Adult Participants without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_cacfp_adults.pdf

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_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

Milk Component ("How To" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Milk

Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-milk-cacfp

USDA Memo CACFP 17-2016: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Q&As:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-requirements-fluid-milk-and-fluid-milk-substitutions-cacfp-qas

USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010, and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions*:*
https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-milk-substitution-children-medical-or-special-dietary-needs-non-disability

Regulations and Policy

CACFP Policy Memos (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources

CACFP Regulations (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/part-226%E2%80%94child-and-adult-care-food-program

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 02C-18 and 02H-18: Requirements for Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Centers and Family Day Care Homes:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/memos/om2018/om02c18_02h18.pdf

FNS Instruction 783-13, Revision 3: Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons: Jewish Schools, Institutions and Sponsors.
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/fnsinstruction/783-13.pdf

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks

USDA Final Rule (81 FR 24347): Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (April 25, 2016):
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/04/25/2016-09412/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act

USDA Final Rule Correction (81 FR 75671): CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (November 1, 2016):
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: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.federalregister.gov/Documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/Child-Nutrition-Programs-Meal-Patterns-Consistent-With-The-2020-2025-Dietary-Guidelines-For

USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/water-availability-child-and-adult-care-food-program

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2009: Meal Disallowance Policies for Family Day Care Homes in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/meal-disallowance-policies-family-day-care-homes-child-and-adult-care-food-program-cacfp

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2012: The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Questions and Answers:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/risk-afterschool-meals-component-child-and-adult-care-food-program-questions-and-answers-0

USDA Memo CACFP 10-2017: Taking Food Components Offsite in the At-Risk Afterschool Component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/taking-food-components-offsite-risk-afterschool-component

Vegetables Component

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 5: Vegetables Component (CSDE training module)
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the CACFP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_cacfp.pdf

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

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 Vegetables in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetables-child-nutrition-programs-tip-sheet

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Yield Table for Vegetables (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section2_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf

Serving Vegetables in the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-vegetables-cacfp

USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-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.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs

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 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#Vegetables

Water Availability During Meal Service

Grab and Go Lesson: Offering and Making Water Available in Child Care (ICN):
https://theicn.org/resources/1538/nutrition-and-meal-management/117771/offering-and-making-water-available-in-child-care.pdf

Offering Water in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offering-water-cacfp

USDA Memo CACFP 18-2016: Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/water-availability-child-and-adult-care-food-program

USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0

Websites

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE training webinars):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize

CACFP Afterschool Programs (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-programs

CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-at-risk-afterschool-care-centers

CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-child-care-centers

CACFP Emergency Shelters (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-emergency-shelters

CACFP Family Day Care Homes (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-family-day-care-homes

CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinar-series

CACFP Handbooks (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-handbooks

CACFP Training Tools (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-training-tools

Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-care-nutrition-and-physical-activity-policies

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/child-nutrition-cn-labeling-program

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-nutrition-programs

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs

Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-to-preschool

Farm to School (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/farm-to-school

FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/fns-instructions-for-child-nutrition-programs

Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs

Forms for CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-child-care-centers/documents

Forms for CACFP Homes (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-family-day-care-homes/documents

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/manuals-and-guides-for-child-nutrition-programs

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning

Operational Memos for the CACFP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/lists/operational-memoranda-for-the-cacfp

Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-cacfp-child

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs

Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-cacfp-child-care-programs

Glossary

added sugars: Sugars and syrups added to foods in processing or preparation, as opposed to the naturally occurring sugars found in 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 "Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)" in section 3 and 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 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, refer to the USDA's CACFP Afterschool Programs webpage.

beans, peas, and lentils (pulses): The dried edible seeds of legumes (such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas) that are one of the five vegetable subgroups recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 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.

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.

CACFP facilities: Child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, and at-risk afterschool programs 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, refer to the CSDE's resource, *CACFP Meal Patterns for Children.*

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 CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.2).

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 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 contribute to the meats/meat alternates 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 "Child Nutrition (CN) Labels" in section 2 and the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the USDA's Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling 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 foods: Foods that contain more than one meal component, such as pizza, burritos, and smoothies made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains 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).

combination-style meal service: A method of meal service that combines pre-plated meal service and family-style meal service. Some foods in the meal are pre-plated while others are served family style. For more information, refer to "Combination-style meal service" in section 4.

Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CCCNS): The CSDE's recommended guidelines for the nutritional content of all foods and beverages served throughout the child care environment, including CACFP meals and snacks, celebrations and any other activities where foods and beverages are provided by the child care program or families. The CCCNS reflects current nutrition science and national health recommendations, and promotes whole or minimally processed nutrient-rich foods that are low in fat, added sugars, and sodium. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.*

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 the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to section 3 and visit the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs 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 CACFP facilities to increase variety, control food cost, and save time. For more information, refer to "Using cycle menus" in section 2.

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 U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines* 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 in CACFP Child Care Programs.*

edible portion: The portion of a food that can be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

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 to 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.

Exhibit A chart: A USDA chart that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for a grain food to provide 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) or 1 serving of the grains component in the Child Nutrition Programs. The required quantities for the grains component in Exhibit A are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because each program has a different meal pattern. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents 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 "USDA's Exhibit A Chart" in "Part C: Required Servings for Grains" of section 3, and the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*.

family-style meal service: A method of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. For more information, refer to "Family-style Meal Service" in section 4.

flour: Finely ground and sifted wheat or other grains such as rye, corn, rice, or buckwheat.

fluid milk substitutes: Nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) that can be used as a substitute for fluid milk in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For reimbursable meals and snacks, nondairy beverages served to children without disabilities must comply with the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes. For more information, refer to "USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

food item: A specific food offered within the meal components that comprise reimbursable meals in the CACFP. A food item may contain one or more meal components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, macaroni and cheese is one food item that provides two meal components (grains and MMA). A 2-ounce whole grain bagel is one food item that provides 2 oz eq of grains.

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/grade groups. For more information, refer to "meal components" in this section and "CACFP Meal Patterns" in section 1.

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 (e.g., 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., an "energy" bar made from processed flour that is fortified 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 that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. For more information, refer to "Fruits Component" in section 3 and visit the "Fruits Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

full component: The minimum quantity required in the CACFP meal patterns for children for each meal and age group.

full serving: Refer to "full 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. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: "juice," "full-strength juice," "100 percent juice," "reconstituted juice," or "juice from concentrate." **Note:** The CACFP meal patterns allow pasteurized full-strength juice to credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. For more information, refer to "Juice limit" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juice 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 that are made primarily of grains and that do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Examples include brownies, cookies, 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). Sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers) are not grain-based desserts.

grains component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. Creditable grain foods include products and recipes that are WGR or enriched. Creditable cooked and RTE breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified. For more information, refer to "Grains Component" in section 3 and visit the "Grains Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs 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. For more information, visit the CSDE's "Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)" section of the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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" and "Crediting Hominy as Grains" in section 3.

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 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* 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% 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: Plants that grow in pods. Legumes include pulses, which are the edible dried seeds of plants in the legume family, 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 vegetable component. For more information, refer to "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Meats/Meat Alternates" and "Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables" in section 3.

main dish: The main dish is generally considered 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 3.

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, refer to section 3 and visit the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs 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 children. For more information, refer to the "CACFP Meal Patterns" in section 1.

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 similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume), tempeh, and yogurt (unflavored or flavored) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces. For more information, refer to "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" in section 3 and visit the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

meats/meat alternates component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, and nuts, and seeds. For more information, refer to "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" in section 3 and visit the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

medical statement: A document that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate dietary accommodations for children with special dietary needs and is signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. The USDA requires that the medical statement to request meal modifications must include: 1) information about the child's physical or mental impairment that is sufficient to allow the CACFP facility to understand how it restricts the child's diet; 2) an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability; and 3) if appropriate, the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

menu item: Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items.

menu of record: The official menu that documents exactly what is served each day in the CACFP facility. This provides a record of the meal components and portion sizes served to all enrolled children and infants and provides documentation for the number of CACFP meals claimed for reimbursement.

milk component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes pasteurized fluid milk that meets the fat content and flavor restrictions of the USDA 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 "Milk Component" in section 3 and visit the "Milk Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs 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. It 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, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheeses do not include pasteurized process 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 nutrition content similar 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 3.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that that do not count toward the meal patterns for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods include foods and beverages in amounts that are too small to credit and foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal components. For more information, refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in the beginning of section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients and products that do not contribute toward the grains component of the CACFP meal patterns for children. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For a list of noncreditable grains for the CACFP meal patterns, 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 more information on nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to "Additional Information about High-Intensity Sweeteners Permitted for Use in Food in the United States" on the FDA's 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 nutrition requirements for nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) 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 based on a 1-cup serving (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 "USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes" in section 3 and the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities 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 of the CACFP meal patterns for children. One oz eq of the MMA component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. The amount of a grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. One oz eq of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as pretzels, breadsticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as muffins and pancakes). For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

point-of-service meal count: The point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal or snack has been served to an eligible child.

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.

pre-plated meal service: A method of meal service where staff pre-plate each child’s plate and cup with the minimum portion of each meal component, based on the meal pattern requirements for each age group. For more information, refer to “Pre-plated meal service” in section 4.

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. For more information, refer to “Grains Component” in section 3.

product fact sheet: Refer to “product specification sheet” in this section.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA’s meal pattern requirements, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs.* The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. CACFP facilities must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. For more information, refer to “Product Formulation Statements” in section 2 and 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.*

product specification sheet: Manufacturer sales literature that provides various information about the company's products. These materials do not provide the specific crediting information that is required on a product formulation statement and cannot be used to determine a product's contribution toward the USDA meal components.

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 food components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. Production records are strongly encouraged for all child care programs, but are required for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern. For more information, refer to "Production Records" in section 2.

pulses: The edible dry seeds from legumes, such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas. For more information, refer to "legumes" in this section.

recognizable food item: A food that is visible in the offered meal or snack and allows children to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flour. For more information, refer to "Yogurt in smoothies" and "Crediting Legume Flour Pasta Products as Meats/Meat Alternates" in the "Meats/Meat Alternates Component" section; "Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies" and "Crediting Pureed Fruits" in the "Fruits Component" section; and "Crediting Pureed Vegetables" and "Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour" in the "Vegetables Component" section.

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): The Commission on Dietetic Registration defines a RD and RDN as someone who has completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited or approved by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND); 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; passed a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); and completed continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration. For more information, visit the AND's What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist website and the CDR's Registered Dietitian (RD) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) Certification website.

reimbursable meals: Meals and snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the USDA regulations and are eligible for USDA funds. Reimbursable meals contain the minimum serving of each required meal component.

saturated fats: Types of fat that raise blood cholesterol, which is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Major sources of saturated fats include coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils, butter, and beef fats. Saturated fats are 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, or number of pieces or slices of a food or beverage. For and snacks to be reimbursable, CACFP facilities must provide the minimum servings specified in the CACFP meal patterns.

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: The mandatory government requirements that determine what a food product (like whole-wheat bread) must contain or may contain to be marketed under a certain name in interstate commerce. These standards protect consumers by ensuring that a label accurately reflects what is inside. For example, mayonnaise is not an imitation spread, and ice cream is not a similar, but different, frozen dessert. The USDA develops standards for meat and poultry products. The FDA develops standards for other food products.

standardized recipe: A recipe that a given food service operation has tested and adapted for use. This recipe produces 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 "Standardized Recipes" in section 2.

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, recognized medical authorities include 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 in CACFP Child Care Programs.*

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 product usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. For more information, refer to "Crediting Surimi" in section 3.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. 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. For more information, refer to "Crediting Tempeh" in section 3.

vegetable subgroups: The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables food group that are recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The subgroups include dark green, red/ orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. The CACFP meal patterns do not require 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 that is comprised of vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. For more information, refer to "Vegetables Component" in section 3 and visit the "Vegetables Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs 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." Wheat bread is low in fiber unless the manufacturer has added fiber.

whole foods: Foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, and 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 (WGR): For the CACFP meal patterns, WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grain or contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any other grain ingredients are enriched. For more information, refer to "Part B: WGR Requirement" in section 3 and 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 fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Whole-wheat flour will be listed as the first grain ingredient.

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