Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children

Child Care Centers • Family Day Care Homes

Emergency Shelters • At-risk Afterschool Care Centers

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

CONNECTICUT
Education

Revised November 2026

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

Contents

About This Guide v
CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series vi
Contact Information for CSDE CACFP Staff vii
Abbreviations and Acronyms viii
1 — Introduction 1
Meal Pattern Legislation 1
Changes to CACFP Meal Patterns 2
Meal pattern changes effective July 1, 2024 2
Meal pattern changes effective October 1, 2025 2
Meal pattern changes effective June 8, 2026 3
Reimbursable Meals and Snacks 3
Meal Components 3
Menu Items 4
Required Servings 4
Additional Foods 5
Nutrition Standards and Restrictions 5
Nutrition standards 5
Prohibited foods 6
Noncreditable foods 6
Meal Modifications for Children with Special Dietary Needs 7
Choking Prevention for Young Children 8
Menu Planning Resources 8
Guidance on Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements 10
2 — Breakfast Meal Pattern 11
Breakfast Cereals 11
Cereal with Milk 11
Documenting Types of Juices, Fruits, and Vegetables 12
How the Daily Juice Limit Applies to Breakfast 12
Substituting MMA for Grains 12
Water Availability 12
Breakfast Menu Ideas and Resources 12
3 — Lunch and Supper Meal Pattern 15
Substituting Vegetables for Fruits 15
Documenting Types of Vegetables and Fruits 15
How the Daily Juice Limit Applies to Lunch/Supper 16
Lunch and Supper Menu Ideas and Resources 16

4 — Snack Meal Pattern 19
Best Practice for Vegetables and Fruits 19
Beverage Limit for Snack 19
How the Daily Juice Limit Applies to Snack 20
Offering Milk with Yogurt 20
Offering More Than Two Food Items 20
Offering Water 20
Snack Menu Ideas and Resources 20

5 — Overview of Meal Components 23
Milk Component 23
Crediting guidance for milk 23
MMA Component 25
Crediting guidance for MMA 25
Vegetables Component 27
Crediting guidance for vegetables 27
Fruits Component 29
Crediting guidance for fruits 29
Grains Component 30
Crediting guidance for grains 30
Methods to determine oz eq 31
Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart 32
Method 2: creditable grains 32
Crediting Resources 33

6 — Overview of Menu Documentation 35
CACFP Menu 35
Production Records 35
Commercial Processed Foods 36
Acceptable documentation 36
Foods Made from Scratch 38
Documentation for Alternate Protein Products (APPs) 38
Documentation for Breakfast Cereals 38
Documentation for Tofu and Tofu Products 39
Documentation for WGR Foods 39
Documentation for Yogurt and Soy Yogurt 39
Storing Crediting Documentation 39

7 — Resources 41
Meal Pattern Requirements 41
Program Guidance 43

Glossary 45

About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children* provides detailed guidance and resources to assist CACFP sponsors with planning menus to meet the CACFP meal patterns for children. The requirements in this guide apply to CACFP child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes.

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

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

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

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

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

CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series

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

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

The menu planning guidance series for the CACFP is available in the "CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series" section

Contact Information for CSDE CACFP Staff

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

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

Abbreviations and Acronyms

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

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

1 — Introduction

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 calorie needs, provide key nutrients, and align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These meal patterns help children eat the types and amounts of foods that best support their growth and development.

CACFP facilities are eligible for USDA reimbursement when meals and snacks served to children contain the minimum serving of each required meal component and meet all crediting requirements.

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, *CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (81 FR 24347). This final rule updated the CACFP meal patterns to align with the *2020-2025 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 implemented gradual updates to the Child Nutrition Programs in several key areas, including the CACFP adult meal patterns. These changes are summarized below.

> The final rule also requires other changes that are not related to the CACFP 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 implemented 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.

Meal pattern changes effective October 1, 2025

Effective October 1, 2025, the final rule changed the product-based limits for sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars.

- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 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.

Meal pattern changes effective June 8, 2026

Effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, changes the fluid milk requirements for ages 2 and older in the CACFP meal patterns. Allowable types of milk include whole milk and reduced fat (2%) milk in addition to the previously allowed low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk. CACFP facilities may choose which type of fluid milk to offer for ages 2 and older. Unflavored whole milk is still required for age 1. Unflavored milk is still required for ages 1-5. Flavored milk may still be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk.

Reimbursable Meals and Snacks

The CACFP meal patterns for children consist of minimum servings of specific meal components. Meals and snacks served to adult 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

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). The CACFP meal patterns for children require different meal components.

- The breakfast meal pattern consists of three meal components: grains; vegetables and fruits; and milk. MMA may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week.
- The lunch and supper meal pattern consists of all five meal components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk). Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch and supper.
- The snack meal pattern consists of any two of the five meal components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk).

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.

Section 5 provides an overview of the five meal components. For information on the specific crediting requirements for each meal component, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

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 CACFP meal patterns for children 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 (extra) foods or larger servings beyond the minimum meal pattern requirements. Additional foods include creditable and noncreditable foods served in addition to the minimum meal pattern requirements.

- Creditable foods are additional servings of a meal component, such as larger servings of fruits and vegetables.
- Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not credit toward the meal patterns (refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in this section).

Young children have small appetites. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of additional foods based on participants' nutritional needs. When offering additional foods, the CSDE encourages menu planners 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.

Nutrition Standards and Restrictions

The CACFP meal patterns for children require nutrition standards for some specific foods and prohibit certain foods. These requirements are summarized below.

Nutrition standards

The nutrition standards for the CACFP meal patterns include product-based limits for sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals and a minimum protein requirement for tofu.

- Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (¼ cup).

Products that do not meet these requirements do not credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

Prohibited foods

Grain-based desserts are not allowed in the CACFP (refer to "Grain-based desserts prohibited" in section 5).

The CACFP meal patterns also prohibit deep-fat frying foods on site, i.e., cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat.

Noncreditable foods

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

- are offered in quantities too small to credit (such as 1 tablespoon of applesauce or ⅛ ounce of cheese); or
- 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. Some noncreditable foods cannot be served or should be served only in moderation. For guidance and more examples of noncreditable foods, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> CACFP facilities cannot use CACFP funds to purchase noncreditable foods such as grain-based desserts, gelatin, pudding, or canned cream soups. The only exceptions are for condiments served with creditable foods, and herbs and spices used to prepare and enhance the flavor of meals.

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.

- **Disability reasons:** The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must make reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on written documentation from 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 participant.

- **Non-disability reasons:** CACFP facilities may choose to make optional meal modifications within the meal patterns on a case-by-case basis for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Optional modifications for non-disability reasons include requests related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences. Meal modifications for non-disability reasons that are within the meal patterns (such as texture modifications or substitutions within the same meal component) do not require a medical statement. Meal modifications for non-disability reasons that are outside the meal patterns require a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

These requirements are summarized in the CSDE's resource, *Overview of the Requirements for Meal Modifications for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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.

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

- CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA webpage):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinars

- CACFP Meal Pattern Posters (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/trainers-tools/posters

- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Slides (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-slides

- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets

- CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program#MealPatternsChildren

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning

- Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards

- 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

- USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/qas-updated-meal-pattern-requirements

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

The CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns* provides a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the CACFP meal pattern and crediting requirements.

Guidance on Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements

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

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

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

2 — Breakfast Meal Pattern

The CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children requires minimum servings of three meal components:

- milk;
- a combined vegetables and fruits component; and
- grains.

Table 2-1 shows the CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children. Menu planning notes for each meal component are provided in the online versions of the CACFP breakfast meal pattern, which are available in the "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

The guidance below assists menu planners with ensuring that breakfast menus meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. Training on the CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children is available in the CSDE's recorded training modules, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

Breakfast Cereals

Cooked and RTE breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). CACFP facilities must document this information, such as listing on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all cereals served in CACFP menus. For additional guidance on crediting documentation, refer to "Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in section 6.

Cereal with Milk

The CACFP menu must list the specific type of cereal as one meal 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.

Documenting Types of Juices, Fruits, and Vegetables

CACFP facilities must document the specific types of juices, fruits, and vegetables served at breakfast. For example, the menu planner should 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, fruits, and vegetables served in CACFP menus.

How the Daily Juice Limit Applies to Breakfast

Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. If juice is served at breakfast, menu planners cannot credit juice as the fruits component or vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack that same day.

Substituting MMA for Grains

The MMA component may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component.

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

Water Availability

CACFP facilities must make water available during the meal service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components. For guidance on the requirements for water, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Meal Service Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs*.

Breakfast Menu Ideas and Resources

For menu ideas and resources, refer to the USDA's resource, *It's Breakfast Time! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age*. More resources are available under "Breakfast" in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Table 2-1. CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children

Breakfast meal components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Milk, fluid	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, rice, or pasta	¼ cup	½ 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

3 — Lunch and Supper Meal Pattern

The CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children requires minimum servings of the five meal components:

- milk
- MMA;
- vegetables ;
- fruits (or vegetable substitutions); and
- grains

Table 3-1 shows the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children. Menu planning notes for each meal component are provided in the online versions of the CACFP breakfast meal pattern, which are available in the "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

The guidance below assists menu planners with ensuring that lunch and supper menus meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. Training on the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children is available in the CSDE's recorded training modules, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

Substituting Vegetables for Fruits

Vegetables may substitute for the fruits component at any lunch or supper. 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. Menu planners cannot offer two servings of only the fruits component.

Documenting Types of Vegetables and Fruits

CACFP facilities must document the specific types of vegetables and fruits served at lunch or supper. For example, the menu planner should 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 menus.

How the Daily Juice Limit Applies to Lunch/Supper

Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. If the menu planner credits juice as the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch or supper, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other meal or snack that same day.

Lunch and Supper Menu Ideas and Resources

For menu ideas and resources, visit the "Lunch and Supper" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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

Lunch meal components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18
Milk, fluid	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, rice, 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

MILK

4 — Snack Meal Pattern

The CACFP snack meal pattern for children requires the minimum serving of any two of the five meal components:

- milk
- MMA;
- vegetables ;
- fruits; and
- grains

Snacks cannot include two foods from the same meal component. For example, orange juice and applesauce are both from the fruits component, and do not provide a reimbursable snack.

Table 4-1 shows the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. Menu planning notes for each meal component are provided in the online versions of the CACFP breakfast meal pattern, which are available in the "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

The guidance below assists menu planners with ensuring that snack menus meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. Training on the CACFP snack meal pattern for children is available in the CSDE's recorded training modules, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.

Best Practice for Vegetables and Fruits

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

Beverage Limit for Snack

Only one of the two meal components may be a creditable beverage such as milk, juice, or a smoothie. For example, the snack menu cannot include juice when milk is the only other meal component.

How the Daily Juice Limit Applies to Snack

Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. If the menu planner credits juice as the vegetables component or fruits component at snack, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other meal or snack that same day.

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.

- **Example:** A snack 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.

Offering Water

Water should be offered as a beverage when the snack menu does not include milk or juice. However, water does not credit in CACFP meals and snacks and cannot be offered in place of the required meal components.

Snack Menu Ideas and Resources

For additional guidance and snack menu ideas, refer to the USDA's resource, *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 "Snacks" in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Table 4-1. 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	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, rice, 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

5 — Overview of Meal Components

This section provides an overview of the requirements for each meal component of the CACFP meal patterns for children. For detailed crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Milk Component

Milk must be pasteurized and meet state and local standards. The CACFP meal patterns for children require fluid milk as a beverage. Milk does not credit when used as an ingredient in other foods, such as quiche, puddings, and cream sauces.

Milk is required at breakfast, lunch, and supper and may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack. Only one snack component may be a creditable beverage. Milk cannot be served when juice is the only other meal component at snack.

Crediting guidance for milk

CACFP facilities must ensure that milk offered in CACFP menus meets the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** The minimum creditable amount is the full serving, except for milk in smoothies (refer to "Crediting milk in smoothies" below).
- **Allowable types of milk:** The CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1. The allowable types of milk for ages 2 and older include whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, and fat-free milk. Flavored milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk. Allowable types of milk for all ages also include cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk; acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk; and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. CACFP menus must document the type of milk served to each age group.
- **Milk transition for infants and preschoolers:** Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months and 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk. Breastmilk may be used to meet the fluid milk component in the preschool meal patterns.

- **Crediting milk in smoothies:** Milk that meets the required fat content and flavor restrictions for each age group may credit as the milk component when served in smoothies. For smoothies only, the minimum creditable amount of milk is ¼ cup. If a smoothie contains less than the full serving of milk, CACFP menus must offer additional milk to meet the minimum requirement. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Allowable milk substitutes (nondairy beverages) for non-disability reasons:** CACFP facilities may choose to offer optional allowable fluid milk substitutes to children who do not consume milk due to non-disability reasons. Fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For detailed guidance on the requirements and considerations for fluid milk substitutes, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. More resources are available in the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **Additional requirements for child care programs in public schools:** In addition to meeting the meal pattern requirements for milk and milk substitutes, child care programs that operate in public schools must meet the state beverage requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes. The state beverage statute applies to all beverages available for sale to students on school premises, as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and snacks. The state beverage statute applies to all beverages available for sale to students on school premises, as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and snacks. Lactose-free/reduced milk cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugar per ounce. Fluid milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugar per ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. For more information on the state beverage statute, visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the milk component are available in the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

MMA Component

The CACFP meal patterns for children require the MMA component at lunch and supper. MMA are optional at breakfast. MMA may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

The MMA component includes fresh and frozen meats (e.g., lean beef, pork, poultry, fish, and shellfish), processed meats (e.g., chicken nuggets, deli meats, and fish sticks), canned meats (e.g., chicken, tuna, and salmon), and meat alternates (e.g., eggs, cheese, yogurt, nuts and seeds and their butters, beans, peas, and lentils, tofu, and tempeh).

Crediting guidance for MMA

CACFP facilities must ensure that meats and meat alternates offered in CACFP menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** MMA credit based on ounce equivalents (oz eq). The minimum creditable amount is ¼ oz eq.
- **Edible portion:** The MMA servings refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Menu planners must use the FBG to determine the yield and edible portion of different types of MMA.
- **Quantity for 1 oz eq:** The quantity that credits as 1 oz eq is based on weight or volume, depending on the type of MMA. A 1-oz eq serving of MMA equals 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 ounce of cheese; 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute; ¼ cup of cooked beans, peas, or lentils; ½ large egg; 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butter; 1 ounce of nuts or seeds; 1 ounce of commercial tofu (must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces);1 ounce of tempeh; 3 ounces of surimi; ½ cup or 4 ounces of yogurt or soy yogurt (cannot exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce); and 1 ounce of alternate protein product (APP).
- **MMA at lunch or supper:** MMA at lunch or supper must be served in the main dish or in the main dish and one other menu item.
- **MMA at breakfast:** The MMA component is optional at breakfast. Menu planners may choose to substitute MMA for the entire grains component up to three times per week. A 1-oz eq serving of MMA substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component. For example, ½ cup of yogurt or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter may substitute for 1 oz eq of grains.

- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Pasta made from bean or legume flours:** Pasta made from bean or legume flours may credit toward the MMA component when served with another MMA, such as meat or cheese. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Tofu:** Tofu and tofu products must be commercially prepared, easily recognized as meat substitutes (such as tofu burgers and tofu sausages), and contain 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Yogurt and soy yogurt:** Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added total per ounce) (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Commercial processed MMA products:** Commercial processed MMA products that are not listed in the FBG require a CN label or PFS to document their meal pattern contribution (refer to "Commercial Processed Foods" in section 6). Some examples include combination entrees like pizza and chicken nuggets, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages; products formulated with APPs (such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolate and casein), and dried meat, poultry, and seafood products (e.g., jerky and summer sausages). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend limiting processed meats to no more than one serving per week; and serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the MMA component are available in the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Vegetables Component

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

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent 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 *2020-2025 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 on the vegetable subgroups, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting guidance for vegetables

CACFP facilities must ensure that vegetables offered in CACFP menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens and tomato paste and puree. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup.
    - Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of lettuce or spinach credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.
    - Tomato paste and tomato puree credit using the whole food equivalency (volume of tomatoes prior to pureeing) instead of the actual volume served (refer to the FBG for crediting guidance). All other vegetable purees credit based on the finished volume served.
- **Vegetable substitutions at lunch and supper:** Vegetables may replace the fruits component at any lunch or supper. CACFP facilities may offer one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component, or two different servings of the vegetables component. A lunch or supper cannot contain two servings of only the fruits component, without offering vegetables.
- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Canned vegetables:** A serving of canned vegetables must be drained.
- **Dried vegetables:** Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on their rehydrated volume and require a PFS.
- **Vegetable juices:** Vegetable juices must be pasteurized full-strength juices. Juice credits at only one meal or snack per day. Vegetable juice does not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, except for smoothies.
- **Pureed vegetables in smoothies:** Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit based on the volume (cups) after pureeing. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit as juice and count toward the juice limit. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.
- **Mixtures of vegetables and fruits:** Mixtures of vegetables and fruits (such as carrot-raisin salad) credit separately toward the vegetables component and fruits component. The serving must contain at least ⅛ cup of visible vegetables and at least ⅛ cup of visible fruits.
- **Commercial vegetable soups:** Commercial vegetable soups credit based on the yields in the FBG. One cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as ½ cup of vegetables. One cup of commercial vegetable soup (such as tomato and minestrone) credits as ¼ cup of vegetables. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Soups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the vegetables component are available in the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Fruits Component

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

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice.

Crediting guidance for fruits

CACFP facilities must ensure that fruits offered in CACFP menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup.
- **Canned fruits:** The creditable serving of canned fruit in 100 percent juice may include the juice but cannot include water or syrup. For example, ½ cup of diced peaches in juice credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- **Dried fruits:** Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- **Pureed fruits in smoothies:** Pureed fruits in smoothies credit based on the volume (cups) after pureeing. Pureed fruits in smoothies credit as juice and count toward the juice limit. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.
- **Fruit juices:** Fruit juices must be pasteurized full-strength juices. Juice credits at only one meal or snack per day. The daily juice limit applies to all sources of 100 percent juice, including juices that are fresh, frozen, and made from concentrate, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies. Juice does not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, except for smoothies. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.
- **Beverage restriction at snack:** Only one meal component at snack may be a creditable beverage, such as milk or juice. For example, juice cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component at snack.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the fruits component are available in the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Grains Component

The CACFP meal patterns for children require grains at breakfast, lunch, and supper. Grains may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

Grain foods must be WGR or enriched. Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified. Allowable grain foods include:

- 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 (cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry);
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat (cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce);
- 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.

To credit as the grains component, these foods must be made with creditable grains. 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.

Crediting guidance for grains

CACFP facilities must ensure that grains offered in CACFP menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. The amount that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For more information, refer to "Methods to determine oz eq" in this section.

- **Crediting requirements:** Grain menu items must be WGR or enriched. For information on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *How to Identify Creditable Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, *Crediting Whole Grains in*

the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Breakfast cereals:** Cooked and RTE breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **WGR requirement:** CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to participants. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **Grain-based desserts are prohibited:** Grain-based desserts are not allowed in the CACFP. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. For more information, visit the USDA's Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **Sweet crackers:** Sweet crackers like graham crackers and animal crackers may be served in reimbursable meals and snacks. As a best practice, the USDA encourages CACFP facilities to limit sweet crackers due to their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week, between all meals and snacks served to in the CACFP.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the grains component are available in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Methods to determine oz eq

The USDA allows two methods for determining the oz eq of creditable grain products and recipes. These methods are summarized below. CACFP facilities may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. For detailed guidance on how to use each method, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* chart to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the food belongs. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program,* indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for the CACFP meal patterns. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Method 2: creditable grains

Method 2 determines the oz eq from the 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 grams of creditable grains are listed in the commercial product's PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the CACFP facility's recipe.

- **Enriched grains:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, enriched grain foods in groups A-E must contain 16 grams of creditable grains and enriched grain 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 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).

There are some situations when CACFP facilities must use method 2 and a PFS is required. 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*.

For more information on oz eq, visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Crediting Resources

The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on the crediting requirements for the meal components of the CACFP meal patterns for children.

- 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 Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/bite-size-meal-pattern-training

- Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (CSDE webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Noncreditable Foods 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 (RAW) for Standardized Recipes (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool
- Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/step-by-step-recipe-standardization-guide-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/
- 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 (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes
- USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation
- 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): https://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): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/nutrition-facts-label
- Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/yield_study_form.pdf

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. The CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the CACFP meal pattern and crediting requirements.

6 — Overview of Menu Documentation

CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate documentation to indicate that CACFP breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack menus meet the applicable meal pattern and crediting requirements. This section provides an overview of the menu documentation requirements. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

CACFP Menu

All sites must have a written menu to document that CACFP meals and snacks provide the required meal components and quantities. For information on CACFP menus, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Production Records

The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must maintain records to document the service of reimbursable meals and snacks to participants. Production records are not required except for CACFP child care centers that follow the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use daily production records because they:

- verify that local menus comply with the applicable CACFP meal patterns;
- communicate information to staff regarding what foods and recipes to use, what quantities to prepare, and what amounts to portion for each meal and snack; and
- provide valuable information to assist with future menu planning.

CACFP facilities that do not use production records should develop an alternate system to document the type and quantity of foods provided for each meal component of reimbursable meals and snacks.

For guidance on production records, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. Additional guidance and template forms are available in the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Commercial Processed Foods

The USDA requires appropriate crediting documentation for commercial processed products. Some examples include:

- combination foods that contain more than one meal component (e.g., pizza, breaded chicken nuggets, cheese ravioli, hummus and other bean dips);
- foods with added liquids, binders, and extenders, e.g., deli meats, hotdogs, and sausages; dried meat, poultry, and seafood products, e.g., jerky and summer sausages;
- foods that are alternate protein products (APPs) or contain APPs; and
- fruits and vegetables with added ingredients, e.g., breaded onion rings, hash brown patties, coleslaw, and dried soup mix.

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

Acceptable documentation

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

- **Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A CN label is a USDA-approved statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements. CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, but they often include crediting information for other meal components that are part of the product, such as vegetables, fruits, and grains. Allowable CN label documentation includes 1) the original CN label from the product carton; 2) a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or 3) a CN label copied with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor, attached to the bill of lading (invoice). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Product formulation statement (PFS):** A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. The PFS must be signed by an official of the manufacturer and state the amount of each meal component contained in one serving of the product. For more information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. For guidance on how to review a PFS, visit the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement webpage. Guidance on how to review a grain PFS is available in the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

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

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS that are not listed in the FBG do not credit in CACFP meals and snacks. For guidance on the requirements for crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. Additional guidance is available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Foods Made from Scratch

CACFP facilities must maintain recipes on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods prepared from scratch. Vendors that prepare scratch 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).

The USDA recommends using standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements.

> The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

For information on standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and the Institute of Child Nutrition's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Documentation for 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 crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Documentation for Breakfast Cereals

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that all cooked and RTE breakfast cereals are WGR, enriched, or fortified and meet the limit for added sugars (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in this section). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

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

Documentation for WGR Foods

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that at least one serving of grains per day is WGR. Required documentation for the WGR criteria includes a PFS for commercial foods and a recipe for foods made from scratch.

Menu planners must identify WGR foods using one of the USDA's six allowable methods for determining if foods meet the CACFP WGR criteria. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Documentation for Yogurt and Soy Yogurt

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that all yogurt and soy yogurt products meet the limit for added sugars (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Storing Crediting Documentation

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

The CSDE recommends maintaining original CN labels from the product carton and PFS forms in a designated binder or folder for easy reference. Digital photos and scans of CN labels and electronic copies of PFS forms should be stored in an easily accessible electronic folder.

7 — Resources

This section includes additional resources and websites for the CACFP. 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 for children and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns*.

Meal Pattern Requirements

Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns ("Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/bite-size-meal-pattern-training

CACFP Meal Pattern Updates (CSDE's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-and-adult-care-food-program#CACFP_Meal_Pattern_Updates

Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/specdiet/guide_meal_modifications_cacfp.pdf

Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program

Menu Forms ("Menu Forms and Production Records" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/menu-forms-and-production-records

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards

7 | Resources

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

Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/summary_final_rule_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

USDA Final Rule Correction: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the HHFKA of 2010 (81 FR 75671):
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/01/2016-26339/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act

USDA Final Rule: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24347):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-042524

USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 25073):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-050826

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/qas-updated-meal-pattern-requirements

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

USDA Memo CACFP 17-2017: Documenting Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/documenting-meals

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:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/initial-implementation-meal-patterns-dga

Program Guidance

CACFP Afterschool Programs (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool

CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-at-risk-afterschool-care-centers

CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-child-care-centers

CACFP Emergency Shelters (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-emergency-shelters

CACFP Family Day Care Homes (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-family-day-care-homes

CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinars

CACFP Handbooks (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/handbooks

CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets

CACFP Updates (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-updates

Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) Documents and Resources (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/resources

Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs

Forms for CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-child-care-centers/forms

Forms for CACFP Homes (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/cacfp-family-day-care-homes/forms

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs

7 | Resources

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/manuals-and-guides-for-child-nutrition-programs

Operational Memoranda for the CACFP (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/lists/operational-memoranda-for-the-cacfp

Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-cacfp-child

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs

Training for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/training-for-child-nutrition-programs

Glossary

added sugars: Sugars and syrups added to foods in processing or preparation, as opposed to the naturally occurring sugars found in 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 crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

artificial sweeteners: A category of nonnutritive sweeteners used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. The six artificial sweeteners approved by the 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.

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

beans, peas, and lentils (pulses): The dried edible seeds of legumes (such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas). Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow beans, peas, and lentils to credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

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 meal patterns: The required meal components and minimum serving sizes that CACFP facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals (breakfast, lunch, and supper) and snacks served to participants. For more information, visit the "CACFP meal patterns" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

CACFP sponsor: A public or private nonprofit organization that is entirely responsible for the administration of the CACFP in one or more day care homes, child care centers, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, or adult day care centers. In some situations, for-profit institutions may also be eligible to participate in the CACFP. For more information, refer to the section 7 CFR 226.2 of the CACFP regulations.

cereal grains: The seeds that come from grasses. Cereal grains can be whole grain (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rolled wheat, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and wheat berries) or enriched (such as enriched cornmeal, corn grits, and farina).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program providing nutritious meals and snacks to children in child care centers, family day care homes, and emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to children participating in eligible at-risk afterschool care programs. The CACFP also provides meals and snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. For more information, visit the USDA's CACFP webpage and the CSDE's CACFP webpage.

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement approved by the USDA that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and visit the "Child Nutrition Labels" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA's federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE's Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

combination food: A menu item that contains more than one meal component, such as pizza, sandwiches, burritos, tacos, lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and smoothies made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains two meal components from the pasta (grains component) and cheese (MMA component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza and burritos) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

corn masa: Dough made from masa harina that is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Corn masa is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to "nixtamalization" in this section.

cornmeal: Meal made from ground, dried corn.

creditable food: A food or beverage that counts toward the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, visit the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the CACFP* and visit the Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

creditable grains: The ingredients in a commercial grain product or recipe that credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

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 different types of grain foods to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, lists the Exhibit A grain oz eq that apply to the CACFP. This chart may be used to determine the grain oz eq for commercial grain products and for recipes that indicate the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. For more information, refer to the USDA's resource, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*.

flour: Finely ground and sifted wheat or other grains such as rye, corn, rice, or buckwheat.

fluid milk substitutes: Plant-based beverages like fortified soy milk that are intended to replace cow's milk. CACFP facilities may choose to offer allowable fluid milk substitutes to children who do not consume milk due to non-disability reasons. Fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

food item: A specific food offered within the 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.

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 for the Child Nutrition Programs that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. For more information, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

full meal component: The minimum quantity of each meal component that is required in the CACFP meal patterns for children for each meal or snack.

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:** Juice may credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

germ: The vitamin-rich sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel. Germ credits the same as enriched grains.

grain-based desserts: Desserts that are made primarily of grains and that do not credit in CACFP menus. 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 (like graham crackers and animal crackers) are not included in the restrictions for grain-based desserts.

grains component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs 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; and meet the limit for added sugars (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For more information, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

grains: Plants in the grass family that produce a dry, edible fruit commonly called a kernel, grain, or berry.

lactose: The naturally occurring sugar found in milk. Lactose contains glucose and galactose. For more information, refer to "simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

lean meat and poultry: Defined by the USDA as meat and poultry that contains less than 10 grams of fat, no more than 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 grams and per labeled serving size, based on the USDA's definitions for food label use. Examples include 95% 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 "Pulses" in this section.

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.

meal components: The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates. For information on the individual meal components, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

meal pattern: The required meal components and minimum servings that schools and institutions participating in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to participants. For more information, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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 that contain at least 5 grams of protein 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume), tempeh, and yogurt or soy yogurt that meets the limit for added sugars (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

meats/meat alternates component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, and nuts, and seeds. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

medical statement: A document signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate meal modifications for a participant with special dietary needs due to disability or non-disability reasons. The USDA requires that medical statements for disability reasons 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 "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

menu item: Any single food or combination food offered on the menu. A menu item may contain one or more meal components. For example, vegetable lasagna is a menu item that contains three meal components: vegetables, grains (pasta noodles), and MMA (cheese).

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 provides documentation for the number of CACFP meals and snacks claimed for reimbursement.

milk component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs 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 "fluid milk substitutes" in this section and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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 the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods 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. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For a list of noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

nonnutritive sweeteners: Ingredients without calories that are hundreds of times sweeter than sugars and that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners include the six FDA-approved artificial sweeteners (acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), advantame, aspartame, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose) and three plant-based sweeteners (stevia, monk fruit, and thaumatin) that are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) by the FDA. For guidance on the FDA approved nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to the FDA's Aspartame and Other Sweeteners in Food webpage.

nutrient-dense foods: Foods and beverages that provide vitamins, minerals, and other substances that contribute to adequate nutrient intakes or may have positive health effects, and contain little or no solid fats, added sugars, refined starches, or sodium. Ideally, these foods and beverages are also in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. Examples include all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry (when prepared with little or no added solid fats, sugars, refined starches, and sodium). The term "nutrient dense" indicates the nutrients and other beneficial substances in a food have not been "diluted" by the addition of calories from added solid fats, sugars, or refined starches, or by the solid fats naturally present in the food.

nutrient-rich foods: Refer to "nutrient-dense foods" in this section.

nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The USDA's nutrition requirements for plant-based beverages like soy milk that are used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and meet the following nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalents (RAE) of vitamin A; 2.5 mcg of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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" 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. The amount of a grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. The amount of meat or meat alternate that provides 1 oz eq is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. A PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The USDA requires a PFS for commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the FBG. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

production record: A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare CACFP meals and snacks. Production records demonstrate how meals contribute to the required meal components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. Production records are required for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern and are strongly encouraged for all CACFP sponsors. For more information, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

pulses: The edible dry seeds from legumes, such as beans, 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 CACFP meals and snacks. 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.

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 and snacks: Meals and snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the USDA regulations and are eligible for USDA funds. Reimbursable meals and snacks contain the minimum serving of each required meal component.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, or number of pieces or slices of a food or beverage. For meals and snacks to be reimbursable, CACFP facilities must provide the minimum servings specified in the CACFP meal patterns.

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.

standard of identity: A legal or regulatory definition that specifies the required ingredients, composition, and sometimes processing methods for a particular food product. These standards ensure that products labeled with a certain name meet specific criteria for quality and content, helping to protect consumers and maintain consistency in the marketplace. The USDA develops standards for meat and poultry products. The FDA develops standards for other food products. For more information, visit the FDA's Standards of Identity for Food webpage.

standardized recipe: A recipe that has been tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, refer to the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

state-licensed healthcare professional: An individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law and is recognized by the State Department of Public Health (DPH). In Connecticut, 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* and visit the "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs.

vegetable subgroups: The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables food group that are recommended by the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These subgroups include dark green, red/ orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. The CACFP meal patterns for children do not require the vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend providing at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup per week. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

vegetables component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that 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, visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

whole grain-rich (WGR): Foods that are 100 percent whole grain or contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any other grain ingredients are enriched. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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*.

CONNECTICUT
Education