Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Child Care Centers • Family Day Care Homes • Emergency Shelters

At-risk Afterschool Care Centers • Adult Day Care Centers

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

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

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Contents

About This Guide vi

CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series vii

Contact Information for CSDE CACFP Staff viii

Abbreviations and Acronyms ix

1 — Introduction 1
- Overview of Menu Records 2
  - Required documentation for commercial foods 2
  - Required documentation for foods made from scratch 2
- What Documentation Must Indicate 3
- Records Retention 4
- Determining Food Yields and Crediting 5
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs 5
  - FBG resources 6
- Determining In-house Product Yields 7
  - Yield study procedures 7

2 — Menus 9
- Menu Forms 10
  - Menu forms for child care programs 10
  - Menu forms for adult day care centers 11
- Using Cycle Menus 12
  - Benefits of cycle menus 12
  - Sample cycle menu for preschoolers 13
- CSDE Sample CACFP Menus 13
  - Sample menus for child care programs 13
  - Menu forms for adult day care centers 14
- Menu Planning 14
- Resources for Cycle Menus and Recipes 15

3 — Production Records 17
Purpose of Production Records 18
Required Elements for Production Records 18
Complete before meal service 18
Complete during meal service 20
Complete after meal service 21
CSDE Production Record Templates 21
Guidance for Completing Production Records 21
Volume versus Weight 23
Using the correct measurement for meal pattern portions 24
Administrative Review of Production Records 25
Resources for Production Records 26

4 — Standardized Recipes 27
Benefits of Standardized Recipes 28
Information to Include for Standardized Recipes 29
Vendor-prepared Foods 30
Verifying Compliance of Menus and Recipes from Other Sources 30
Resources for Standardized Recipes 31

5 — Overview of Crediting Commercial Processed Products 33
Acceptable Documentation for Commercial Processed Products 34
Difference Between CN Labels and PFS Forms 35
Guidance and Training for Crediting Documentation 36

6 — Child Nutrition (CN) Labels 37
Eligible Products 37
Benefits of Using CN-labeled Products 37
Considerations for CN-labeled Products 38
CN-Labeled Products Not Required 38
Identifying CN Labels 38
USDA's CN Label Verification System 40
Dates on CN Labels 40
Meal Pattern Contribution of CN Labels 41
MMA contribution 41
Grains contribution 41
Vegetables contribution 41
Fruits contribution 42
Acceptable Documentation 42
CN labels with a watermark 42
Resources for CN Labels 44

7 — Product Formulation Statements 47
When a PFS is Required 47
Verifying PFS Forms for Accuracy 49
Required PFS Information 49
Guidance for Reviewing PFS Forms 53
Storing PFS Forms 53
USDA PFS Forms 53
PFS forms for MMA 54
PFS forms for vegetables and fruits 54
PFS forms for grains 54
Sample completed PFS forms for multiple component foods 55
Resources for PFS Forms 55

9 — Nutrition Information 57
Determining Crediting Information 57
Making Meal Modifications 59
Nutrition Information for USDA Foods 60
Resources for Nutrition Information 61

7 — Resources 63
Meal Pattern Requirements 63
Program Guidance 65

Glossary 67

About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Guide to Menu Documentation for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* provides detailed guidance and resources to assist child care programs and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) with maintaining the records required to document that menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns. The requirements in this guide apply to all CACFP child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, family day care homes, and adult day care centers.

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

> This guide 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_menu_documentation.pdf.

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

CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series

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

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

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

Contact Information for CSDE CACFP Staff

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

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

Abbreviations and Acronyms

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

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

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

1 — Introduction

This guide provides comprehensive information and resources to assist CACFP child care programs and adult day care centers (referred to as CACFP facilities) with maintaining the records required to document that menus comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for the CACFP. The requirements in this guide apply to all CACFP child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, family day care homes, and adult day care centers.

All child care programs and adult day care centers that participate in the CACFP must offer meals and snacks that comply with the applicable USDA meal patterns. The CACFP meal patterns require minimum servings of specific meal components for each age group.

- **CACFP meal patterns for children:** The CACFP meal patterns for children apply to ages 1-12, ages 15 and younger of migrant workers, children of any age with disabilities, and children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children* and visit the "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **CACFP adult meal patterns:** The CACFP adult meal patterns apply to adult participants in adult day care centers. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns* and visit the "CACFP Adult Meal Patterns" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

CACFP facilities must be able to document that all reimbursable meals and snacks provide the required meal components and quantities for each meal and age group. Without appropriate documentation, foods and beverages do not credit toward the required meal components of the CACFP meal patterns. The CSDE will disallow reimbursement for noncompliant meals and snacks.

Overview of Menu Records

CACFP facilities must maintain specific records to document the service of reimbursable meals to participants. These required records are summarized below.

Required documentation for commercial foods

- Menus [1]
- Production records or equivalent documentation [2]
- Child Nutrition (CN) labels [3]
- Product formulation statement (PFS) forms [3]
- Nutrition information (Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients) [4]

Required documentation for foods made from scratch

- Menus [1]
- Production records or equivalent documentation [2]
- Recipes (preferably standardized) [5]
- Nutrition information (Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients) [4]

[1] Menus must represent the actual meal components served for each meal and snack claimed for CACFP reimbursement. For information on menus, refer to section 2.

[2] Production records are not required in the CACFP except for child care centers that follow the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal patterns. The CSDE encourages the use of production records because they provide appropriate documentation that meals and snacks comply with the CACFP meal patterns. For information on production records, refer to section 3.

[3] A Child Nutrition (CN) label or PFS is required for all commercial processed products that are not listed in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. For more information, refer to on CN labels in section 6 and PFS forms in section 7.

[4] Nutrition information is required to determine the crediting information for many commercial products and may also be needed for ingredients in recipes. For information on nutrition information records, refer to section 8.

[5] The USDA recommends using standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements. For information on standardized recipes records, refer to section 4.

What Documentation Must Indicate

The CACFP facility's documentation must indicate that breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack menus meet the specific CACFP meal pattern requirements for each meal and age group. These requirements are summarized below.

- **Creditable foods:** All foods and beverages counted toward the meal components for reimbursable meals and snacks must meet the specific crediting requirements for the applicable CACFP meal pattern. For detailed guidance on the crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Minimum meal component servings:** All breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack menus must offer the minimum servings of the required meal components for each meal and age group. For detailed guidance on the CACFP meal patterns, refer to the *Guide to Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children* or *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns* and visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **Daily whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement:** CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to participants. For detailed guidance on the WGR requirement and the WGR criteria for different grain foods, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Crediting restrictions:** CACFP menus must meet the daily juice limit (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*) and the product-based limits for added sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*).

> 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.

- **Prohibited foods:** Grain-based desserts are not allowed in the CACFP. For more information, visit the USDA's Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The CACFP meal patterns also prohibit deep-fat frying foods on site, i.e., cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat.

CACFP facilities must ensure that all applicable staff understand how to complete and maintain the required menu records. These records must be maintained on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP (refer to "Records Retention" in this section).

Records Retention

Section 7 CFR 226.10(d) of the CACFP regulations require that all records pertaining to the CACFP must be retained for a period of three years after the date of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which they pertain. If audit findings have not been resolved, the records must be retained beyond the three-year period, for as long as is required for resolution of the issues raised by the audit. For detailed guidance and resources on the CACFP records retention requirements, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Determining Food Yields and Crediting

The purpose of the required menu records is to document that meals and snacks served to participants meet the applicable CACFP meal pattern requirements. Ensuring that menu planners accurately determine the yield of commercial products and foods made from scratch is a critical element of appropriate documentation.

Yield determines how a food or beverage credits toward the CACFP meal patterns. Yield refers to the amount (weight, volume, or number of servings) of a product at the completion of the preparation process.

The yield of a product or standardized recipe depends on the type of food and the preparation process. For example:

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

Processed fruits and vegetables yield less than the purchased amount due to peeling and trimming. Raw meats yield less than the purchased amount because moisture and fat are lost in the cooking process. Rice and pasta yield more than the purchased (dry) amount because water is absorbed during the cooking process.

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

The USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) is the definitive resource for determining yields and crediting information for the Child Nutrition Programs. The FBG provides yield information for common types and customary sizes of milk, meats/meat alternates (MMA), vegetables, fruits, and grains, including commercially available foods and USDA Foods.

The FBG helps menu planners determine a food's specific contribution toward the meal pattern requirements, how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide, what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe, and how much food to buy.

> CACFP facilities should ensure that menu planners use the FBG to determine accurate crediting information for foods and beverages served in reimbursable meals and snacks.

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

FBG resources

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

The resources below provide guidance on using the FBG.

- Food Buying Guide (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/food-buying-guide

- 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

- Navigating the Food Buying Guide FBG Calculator (USDA webinar):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/navigating-food-buying-guide-fbg-calculator

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

Determining In-house Product Yields

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

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

If a food service operation consistently obtains a higher or lower yield for a product than the yield listed in the FBG, the CACFP facility should conduct an in-house yield study to determine the actual number of portions of a specified size that the product provides. In-house yields are also required for products not listed in the FBG. The CSDE allows CACFP facilities to use in-house yields to determine a product's meal pattern contribution, if the process is properly documented and follows the CSDE's yield study procedures.

Yield study procedures

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

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

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

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

4. Fill the measuring utensil level to the top of the measure.
5. Carefully count and document the number of portions in each sample.
6. Add the total number of servings from each of the samples.
7. Divide the total number of servings by the number of samples to get the average number of servings per sample.
8. Complete the CSDE's *Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs* and maintain on file for review by the CSDE staff during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

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

2 — Menus

CACFP facilities must develop menus that represent the actual meal components served for each meal and snack claimed for CACFP reimbursement. Menus must identify the date of the meal service and all meal components and food items served, including the type of milk. For children ages 1 and older and adult participants, the menu must also indicate which grain products are WGR.

Each CACFP facility must have a written "menu of record" on file to document the specific meal components served to all enrolled participants each day. Cycle menus or menus developed in advance of the meal service must specify the month and day and indicate any menu substitutions that occur (refer to "Using cycle menus" in this section).

The CACFP facility must maintain all menus on file with other required CACFP records in accordance with section 7 CFR 226.10(d) of the CACFP regulations (refer to "Records Retention" in section 1).

Menu Forms

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

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

The CSDE provides sample CACFP weekly menu forms for child care programs and adult day care centers. These forms help menu planners include the required meal components and servings for each age group and meal. CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to meet individual program needs. Alternate menu formats should contain appropriate guidance regarding the required meal components and servings for each meal and snack served to each age group.

Menu forms for child care programs

The CSDE's sample CACFP weekly menu forms below help menu planners in child care programs include the required meal components and servings for the CACFP meal patterns for children.

At-risk supper and snack

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

Breakfast, lunch, and snack

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

Breakfast and snack

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

Emergency shelters

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

Lunch and snack

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

Snack

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

These menu forms are available in the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Menu forms for adult day care centers

The CSDE's sample CACFP weekly menu forms below help menu planners in adult day care centers include the required meal components and servings for the CACFP adult meal patterns.

- CACFP Adult Day Care Centers Menu Form for AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack
- CACFP Adult Day Care Centers Menu Form for Breakfast, Lunch and Snack
- CACFP Adult Day Care Centers Menu Form for Lunch and Snack

These menu 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.

Using Cycle Menus

The CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to use cycle menus for CACFP meals and snacks. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a specific period with a different menu for each day. At the end of the cycle, the menu repeats in the same order.

A typical cycle menu might be four to six weeks. Offering a cycle menu of at least four weeks. increases the variety of offered meals and ensures that participants are not served the same combination of foods too often.

Cycle menus allow flexibility for variations like holidays, seasonal foods, special items, and the use of USDA Foods. For example, CACFP facilities could have a different cycle menu for fall, winter, and spring.

Benefits of cycle menus

Using cycle menus in the CACFP has many benefits.

- **Structure and predictability:** Cycle menus provide structure and predictability, which helps CACFP facilities with planning and documenting menus that meet the CACFP meal patterns. Predictability also provides familiarity for participants, who look forward to their favorite meals being repeated in a predictable way.

- **Save time and labor costs:** CACFP facilities will spend less time gathering information, planning menus, developing product specifications, and checking deliveries. This also helps to standardize purchasing procedures and reduce time spent on purchasing.

- **Improve staff efficiency:** As menu items are repeated, the staff who prepare food for meals and snacks become more familiar with the standardized recipes and are more efficient in producing them.

- **Control food costs:** CACFP facilities can more easily predict the correct quantity of foods to purchase when previous menu data is available. Cycle menus also help decrease food costs by allowing CACFP facilities to purchase regularly used items in bulk and take advantage of seasonal foods. In addition, CACFP facilities may qualify for volume discounts when buying larger amounts of the same items.

- **Reduce food waste:** CACFP facilities can more easily predict how much of each menu item to prepare when menus are used repeatedly, so less food is left over.

- **Control inventory and storage costs:** CACFP facilities can better estimate the correct quantity of foods to purchase, which helps keep stock at appropriate levels.

For more guidance and resources on cycle menus, refer to the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Cycle Menus" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Sample cycle menu for preschoolers

The ICN's *Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers* features four seasonal four-week cycle menus for preschoolers. The ICN also offers an online learning course, *CARE Connection – Planning Cycle Menus in Child Care*.

CSDE Sample CACFP Menus

The CSDE's sample breakfast, lunch, and snack menus provide meal and snack ideas for child care programs and adult day care centers.

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

Sample menus for child care programs

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

For resources on menu planning, refer to "Menu Planning Resources" in this section and the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*. Additional resources are available in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Menu forms for adult day care centers

The sample adult day care center menus are available in the "Sample CACFP Menus" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. Each menu contains at least the minimum required food components and servings. Some menus include additional components or exceed the minimum serving requirements.

For resources on menu planning, refer to "Menu Planning Resources" in this section and the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*. Additional resources are available in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Menu Planning

CACFP facilities should follow basic menu planning principles to create appealing and nutritious menus that are culturally relevant and promote positive attitudes about healthy eating. Some key principles include:

- balancing flavors;
- adding contrast with different tastes, textures, shapes, and types of food; and
- using a variety of color combinations to enhance the eye appeal of meals and snacks.

Other considerations include incorporating seasonal and local foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, focusing on regional and cultural food preferences, and planning for holidays and other special occasions.

For menu planning guidance and resources, refer to "Resources for Cycle Menus and Recipes" in this section.

Resources for Cycle Menus and Recipes

The resources below include cycle menus and standardized recipes for CACFP meals and snacks.

- Breakfast ("Menu Planning" 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-planning#Breakfast
- CACFP Recipes for Child Care Homes and Adult Day Care (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/standardized-recipes
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/cnrb/
- Cycle Menus (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/cycle-menus
- Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/wpfd_file/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers/
- Lunch and Supper ("Menu Planning" 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-planning#LunchSupper
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/recipes-for-child-nutrition-programs
- Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-child-care-centers
- Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-homes
- 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

- Snack Inspiration: Menus with 240 Snack Ideas (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction): https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/community-nutrition/pdf/snack_inspiration.pdf

- Snacks ("Menu Planning" 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-planning#Snacks

- Team Nutrition Recipes (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/recipes

For additional resources, visit the "Cycle Menus" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

For detailed guidance on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children* or *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

For a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the CACFP meal pattern requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> CACFP facilities are responsible for ensuring that local menus and recipes meet the applicable CACFP meal patterns. Menu planners should verify the meal pattern contribution of all non-USDA cycle menus and recipes before using (refer to "Verifying Compliance of Menus and Recipes from Other Sources" in section 4).

3 — Production Records

A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. Production records are not required in the CACFP except for CACFP child care centers that follow the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern..

However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) require that CACFP facilities must maintain records to document the service of reimbursable meals and snacks to participants. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) strongly encourages all CACFP child care programs and adult day care centers to use production records because they provide a variety of benefits. Using production records helps CACFP facilities:

- 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 age group; and
- provide valuable information to assist CACFP facilities with future menu planning.

Using production records is a best practice for all CACFP facilities. 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. Menu planners should use the FBG to determine how many servings of a meal component a specific quantity of food will provide.

Purpose of Production Records

Production records help verify that the meal service meets the CACFP meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals. They show how the offered meals contribute to the required meal components and food quantities for each meal and age group every day. Production records are also an important communication tool that tells food service staff what foods and recipes to use, what quantities to prepare, and what amounts to portion.

In addition to documenting reimbursable meals, production records also provide valuable information about the meal service, such as the quantities prepared and total meals served. This historical information helps with future menu planning. CACFP facilities can use previous production records to forecast trends, identify participants' preferences, and plan future menus. Production records also help CACFP facilities with controlling waste, tracking food safety, and conducting a nutrient analysis of menus.

Guidance on completing production records is below and summarized in the CSDE's resource, *Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Required Elements for Production Records

Production records must include certain elements that are recorded at different times. The guidance below indicates what production records must include and when staff should complete the required information.

Complete before meal service

The information below may be completed days or weeks in advance of the meal service. Information that does not change (such as the basic information below) may be pre-filled before printing the production record.

- **Basic information:** Indicate the sponsor name, program/site name, meal date, ages being served, and meal type (breakfast, lunch, supper, or snack).
- **Planned menu items:** List the specific type and amount of all meal choices, milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all noncreditable food items like condiments (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*).
- **Recipe name and number or food product name and code:** Indicate the recipe name and number for all foods made from scratch. Indicate the product name and code for all commercial products.

- **Planned portion size and number of servings:** Indicate the planned portion size of each menu item, with the specific unit of measure (e.g., scoop number, measuring cup amount, each, and ladle or spoodle size) and the planned number of servings. This is the total number of servings planned for all meals/snacks (reimbursable and if applicable, nonreimbursable). Use standard abbreviations (e.g., lb = pound, oz = ounces, gal = gallon, qt = quart, c = cup, Tbsp = tablespoon, and tsp = teaspoon) and express measurements in fractions, when applicable (e.g., ¼, ½, and ¾). List each menu item's meal component contribution in oz eq for meats/meat alternates (MMA) and grains, and cups for fruits, vegetables, and milk.

    - **MMA (oz eq):** Indicate the correct quantity for each type of MMA. List commercial processed products like pizza and chicken nuggets in oz eq, based on their CN label or PFS. List lean meat, poultry, and fish, natural and processed cheese, and nuts and seeds in ounces (1 ounce = 1 oz eq); eggs by each (½ large egg = 1 oz eq); nut/seed butters in tablespoons (2 tablespoons = 1 oz eq); beans, peas, and lentils, and cottage cheese in cups (¼ cup = 1 oz eq); and yogurt by volume or weight (½ cup or 4 ounces = 1 oz eq). For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children* or *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns.*

    - **Grains (oz eq):** Indicate the correct quantity for each type of grain. List groups A-E (baked goods like breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, and pancakes) by weight (ounces) and groups H-I (e.g., cooked cereal grains like rice, pasta, and quinoa) by volume (cups), based on the required quantity for 1 oz eq or the minimum creditable grains per serving. If a commercial processed products has insufficient information to determine crediting, the oz eq must be based on the product's PFS. Indicate if grains are whole grain-rich (WGR). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources and webpages below.

        - Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_calculation_cacfp_oz_eq.pdf

        - Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/ grain_oz_eq_cacfp.pdf

- Serving Requirements ("Grains" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/grains#ServingRequirements

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

- Whole Grain-rich Requirement ("Grains" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/grains#WGR

- **Vegetables (cups):** Include the form of the food, e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Include all vegetable juices.

- **Fruits (cups):** Include the form of the food (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) and packing medium (e.g., canned in juice or light syrup, or frozen with added sugar). Include all fruit juices.

- **Milk (cups):** List the type of milk for each age group. Unflavored whole milk is required for age 1. The CACFP meal patterns for ages 2 and older allow unflavored whole milk, reduced-fat milk, low-fat milk, and fat-free milk. Flavored milk may be served to ages 6 and older and adult participants, but the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only unflavored milk.

Complete during meal service

- **Temperatures and times:** For time/temperature control for safety food (TCS) – formerly known as potentially hazardous foods – staff should record temperatures throughout the meal service as applicable, to ensure that hot foods are held at 135°F or above and cold foods are held at 41°F or below. Take corrective action if any foods are not at target temperature. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Complete after meal service

- **Substitutions:** Indicate any substitutions for the planned menu, such as different entrees or vegetables.
- **Total servings prepared:** Indicate the total number of servings actually prepared for the meal service.
- **Servings left over:** Indicate the total number of servings left over for each menu item.
- **Total servings selected:** Indicate the total number of servings selected during the meal service. Subtract "Servings left over" from "Total servings prepared."
- **Total number of meals and snacks served:** Indicate the number of reimbursable meals and snacks served to each age group. If applicable, indicate the number of nonreimbursable meals and snacks served, e.g., second meals/snacks and meals/snacks for staff members.

CSDE Production Record Templates

Production record templates for child care program and adult day care centers 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. These production records assist child care programs and adult day care centers with providing the information required to document that menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns. CACFP facilities may use or adapt these sample production records to meet individual program needs.

Guidance for Completing Production Records

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

- Use a physical written production for each site, including satellite locations.
- Complete all information. Check production records after the meal service to make sure that information is not missing or incomplete.
- Record the information legibly, i.e., make sure that handwriting can be read.

- Use the proper weight or volume measure for each food item (oz eq for MMA and grains, and cups for fruits, vegetables, and milk). For example, fruits and vegetables must be listed in cups, not ounces (refer to "Volume versus Weight" in this section).
- List the specific type and amount of each food item separately. Do not indicate foods as assorted choices. For example, instead of "assorted juices," list apple juice, orange juice, and pineapple juice. Instead of "assorted fruits and vegetables," fruit choices," or "vegetable choices," list each type of fruit and vegetable.
- List the appropriate type of milk for each age group.
- List all condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing.
- List portion sizes accurately. Make sure that the listed portion sizes are the same as the amount being served to participants.
- List all items prepared for the meal including daily items and alternate meal choices.
- Accurately record the "planned" portions for each age group.
- List the total number of nonreimbursable meals (e.g., second meals for participants and staff meals) separately from reimbursable meals.
- Add any extra servings of food needed during the meal service period.
- Indicate if any substitutions are made to the planned menu items.
- Indicate if leftovers from a previous day are used.
- Indicate how leftovers from that day's meal service will be used, e.g., refrigerated for use in future meals, frozen for future use in the cycle menu, or discarded.

CACFP facilities should maintain production records on file with other required documentation (refer to "Records Retention" in section 1). The CSDE will review menu documentation during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Volume versus Weight

The quantities listed in production records must reflect the servings required by the CACFP meal patterns, which indicate the servings of the meal components by weight (ounces) or volume (fluid ounces).

- The servings for the milk component, vegetables component, and fruits component are indicated by volume (cups).
- The servings for most foods in the MMA component are indicated by weight (ounces). Some MMA are indicated by volume, such as peanut butter (tablespoons), and beans, peas, and lentils (cups). Some MMA are indicated by volume or weight, such as cottage cheese, yogurt, and tofu.
- The servings for foods in the grains component are indicated by weight (ounces or grams) or volume (cups), based on the groups in the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*. Foods in groups A-E (like crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) are indicated by weight. Foods in group H (cereal grains like pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, barley, oats, and quinoa) and group I (ready-to-eat breakfast cereals) are indicated by volume or weight.

Menu planners should use the USDA's FBG to determine the quantity of a food that meets the required meal pattern serving (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1). The FBG can also be used to determine the weight equivalent of servings measured by volume. Production records must reflect these amounts. For example, the servings of vegetables, fruits, peanut butter, and beans, peas, and lentils must be listed by cups, not by weight.

For guidance on weights and measures, refer to the ICN's *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* and visit the "Portion Control" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Using the correct measurement for meal pattern portions

When completing production records, staff need to understand that volume and weight measurements are not the same. Volume refers to the space an ingredient occupies in a measuring container. Common units of volume include teaspoons, tablespoons, fluid ounces, cups, pints, quarts, and gallons.

> In most cases, a specific volume of food does not equal the same weight. However, there are some exceptions, such as yogurt (½ cup equals 4 ounces by weight) and certain canned fruits and vegetables. Refer to the FBG for specific crediting guidance.

A frequent compliance issue with production records and similar menu documentation is listing portion sizes incorrectly. For example, listing fruits and vegetables as "4 ounces" instead of "½ cup" fails to document whether the serving meets the meal pattern requirements, because these measurements are not equivalent. A serving of 4 ounces of fruits or vegetables by weight may or may not equal ½ cup of the fruits component or½ cup of the vegetables component.

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

Administrative Review of Production Records

During the Administrative Review of the CACFP, the CSDE will evaluate the CACFP sponsor's menu documentation records (including production records, if used) to ensure they.

- include all information necessary to support claims for reimbursable meals and snacks, i.e., all menu items are listed and the minimum servings of all meal components are offered;
- document that the prepared foods are creditable for the total number of reimbursable meals/snacks offered and served;
- document the total number of nonreimbursable meals/snacks separately from reimbursable meals/snacks;
- document that menus meet the requirements for fluid milk, the WGR requirement, and the daily juice limit (refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns for Children* or *Guide to Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Adult Meal Patterns*); and
- align with the CACFP facility's recipes, i.e., the ingredients in the CACFP facility's recipes correspond to the menu items listed on the production records.

When production records are used, CACFP facilities should ensure that food service staff include all required elements for each daily production record (refer to "Required Elements for Production Records" in this document). Food service staff must be trained in the proper procedures for completing production records

Resources for Production Records

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

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/
- Instructions for the Production Record Templates for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/prodrecord/instructions_ production_ record_cacfp.pdf
- Production Records ("Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the 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
- Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/prodrecord/using_production_ records_cacfp.pdf
- Weights and Measures ("Portion Control" section of CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/portion-control#WeightsMeasures

The CSDE's resource, *Using Production Records in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, provides guidance for production records in the CACFP.

4 — Standardized Recipes

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

Recipes are required for all foods prepared on site by the CACFP facility and all foods made from scratch that are purchased by the CACFP facility from vendors (refer to "Vendor-prepared Foods" in this section). Some examples of foods made from scratch include entrees (such as lasagna, sandwiches, chicken stir-fry, and macaroni and cheese), soup, cornbread, pancakes, coleslaw, and potato 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. Standardized quantity recipes produce 25 or more servings.

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

Benefits of Standardized Recipes

Standardized recipes document the specific CACFP meal pattern contribution per serving. For example, a standardized recipe for lasagna might indicate that one serving credits as 1½ oz eq of the MMA component, ¼ cup of the vegetables component, and 1 oz eq of the grains component. In addition to documenting the meal pattern contribution, standardized recipes provide many other benefits for the CACFP.

- **Consistent quality and portion size:** Standardized recipes ensure that the quality and portion size of menu items is consistent, regardless of who prepares the food. This improves participants' satisfaction because the taste and portion size are always the same.

- **Predictable yield:** Standardized recipes ensure a predictable yield each time. This assists menu planners with controlling food costs and implementing more efficient purchasing procedures.

- **Meal pattern compliance:** Standardized recipes ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. This contributes to successful completion of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.

- **Consistent nutrient content:** Standardized recipes provide consistent nutrient content. They also indicate the nutrition information per serving, which is essential for addressing participants' special dietary concerns like food allergies.

- **Staff efficiency and reduced labor costs:** Standardized recipes can help improve staff efficiency and reduce labor costs because production techniques are always the same.

- **Managing inventory:** Standardized recipes assist with managing inventory by specifying the exact ingredient quantities, which helps to prevent shortages and overstock.

- **Food safety guidance:** Standardized recipes provide guidance on food safety through preparation steps that avoid cross-contamination and ensure appropriate time and temperature controls.

For more information, refer to the ICN's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Information to Include for Standardized Recipes

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

- recipe name that describes the recipe;
- recipe number that is unique to each recipe;
- recipe category classification, e.g., main dish (entree), grains, and vegetables;
- ingredients used, including the form of the food (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) and the preparation techniques used (e.g., peeled, grated, minced, and diced) with the required size if applicable (e.g., ½-inch slices or ¼-inch diced);
- quantity (weight and volume) of each ingredient for each recipe yield (e.g., 50 servings or 100 servings);
- units of measure for each ingredient using standard abbreviations (e.g., lb = pound, oz = ounces, gal = gallon, qt = quart, Tbsp = tablespoon, and tsp = teaspoon) and a fraction format;
- preparation directions including the specific steps;
- cooking time and temperature, as required;
- food safety Critical Control Points (CCPs), i.e., time and temperature critical limits for each step of preparing, holding, serving, and storing (for more information, visit the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage);
- serving size (the weight and/or volume of a single portion);
- recipe yield (weight and/or volume and number of servings), i.e., the amount produced when production is complete;
- equipment (such as pans, steamers and mixers) and serving utensils (such as scoops, ladles, and spoodles);
- crediting information for each meal component per serving (fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA); and
- nutrient analysis, i.e., nutrition information per serving.

For more information, refer to the ICN's *Recipe Standardization Guide for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Vendor-prepared Foods

CACFP facilities must ensure that local menus meet all requirements of the applicable CACFP meal patterns, regardless of how the food service program is operated. The meal pattern and crediting requirements are the same for all types of food service operations, including CACFP facilities that:

- self-operate their food service program;
- maintain a school food agreement with a board of education (child care centers only);
- contract with a food service management company (FSMC); or
- purchase vended meals.

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

Verifying Compliance of Menus and Recipes from Other Sources

Menus and recipes are often available from sources other than the USDA, such as websites, organizations, and other CACFP operations. When CACFP facilities use non-USDA menus and recipes, menu planners should verify the accuracy of their meal pattern contribution and crediting information. Any discrepancies must be corrected before these menus and recipes can be used for CACFP meals and snacks. CACFP facilities are responsible for ensuring that all their menus and recipes comply with the applicable CACFP meal patterns.

Resources for Standardized Recipes

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

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):
  https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/

- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (ICN):
  https://theicn.org/cnrb/

- Foods Made from Scratch (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs#Scratch

- 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/

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

- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf

- Standardized Recipe Form for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_cacfp.docx

- Standardized Recipes (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

- Weights and Measures ("Portion Control" section of CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/portion-control#WeightsMeasures

- Why Use Standardized Recipes? Fact Sheet (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/resources/527/food-service-management-skills/107291/why-use-standardized-recipes.pdf

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

5 — Overview of Crediting Commercial Processed Products

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

- combination foods that contain more than one meal component, e.g., pizza, chicken nuggets, cheese ravioli, hummus and other bean dips, fruit and yogurt smoothies, fruit-filled pastries, and trail mixes with dried fruits and nuts;
- foods with added liquids, binders, and extenders, e.g., deli meats, hotdogs, and sausages (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*);
- dried meat, poultry, and seafood products, e.g., jerky and summer sausages;
- foods that are alternate protein products (APPs) or contain APPs (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*);
- fruits and vegetables with added ingredients, e.g., breaded onion rings, french fries, hash brown patties, coleslaw, and dried soup mix; and
- whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched grain products that also contain noncreditable grains (e.g., oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch, including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours), such as muffins, crackers, and breakfast cereals.

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.

> CACFP facilities are ultimately responsible if a menu does not meet the meal pattern requirements. The USDA requires crediting documentation to demonstrate how food items meet the requirements of the meal pattern regulations.

Acceptable Documentation for Commercial Processed Products

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

1. **CN label:** The original CN label from the product carton, a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton, or 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 additional guidance, refer to section 6.

2. **PFS form:** A PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal component contained in one serving of the product. For additional guidance, refer to section 7.

This documentation must be maintained on file by the CACFP facility and available for the Administrative Review of the CACFP (refer to "Records Retention" in section 1).

> Commercial processed products that are not listed in the USDA's FBG cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks unless they have a CN label or PFS. For information on the FBG, refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1.

Difference Between CN Labels and PFS Forms

CN labels are the definitive documentation for verifying the meal pattern contribution of processed products. They provide a warranty against audit claims when the product is used according to the manufacturer's instructions. For detailed guidance on CN labels, refer to section 6.

PFS forms are different from CN labels. They do not provide the same guarantee of a product's meal pattern compliance.

A PFS is required for all commercial processed products without a CN label that are not found in the FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1). The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must verify the crediting information on PFS forms for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and snacks. For detailed guidance on PFS forms, refer to section 7.

Table 5-1. Comparison of CN labels and PFS forms

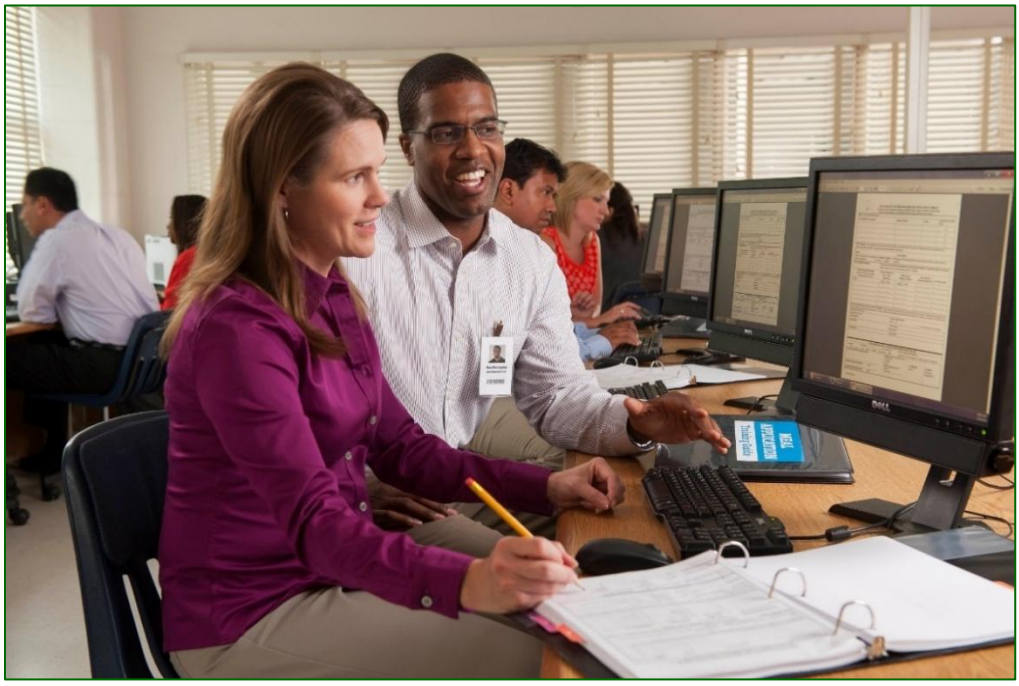
Requirements	CN label	PFS forms
Standard information required	Yes	No
Reviewed, approved, and monitored by the USDA	Yes	No
Includes USDA guarantee of meal component contribution for the Child Nutrition Programs	Yes	No
Distinct six-digit product identification number	Yes	No
CACFP facilities must check crediting information for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and snacks	No	Yes

Guidance and Training for Crediting Documentation

The requirements for crediting documentation for processed foods are defined in USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. Guidance on these requirements is provided in the CSDE's resources, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.* For more resources, refer to "Resources for CN labels" in section 6 and "Resources for PFS Forms" in section 7.

For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Accepting Product Documentation" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the documentation requirements is available in Module 4: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns*. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.



6 — Child Nutrition (CN) Labels

The CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs. The CN label on a product communicates how the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements. CN labeled products provide a warranty against audit claims when the product is prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The CN Labeling Program is operated by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in collaboration with the USDA's Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), and the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Seafood Inspection Program (NOAA SIP). Manufacturers participating in the CN Labeling Program must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet all requirements.

Eligible Products

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component in the USDA's meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. MMA include meat, poultry, and seafood; cheese; yogurt and soy yogurt; dry beans, peas and lentils; whole eggs; tofu; nuts and seeds; nut and seed butters; shelf-stable, dried and semi-dried meat, poultry, and seafood products; surimi seafood; and tempeh.

Examples of CN-labeled products made with MMA include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded seafood portions. Products contributing only to the grains, fruits, and vegetables components are not eligible for CN labels.

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

Benefits of Using CN-labeled Products

A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements when the processed product is used according to the manufacturer's instructions. CN labels also simplify cost comparisons of similar products.

Considerations for CN-labeled Products

The CN crediting statement declares the quantities of the creditable food items in a processed food that can be used to meet the meal pattern requirements. However, it does not provide any other guarantees. For example, the CN label does not indicate that the product:

- the product is healthier, more nutritious, or of a higher quality than a similar non-CN labeled product; or
- the product is safer to eat, or free of pathogens or allergens.

CACFP facilities must obtain additional information to determine if a CN-labeled product meets any preferred or required nutrition standards.

CN-Labeled Products Not Required

The USDA does not require that manufacturers make CN-labeled products or that schools and institutions participating in the Child Nutrition Programs purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the CACFP facility. CACFP facilities that require CN-labeled products must clearly state this information in their purchasing specifications.

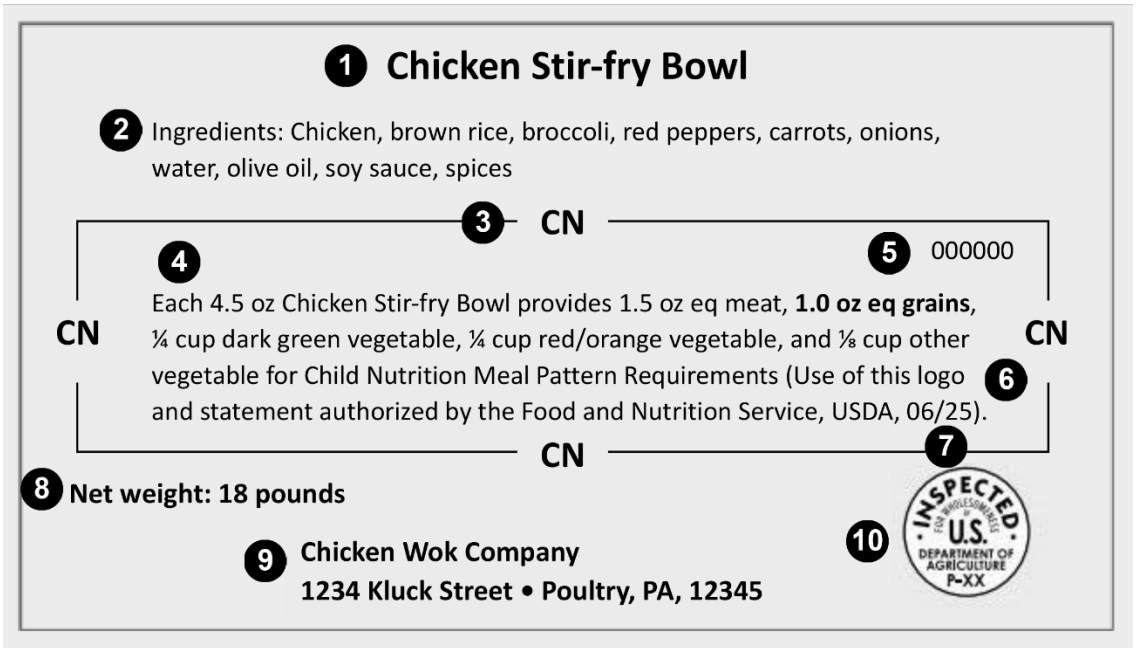
Identifying CN Labels

The CN label is found on the product packaging and will contain the required elements below.

- The federally required label featuring the product name, inspection legend, ingredient statement, name and address of manufacturer or distributor, and net weight.
- The CN logo, which is a distinct border with "CN" on each side surrounding the meal pattern contribution statement.
- The meal pattern contribution statement, which provides specific crediting information for the serving.
- The USDA FNS authorization statement: "Use of this logo and statement authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA." **Note:** In June 2026, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) changed to the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA). The old FNS wording will still be on CN labels while the USDA transitions these documents to the new name.
- A unique six-digit product identification number, which is assigned by the USDA's AMS.
- The month and year of AMS approval or the NOAA SIP approval, which is listed after the FNS authorization statement. The date is written using numbers to represent the month/year of final label approval (refer to "Dates on CN Labels" in this section).

Figure 6-1 shows an example of a CN label and the required elements. For training on CN labels, refer to Bite Size Module 8: Child Nutrition (CN) Labels of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns*.

Figure 6-1. Sample CN label



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

USDA's CN Label Verification System

The USDA's CN Label Verification System assists CACFP facilities and state agency reviewers with verifying the status of a CN label, such as the crediting information, CN number, and approval date, and the validity of a CN label copied with a watermark. For example, if a manufacturer has not updated the authorization date on the CN label, the CN Label Verification Report would include the updated "Valid Until" date of the label.

The CN Label Verification System publishes two monthly reports: 1) a list of products with valid CN labels (CN Label Verification Report); and 2) a list of contact information for manufacturers authorized to produce CN-labeled products (CN Label Manufacturers Report). These lists are available on the USDA's Child Nutrition Authorized Labels and Manufacturers webpage.

Dates on CN Labels

Once authorized by the USDA, CN labels are valid for five years under the condition that the manufacturer remains an authorized CN producer and the product formulation does not change. The date printed on the CN label is the original date of authorization or the date of the most recent authorization for use of that CN label. This is different from the "Valid Until" date shown on the CN Label Verification Report, which indicates when the current authority to use the label expires.

Manufacturers may choose to leave the original authorization date on the label when they receive reauthorization of their CN label so that label inventories do not go to waste. For example, if a CN label was originally authorized on February 15, 2024, it is valid until February 15, 2029. The manufacturer may resubmit the same product for reauthorization of the CN label. If reauthorization is granted, the "Valid Until" date is updated to five years from the most recent date of authorization on the CN Label Verification Report, but the date on the CN label may remain as "02/24."

Meal Pattern Contribution of CN Labels

CN labels indicate the meal pattern contribution of the MMA component and other meal components (such as grains, vegetables, and fruits) in one serving of the product. CN labels do not include milk component crediting. Guidance for each meal component on a CN label is summarized below.

MMA contribution

A CN-labeled product lists the serving's MMA contribution in oz eq.

Grains contribution

A CN-labeled product that contains a grain portion includes one of two crediting terms below indicate if the product credits as whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched.

- The term "oz eq grains" on the CN label indicates that the product meets the WGR criteria. WGR means that the grain portion of a product is at least 50 percent whole grain with the remaining grains being enriched.
- The term "oz eq grains (enriched)" means that the grain portion of the product is primarily made from enriched grains. These products credit toward the grains component but do not meet the WGR criteria.

The CACFP meal patterns require at least one serving of WGR grains per day.

Vegetables contribution

A CN-labeled product that contains vegetables lists the serving's contribution to the five vegetable subgroups in cups (dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other). The CACFP meal patterns do not require the vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of each vegetable subgroup. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

As of July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "legumes (beans and peas)" to "beans, peas, and lentils." Manufacturers may continue to use the term "legumes vegetables" on approved CN labels. At the time of application renewal or resubmission, manufacturers must update the term to "beans, peas, and lentils."

Fruits contribution

A CN-labeled product that contains fruit lists the serving's contribution to the fruits component in cups.

Acceptable Documentation

Acceptable and valid documentation for a CN label includes any of the documents below.

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. CN labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible.
3. A CN label copied with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor and the bill of lading (invoice).

CACFP facilities must maintain this documentation on file with all other menu records (refer to "Storing CN Labels" in this section). For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Accepting Product Documentation" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

CN labels with a watermark

Manufacturers may use a CN label with a watermark (refer to figure 6-2) when the CN logo and contribution statement are on product information other than the actual product carton. Manufacturers may provide a watermarked CN label during the bidding process. Original CN labels on product cartons will not have a watermark.

> Product information on a watermarked CN label can be changed. The USDA encourages CACFP facilities to verify that the watermarked CN label came from a product that was purchased and accurately reflects that product.

A watermarked CN label is acceptable documentation for the Administrative Review of the CACFP if it is attached to a bill of lading (invoice) that contains the product name and CN number (refer to figure 6-3). Valid and acceptable documentation for the watermarked CN label includes 1) a hard copy of the CN label copied with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor; or 2) an electronic copy of the CN label with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor. For more

information, refer to USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*.

Figure 6-2. Sample CN Label with a watermark

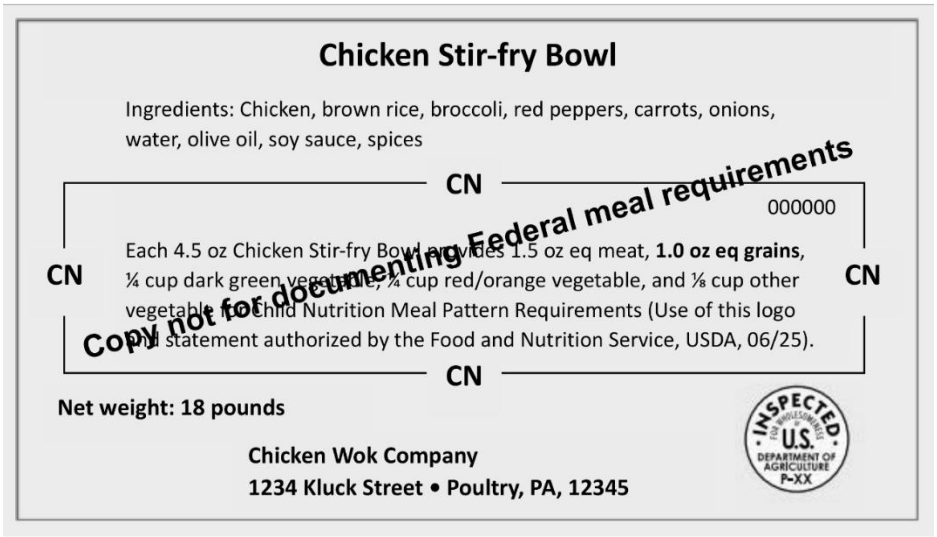
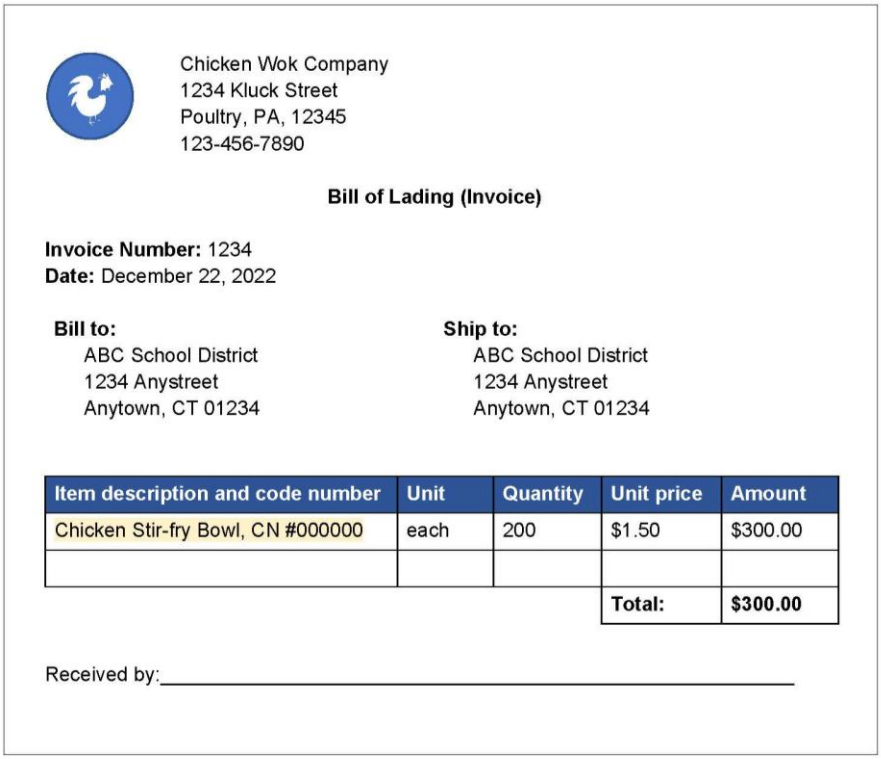


Figure 6-3. Sample bill of lading (invoice) for a CN-labeled product



Chicken Wok Company
1234 Kluck Street
Poultry, PA, 12345
123-456-7890

Bill of Lading (Invoice)

Invoice Number: 1234
Date: December 22, 2022

Bill to:
ABC School District
1234 Anystreet
Anytown, CT 01234

Ship to:
ABC School District
1234 Anystreet
Anytown, CT 01234

Item description and code number	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Amount
Chicken Stir-fry Bowl, CN #000000	each	200	$1.50	$300.00
			Total:	**$300.00**

Received by:_____

Resources for CN Labels

The resources below provide additional information on CN labels.

- Bite Size Module 8: Child Nutrition (CN) Labels (CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training

- Child Nutrition Authorized Labels and Manufacturers (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/authorized-labels-manufacturers

- Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Manual (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/manual

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

- CN Labeling Program (USDA webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling

- CN Labels and Product Formulation Statements (USDA Presentation): https://theicn.org/resources/930/march-2016/109876/manufacturers-product-formulation-statement-pfs03-31-16.pdf

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

- Food Buying Guide Module 3: Product Formulation Statements (PFS) (ICN): https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/139/fbg-module-3-product-formulation-statements-pfs

- Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/records_retention_cacfp.pdf

- 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

Additional crediting documentation resources are available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

7 — Product Formulation Statements

A product formulation statement (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. These forms generally include a detailed explanation of what the product contains and indicate the amount of each ingredient in the product by weight. Unlike CN labels, the information on PFS forms can vary among manufacturers because these forms are not reviewed, approved, or monitored by the USDA.

While only processed products that contain at least ½ oz eq of MMA are eligible for CN labels, a PFS can be used to document the meal pattern contribution for any processed food product. However, unlike CN labels, the information on PFS forms might vary among manufacturers because these forms are not reviewed, approved, or monitored by the USDA.

Figure 7-1 shows a sample PFS for commercial grilled chicken nuggets.

When a PFS is Required

CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer for all commercial processed products without a Child Nutrition (CN) label that are not listed in the USDA's FBG (refer to "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" in section 1).

To avoid additional burdens on food industry partners, CACFP facilities cannot request a PFS or additional crediting information when a valid CN label or watermarked CN label is provided.

> Processed foods without a PFS or CN label do not credit in reimbursable meals and snacks unless they are listed in the FBG.

Figure 7-1. Sample PFS for a commercial MMA product

ABC Chicken Company

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

Food manufacturers/vendors must: 1. Provide the following information on company letterhead signed by an official company representative. 2. Use the "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" (FBG) to fill out the tables below. 3. Provide a copy of the ingredient list from the product package.

Product Name: Grilled Chicken Nuggets Code No.: 123456

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

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

DESCRIPTION OF CREDITABLE MEAT INGREDIENT PER FBG[1]	OUNCES PER RAW PORTION OF CREDITABLE MEAT INGREDIENT[2] A	MULTIPLY	FBG YIELD[3] B	CREDITABLE AMOUNT A x B
Boneless chicken without skin	2.88 ounces	x	0.73	2.1 ounces
		x		
		x		
			C. Total Creditable Meats Amount (oz)	2.1 ounces

[1] Ingredient(s) listed must match a food item found in the FBG or be a similar item that may substitute if the exact item is not listed. When searching for the food item, select the food item that most closely matches 1) the initial state of the ingredient as it is added to the formulation shown in the "Food As Purchased, AP" description and 2) the final state of the ingredient as consumed in the final product (e.g., cooked, raw, drained) shown in "Serving Size per Meal Contribution" description. Select the food item that credits as 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq).

[2] Provide the amount in ounces of the ingredient in the form that matches "As Purchased" column in the FBG (typically raw/unprocessed).

[3] The yield must match the yield provided in the FBG for the ingredient listed in the first column; the FBG yield is shown in the "Servings per Purchase Unit" column or in the "Additional Information" column.

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

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

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

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

John Smith
Signature

President
Title

John Smith
Printed Name

1/14/2026
Date

123-456-7890
Phone Number

Verifying PFS Forms for Accuracy

CACFP facilities are responsible for verifying that the calculations and meal pattern contribution statement on a manufacturer's PFS are accurate. 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.

CACFP facilities must ensure that the PFS includes each required element and that the crediting calculations are correct. If any information is missing or incorrect, CACFP facilities must request a revised PFS from the manufacturer, with supporting documentation if needed.

> The USDA encourages careful review of product literature. CACFP facilities are accountable for ensuring that reimbursable meals and snacks meet the meal pattern requirements.

Required PFS Information

A PFS is an official certified document of the company. It must be on company letterhead and signed by a person of authority in the company, such as the quality control manager or the appropriate staff in nutrition or research and development. This signature may be handwritten, stamped, or electronic.

PFS forms must include specific elements to be acceptable as crediting documentation for the CACFP. The product's label with the ingredients statement must also be attached.

> PFS forms that do not contain the required elements cannot be accepted as crediting documentation. CACFP facilities must request a revised PFS from the manufacturer, with supporting documentation if needed.

Guidance on the required PFS elements is below.

1. **Product name:** The product name on the PFS must match or have a similar description to the name on the product label. Some examples are below.

Name on label	Name on PFS	Acceptable match?
Crispy breaded square chicken strips	Breaded chicken strips	Yes. The description is similar.
Crispy breaded square chicken strips	Chicken	No. “Chicken” does not indicate the type or form of the food, i.e., that the chicken is breaded or in the form of strips.
Early Harvest Green Beans	Beans	No. “Beans” does not sufficiently match the description on the product label because it does not indicate the type of beans.
Early Harvest Green Beans	Green beans	Yes. This matches the type of beans listed on the product label.

2. **Product code:** A unique identifier assigned by the manufacturer that may include numbers, letters, or a combination of both.

3. **Serving or portion size:** The serving size stated on the PFS should represent the amount of the product as purchased or ready for serving. This is the amount of food needed to provide the creditable amount stated on the PFS. The serving size may be stated as a weight or measure. Servings listed as measures should also include the weight of the measure. Some examples include one beef patty (2 ounces or 56 grams) and 2 pancakes (50 grams).

4. **Creditable ingredients:** The creditable ingredients must match or have a similar description to the ingredients listed on the product's label and a food item in the FBG.

    - The PFS must provide information about the creditable ingredients, including the specific type or form, e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dry.

    - The PFS must include the percentage of fat for ground beef or ground pork ingredients because this directly correlates to the cooking yield. The percentage of fat is not required for ground poultry, such as turkey and chicken.

    - If the manufacturer claims that the product provides a higher creditable amount than the amount listed in the FBG, the PFS must clarify all credited ingredients and demonstrate how the product provides that creditable amount according to the USDA's regulations, guidance, or policies.

5. **Information demonstrating meal pattern contribution:** The PFS must demonstrate how the creditable ingredients contribute to the USDA's meal patterns for the CACFP.

    - **Rounding rules:** The manufacturer's crediting calculations must follow the USDA's rounding rules for the meal pattern contribution. All creditable amounts must round down to the nearest creditable amount for the specific meal component, i.e., ¼ oz eq for MMA and grains and ⅛ cup for fruits and vegetables. For example, 1.49 oz eq of grains credit as 1.25 oz eq and 2½ tablespoons of vegetables credit as 2 tablespoons (⅛ cup).

    - **Product weight versus creditable amount:** The creditable amount cannot exceed the total weight of the product. For example, a hamburger that weighs 1½ ounces cannot credit as 2 oz eq of the MMA component.

    - **Visible meal components:** The creditable meal components in the finished product must be visible (recognizable). For example, to credit toward the MMA component, the product must have a visible meat or meat alternate (such as a sausage link, beans, cheese, or peanut butter) and the PFS must specify the method for crediting these items.

      Note: Unrecognizable ingredients do not credit. Some examples include peanut butter in smoothies, pureed tofu in soups, applesauce in muffins, and pureed fruits and vegetables foods other than smoothies. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that participants can easily identify the foods in reimbursable meals and snacks. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs, which includes the

goal of helping participants easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

- **Supporting documentation for APPs:** The PFS for products that contain APPs must provide supporting documentation to indicate that these ingredients meet the USDA's APP requirements (Appendix A of the CACFP Regulations). Acceptable documentation includes a CN label, or a PFS from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements (refer to the USDA's Sample APP Documentation). For additional guidance, visit the USDA's Alternate Protein Products webpage and refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

PFS forms that do not contain the required elements cannot be accepted as crediting documentation. For more detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> Manufacturers are responsible for ensuring that commercial products are processed to meet the meal pattern contribution stated on the PFS. CACFP facilities are responsible for verifying the PFS form's crediting information before serving the product and maintaining this documentation on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Guidance for Reviewing PFS Forms

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*.

Training on PFS forms is provided in Bite Size Module 9: Product Formulation Statements of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns*. Additional guidance on PFS forms is available in the "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Storing PFS Forms

CACFP facilities must maintain PFS forms and crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the CACFP (refer to "Records Retention" in section 1). This documentation must be current.

The CSDE recommends maintaining PFS forms in a designated binder or folder for easy reference. Electronic copies of PFS forms should be stored in an easily accessible electronic folder. This documentation must be available for the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

USDA PFS Forms

The USDA's Product Formulation Statement Guidance and Templates for Food Manufacturers/Industry webpage provides PFS templates for the MMA, grains, fruits, and vegetables components, and resources to assist CACFP facilities with evaluating the accuracy of a PFS. Manufacturers are not required to use the USDA forms. However, alternate PFS forms must include all required information from the USDA forms.

Manufacturers may modify the USDA's PFS forms for various types of commercial products. For example, a PFS for cheese pizza could include crediting information for the vegetables component (tomato sauce) in addition to the MMA component (cheese) and grains component (crust). Manufacturers may choose to use one PFS to document the crediting information for each meal component but must clearly identify how each component contributes to the meal pattern requirements. The PFS must include the information needed for CACFP facilities to determine how the product credits in the CACFP.

PFS forms for MMA

This PFS is used to document the oz eq of MMA in one serving of a commercial product.

- Alternate Protein Products (USDA webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cnp/food-industry-toolkit/app
- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-mma-template.pdf
- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs: Completed Sample (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-mma-sample.pdf

PFS forms for vegetables and fruits

This PFS is used to document the cups of fruits and vegetables in one serving of a commercial product.

- Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-pfs-vegfruit-template-cacfp.pdf

PFS forms for grains

This PFS is used to document the oz eq of grains in one serving of a commercial product.

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

Sample completed PFS forms for multiple component foods

These sample completed PFS forms provide examples for combination foods that contribute to more than one meal component.

- Sample PFS for Berry Smoothie (MMA and Fruit): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-smoothie-sample-pfs-mma-fruit.pdf
- Sample PFS for Breakfast Sandwich (Grains and MMA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-sample-pfs-egg-sandwich-mma-grains.pdf
- Sample PFS for Chili (MMA and vegetable Subgroups with Beans, Peas, Lentils as Vegetable): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-sample-pfs-chili-bpl-veg.pdf
- Sample PFS for Chili (MMA and Vegetable Subgroups with Beans, Peas, Lentils as MMA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/tn-sample-pfs-chili-bpl-mma.pdf

Resources for PFS Forms

The resources below provide guidance on using PFS forms in the CACFP.

- Bite Size Module 9: Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's training program, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training
- Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs
- Food Buying Guide Module 3: Product Formulation Statements (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/courses/139/fbg-module-3-product-formulation-statements-pfs

- Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement: Is it Acceptable? (ICN and USDA training): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtUo70IP9cc

- Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement: Is it Acceptable? Presentation Slides (ICN and USDA): https://theicn.org/resources/930/march-2016/109876/manufacturers-product-formulation-statement-pfs03-31-16.pdf

- Product Formulation Statement Guidance and Templates for Food Manufacturers/Industry (USDA webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cnp/food-industry-toolkit/pfs/guidance

- Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements

- Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/records_retention_cacfp.pdf

- 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 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

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

Additional crediting documentation resources are available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

9 — Nutrition Information

CACFP facilities must obtain nutrition information for all commercially processed foods served in reimbursable meals and snacks. If a processed product does not have a Nutrition Facts label, CACFP facilities are responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the manufacturer.

In addition to CN labels and PFS forms, nutrition information helps menu planners determine if certain commercial products credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. Nutrition information is also required to meet the USDA requirements to provide reasonable meal modifications for participants whose disability restricts their diet.

Determining Crediting Information

For many commercial processed products, CACFP facilities will need to review the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients to determine crediting information. The examples below indicate when nutrition information is required to document crediting information for foods and beverages.

- **Crediting fluid milk substitutes (nondairy beverages):** The USDA allows CACFP facilities to offer allowable fluid milk substitutes for non-disability reasons. Fluid milk substitutes are plant-based beverages like fortified soy milk that are intended to replace cow's milk. These fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (section 7 CFR 226.20(g)(3)(ii) of the CACFP regulations). Some fluid milk substitutes include this information on their Nutrition Facts label, while others require additional documentation from the manufacturer to determine compliance. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the CACFP or *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Adult Participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Crediting deli meats, hotdogs, sausages, and similar foods:** A PFS is required to determine crediting information for deli meats, hotdogs, sausages, and similar foods that contain binders and extenders but are not CN labeled. These foods credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula, not the serving weight. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces. The ingredients statement indicates if the product contains added liquids, binders, and extenders. This alerts the menu planner that a PFS is required to determine the crediting information for the product. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult*

Care Food Program and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Crediting tempeh:** To credit 1 ounce of tempeh as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, its ingredients must be limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs (refer to USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019, and SFSP 11-2019: *Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs*). If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS to document crediting information. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if tempeh products contain additional ingredients.

- **Crediting commercial tofu products:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, commercial tofu products and tofu and other soy products must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine if a tofu product meets this requirement. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

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

- **Crediting WGR commercial grain products for grades K-12:** To credit as a WGR food in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12, commercial grain products must meet three criteria: 1) the first ingredient (excluding water) is a whole grain; 2) any other creditable grains are enriched; and 3) the combined weight of noncreditable grains does not exceed the specified grains, i.e., no more than 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H (cereal grains). Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if a whole grain is the first ingredient and if the product contains any noncreditable grains. This alerts the menu planner if a PFS is required to determine if the product meets the WGR criteria. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Crediting WGR commercial grain products:** To credit as a WGR food, commercial grain products must contain a whole grain as the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if commercial products meet this requirement. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Crediting commercial smoothies:** Commercial smoothies that contain dietary supplements (such as whey protein powder) or herbal supplements (such as gingko biloba, ginseng, and echinacea) do not credit in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if commercial smoothies contain these ingredients. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

For guidance on how to review Nutrition Facts labels for commercial products, refer to the USDA's resource, *Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. For more information, visit the "Nutrition Information" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage and the "Food Labels" section of the CSDE's Nutrition Education webpage.

Making Meal Modifications

The USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b) and CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.20(g)) outline the required modifications for participants whose disability restricts their diet (disability reasons) and the optional modifications for participants who do not have a disability but have other special dietary needs (non-disability reasons). CACFP facilities will need to review the nutrition information for commercial products when planning meal modifications for participants with special dietary concerns, such as food allergies, lactose intolerance, and celiac disease. This information is required to modify meals and snacks, so they are safe for the participant to eat.

The USDA considers providing nutrition information for foods served in reimbursable meals and snacks to be part of reasonable meal modifications for participants whose disability restricts their diet. CACFP facilities are responsible for making nutrition information for school meals and snacks available to students, families, school nurses and other medical professionals, and appropriate school staff, as needed.

For information on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Nutrition Information for USDA Foods

The USDA's USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets webpage provides product information sheets for USDA Foods. These sheets include the product's description, crediting and yield information, culinary tips and recipes, food safety information, and a general Nutrition Facts label. However, they do not include a product-specific Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement.

For further processed USDA Foods, the nutrition information and ingredients for USDA direct delivery food items (brown box) may vary based on the vendor who received the bid. If CACFP facilities require product information for students with food allergies or other dietary needs, they must obtain product-specific information from the manufacturer.

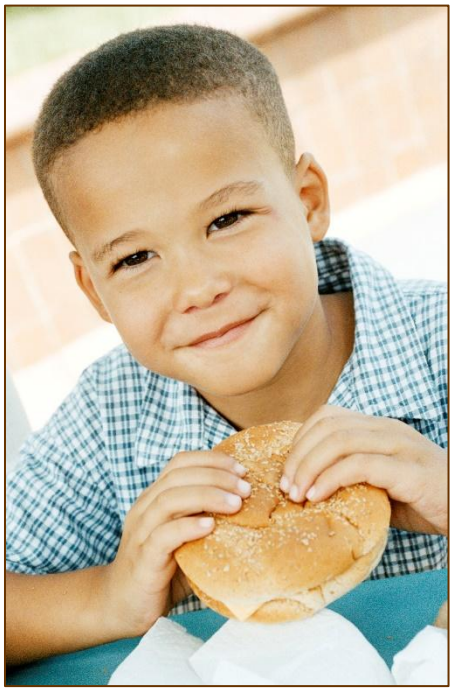
To find the nutrition information for USDA direct delivery food items, check the outside of the case or the inside packaging. If nutrition information is not available, check with the product's manufacturer. The processor's agreement with the Connecticut Food Distribution Program (FDP) requires that the processor must provide product nutrition information to CACFP facilities upon request and make this information available on their website. For additional assistance, contact the Connecticut FDP staff.

Resources for Nutrition Information

The resources below provide guidance on obtaining nutrition information.

- FoodData Central (USDA):
  https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/
- Food Labeling & Nutrition (FDA):
  https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition
- Food Labels (CSDE's Nutrition Education webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-labels
- Nutrient Analysis of Menus (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/nutrient-analysis-of-menus
- Nutrition Information (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
  https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/nutrition-information
- Product Specifications & Requirements for USDA Foods (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service):
  https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food/product-specs
- Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
  https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/app_requirements_cacfp.pdf
- USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets (USDA):
  https://www.fna.usda.gov/usda-fis/product-information-sheets

For additional guidance, visit the "Nutrient Analysis of Menus" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage



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 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

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

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

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

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

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

USDA Final Rule 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 Training Tools (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/trainers-tools

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

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

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

Glossary

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*.

at-risk afterschool care centers: The at-risk afterschool meals component of the CACFP provides reimbursement for snacks and suppers served to children through age 18 who are participating in afterschool programs in eligible (at-risk) areas. The program provides funds to public and private nonprofit (federal tax-exempt) and for-profit organizations, and schools, for nutritious snacks and suppers served as part of organized programs of care, which are known to help reduce or prevent children's involvement in high-risk behaviors. All snacks must meet the requirements of the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, visit to the USDA's CACFP Afterschool Programs webpage and the CSDE's CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers webpage.

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

CACFP facilities: Child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool programs, and adult day care centers that participate in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program.

CACFP meal patterns for children: The required meal components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. The CACFP meal patterns apply to children ages 1-12; children ages 15 and younger of migrant workers; children of any age with disabilities; and children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool care centers and emergency shelters. . For more information, visit the "CACFP Meal Patterns for Children" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

CACFP 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.

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).

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 Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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

cycle menu: A series of menus planned for a specific period, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help CACFP facilities to increase variety, control food cost, and save time. For more information, visit the "Cycle Menus" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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 for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Guide to Meal Modifications in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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.

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 Food and Drug Administration (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*.

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 participants who do not consume milk due to non-disability reasons. Fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* or *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons for Adult Participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

food item: A specific food offered within the 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 each meal or snack and each age group.

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

full serving: Refer to "full component" in this section.

full serving: Refer to "full meal component" in this section.

full-strength fruit or vegetable juice: An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state. 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 and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

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 does not exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce. 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, 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 participants 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*.

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

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.

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 National School Lunch Program (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.

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.

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, visit the "Medical Statements" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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.

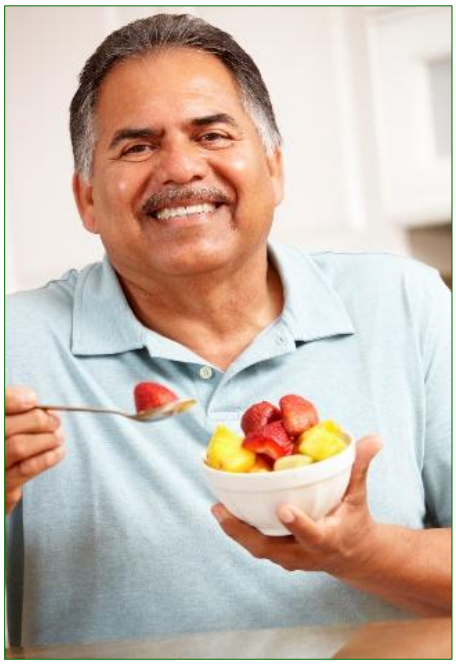
time/temperature control for safety food (TCS): Foods defined by the FDA Food Code that requires time/temperature control for safety (TCS) to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.

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

vegetables component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs that 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*.



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