

CACFP Updates February 2026



CACFP Updates is the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) electronic newsletter for sponsors of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), including child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers.

Note: This edition of CACFP Updates includes updated **meal pattern and crediting resources** for the CACFP. Changes to these documents include the USDA's revised product formulation statement (PFS) templates, and updated formatting, content, resources, and links. Please discard any previously downloaded versions and replace them with the revised versions.

This month's topics are listed below. Please review and share with appropriate staff members. For previous versions of CACFP Updates, visit the CSDE's [CACFP Updates](#) webpage.

- Revised USDA Product Formulation Statement (PFS) Templates and Samples
- Updated CSDE Resources for Meal Pattern Crediting Documentation
- Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the CACFP
- Updated CSDE Resource: Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the CACFP
- Updated CACFP Meal Patterns for Children
- Updated CACFP Menu Forms for Child Care Programs
- Updated CACFP Adult Meal Patterns
- Updated CACFP Menu Forms for Adult Day Care Centers
- Using Production Records in the CACFP
- Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component
- Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Fruits Component and Vegetables Component
- Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Grains Component

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Revised USDA Product Formulation Statement (PFS) Templates and Samples

The USDA recently revised their product formulation statement (PFS) templates and samples for food industry partners to demonstrate how a food product may contribute to the meal pattern requirements in the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP). Manufacturers may voluntarily provide a PFS at the request of program operators, but the USDA does not approve these forms.

The revised USDA PFS templates and samples add clarity and provide additional instructions for manufacturers, and update terminology to align with current CNP guidance. A new sample PFS for documenting how to credit a food product containing meats/meat alternates (MMA) is included with the revised PFS templates and existing samples for grains and vegetables. New samples for combination foods that contribute to more than one meal component are also available.

The PFS forms and samples are available on the USDA's [Manufacturer Documentation: Child Nutrition Labels and Product Formulation Statements](#) webpage. These forms can also be accessed from the "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

As a reminder, the USDA requires a PFS for all commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). CACFP sponsors must obtain and verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and snacks.

For detailed guidance on each required element and how to review a PFS, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), and visit the USDA's updated [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](#).

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Updated CSDE Resources for Meal Pattern Crediting Documentation

The CSDE revised the crediting documentation resources below to include the USDA's revised PFS templates, and updated formatting, content, resources, and links. The updated versions are dated January 2026.

- **CSDE Guide:** [Guide to Menu Documentation for the CACFP](#)
- [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#)
- [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the CACFP](#)
- [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#)
- [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the CACFP](#)

Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the CACFP

The CSDE revised the CACFP menu planning guides below to include the USDA's revised PFS templates, and updated formatting, content, resources, and links. The updated versions are dated January 2026.

CACFP Child Care and Adult Centers:

- [Guide to Menu Documentation for the CACFP](#)
- [Guide to Meeting the Crediting Requirements for the CACFP](#)

CACFP Child Care:

- [Guide to Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children](#)
- [Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Child Care Programs in the CACFP](#)

CACFP Adult Centers:

- [Guide to Meeting the CACFP Adult Meal Patterns](#)
- [Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Adult Day Care Centers in the CACFP](#)

In addition to the direct links above, these guides are available in the "[CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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Updated CSDE Resource: Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the CACFP

The CSDE's [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) is a list of resources and websites to assist child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers with meeting the USDA meal pattern and crediting requirements for the CACFP. The current version is dated February 2026.

Updated CACFP Meal Patterns for Children

Updated versions of the CACFP meal patterns for children (dated February 2026) are available in the "[CACFP Meal Patterns for Children](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The changes include updates to the "Menu Planning Notes" section (including information on optional fluid milk substitutes) and updated formatting, resources, and links.

- Breakfast: [CACFP Breakfast Meal Pattern for Children](#)
- Lunch/Supper: [CACFP Lunch/Supper Meal Pattern for Children](#)
- Snack: [CACFP Snack Meal Pattern for Children](#)

The meal patterns have not changed. Only the "Menu planning notes" section is revised.

Updated CACFP Menu Forms for Child Care Programs

Updated versions of the CACFP menu planning forms for child care programs (dated February 2026) are available under "[Menu Forms for Child Care Programs](#)" in the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. The changes include formatting only and a correction to one form, Menu Planning Form for At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18. The forms are unlocked to allow sponsors to enter information or adapt as needed.

At-risk Supper and Snack

- At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18: **Note:** This form updated to correct the portion size for milk to 1 cup for snack and supper.
- Two weeks of At-risk Snack for Ages 6-18
- Two-weeks of At-risk Supper for Ages 6-18

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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

Updated CACFP Adult Meal Patterns

Updated versions of the CACFP adult meal patterns (dated February 2026) are available in the [CACFP Adult Meal Patterns](#) section the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The changes include updates to the "Menu Planning Notes" section (including information on optional fluid milk substitutes) and updated formatting, resources, and links.

- Breakfast: [CACFP Breakfast Meal Pattern for Adult Day Care Centers](#)
- Lunch/Supper: [CACFP Lunch/Supper Meal Pattern for Adult Day Care Centers](#)
- Snack: [CACFP Snack Meal Pattern for Adult Day Care Centers](#)

The meal patterns have not changed. Only the "Menu planning notes" section is revised.

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Updated CACFP Menu Forms for Adult Day Care Centers

Updated versions of the CACFP menu planning forms for child care programs (dated February 2026) are available under "[Menu Forms for Adult Day Care Centers](#)" in the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. The changes include formatting only. The forms are unlocked to allow sponsors to enter information or adapt as needed.

- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack (AM or PM)
- Lunch and Snack
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack

Using Production Records in the CACFP

The CACFP regulations require that CACFP sponsors must maintain records to document the service of reimbursable meals and snacks to participants. Production records are not required except for CACFP child care centers that follow the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern. However, using production records is best practice because they:

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

Guidance on using production records is available in the CSDE's resource, [Using Production Records in the CACFP](#). The CSDE's template production records and instructions are available under "[Production Records](#)" in the "Menu Forms and Production Records" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The current versions are dated February 2026.

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Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component

The updated MMA crediting handouts below (dated January 2026) are available in the “[Meats and Meat Alternates](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The changes include the USDA’s revised PFS templates, and updated formatting, content, resources, and links.

- [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#)
- [Worksheet for Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#)
- [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP](#)

These resources apply to the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns.

Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Fruits Component and Vegetables Component

The updated crediting handouts for fruits and vegetables below (dated January 2026) are available in the “[Fruits](#)” and “[Vegetables](#)” sections of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The changes include the USDA’s revised PFS templates, and updated formatting, content, resources, and links.

- [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Juices in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Soups in the CACFP](#)
- [Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP](#)

These resources apply to the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns.

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Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Grains Component

The updated grain crediting handouts below (dated January 2026) are available in the “[Grains](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. The changes include the USDA’s revised PFS templates, and updated formatting, content, resources, and links.

- [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#)
- [Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#)
- [Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat \(RTE\) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP](#)
- [Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP](#)
- [Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the CACFP](#)
- [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP](#)
- [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#)
- [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the CACFP](#)

These resources apply to the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's [CACFP Updates](#) webpage or contact the [CACFP staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfpupdates/2026/cacfp_updates_2026_02.pdf.



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