

CACFP Updates April 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.

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 Resource: Crediting Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- USDA Resources for Family Style Meal Service with Children in the CACFP
- USDA Taste-testing Resources to Encouraging Children to Try New Foods

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Revised USDA Resource: Crediting Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

The USDA's revised [Crediting Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) (Crediting Handbook) is now available online. This updated resource helps CACFP operators serve meals and snacks that encourage healthy choices, healthy families, and healthy outcomes.

The Crediting Handbook is a technical assistance resource designed to assist CACFP operators in planning menus that meet the current USDA meal pattern requirements. The handbook is also an important supplemental companion to the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) for crediting foods and meal planning.

This resource provides information on the current CACFP meal patterns, crediting guidance for each meal component, a "Crediting in Action" section to practice crediting skills, and a list of helpful resources. The recent revision makes the guidance clear and consistent, adds new examples to assist with crediting, and uses wording that matches current policy. Some of the new additions are indicated below.

- "Crediting Tips" in each meal component section for easy-to-reference crediting highlights.
- The "Flowchart for Determining Creditable Grains" to help program operators quickly determine if a grain product is made of creditable grains.
- A quick reference crediting chart for meats/meat alternates provides crediting info for common food items.

USDA Resources for Family Style Meal Service with Children in the CACFP

The USDA's [Family Style Meal Service with Children in the CACFP](#) webpage includes resources to help CACFP child care programs prepare and support children, train staff, and meet CACFP meal pattern requirements to successfully serve meals family style. This webpage includes the [Family Style Meal Service With Children in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) training program, social media graphics, classroom posters, and a handout for families, [Serving Meals "Family Style."](#)

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USDA Taste-testing Resources to Encouraging Children to Try New Foods

The USDA has several resources to help CACFP sponsors conduct taste-tests and encourage children to try new foods.

- [Encourage Children to Try New Foods Video](#): This video shows how CACFP operators can foster children's interest in new foods.
 - [Tips for a "Choosy" Eater Handout for Families](#): This handout helps families encourage new foods at home. taste-testing materials:
 - [Taste-Testing Event Resources](#): Resources to promote taste-tests including posters, stickers, shareable graphics, ballots, and event ideas and tips. CACFP sponsors can also request free copies of the taste-testing materials below from Team Nutrition.
 - [Make Today a Try-Day! Stickers \(roll of 200\)](#)
 - [Make Today a Try-Day! Poster and Sticker Set](#)
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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_04.pdf.

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