CACFP Updates October 2026 Special Edition



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 special edition of CACFP Updates includes information on the CSDE's new training program, **Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns**, and updates to related resources. Please discard any previously downloaded versions of the indicated resources and replace them with the revised versions dated October 2026.

This edition'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.

- New CSDE Training Program Now Available, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns
- Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the CACFP (October 2026)
- Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the CACFP (October 2026)
- New Offer versus Serve (OVS) Guides for Adult Day Care Centers and At-risk Afterschool Programs
- On-Demand CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Webinar, Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the CACFP

New CSDE Training Program Now Available, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns

The CSDE's new CACFP training program is now available, Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns. Bite Size is a series of recorded modules that provide comprehensive guidance on complying with the CACFP meal patterns, crediting requirements, and meal service requirements for CACFP child care facilities (including child care and Head Start centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes) and adult day care centers.

Bite Size reflects the current CACFP meal pattern requirements of the CACFP regulations 7 CFR Part 226 and USDA legislation and policies for the CACFP, including the changes required by the USDA final rules, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (effective October 1, 2025) and Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs (effective June 8, 2026).

The modules include:

- 1: Introduction to Training
- 2: CACFP Meal Patterns for Children
- 3: Meal or No Meal Knowledge Check for CACFP Meal Patterns for Children
- 4: CACFP Adult Meal Patterns
- 5: Meal or No Meal Knowledge Check for CACFP Adult Meal Patterns
- 6: Menus, Production Records, and Standardized Recipes
- 7: Introduction to Crediting Documentation
- 8: Child Nutrition (CN) Labels
- 9: Product Formulation Statements
- 10: Milk Component
- 11: Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component
- 12: Vegetables Component
- 13: Fruits Component
- 14: Grains Component
- 15: Offering Water in the CACFP
- 16: Meal Service for Children
- 17: Offer versus Serve (OVS) at Breakfast in Adult Day Care Centers
- 18: Offer versus Serve (OVS) at Lunch and Supper in Adult Day Care Centers
- 19: Offer versus Serve (OVS) at Supper in At-risk Afterschool Programs

The Bite Size modules are housed in Qualtrics. Attendees must complete a brief registration to access each module.

For a description of each module, refer to the CSDE's resource, Description of Modules in the Bite Size Meal Pattern Training. For more information, visit the "Bite Size Meal Pattern Training" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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Note: Please contact Susan Fiore at susan.fiore@ct.gov to report any issues or technical glitches encountered while accessing the new training modules, or to suggest any edits.

Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the CACFP (October 2026)

Updated versions of the CSDE CACFP crediting resources are now available. These documents provide guidance on crediting specific foods in the CACFP meal patterns. The current versions are dated October 2026 and are available on the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Updates include links to the new Bite Size modules, updated content for consistency with Bite Size, and corrections to obsolete USDA links due to the June 2026 name change from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA).

Crediting Overview

- Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the CACFP
- Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the CACFP

Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component

The updated MMA crediting handouts below are available in the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- 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

Fruits Component and Vegetables Component

The updated crediting handouts for fruits and vegetables below are available in the "Fruits" and "Vegetables" sections of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- 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

Grains Component
The updated grain crediting handouts below are available in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- 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

Crediting Documentation
The updated crediting documentation handouts below are available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP
- Records Retention Requirements for the CACFP
- Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP
- Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP

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Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the CACFP (October 2026)

The CSDE revised the CACFP menu planning guides below to include links to the new Bite Size modules, updated content for consistency with Bite Size, and corrections to obsolete USDA links due to the June 2026 name change from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA).

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.

New Offer versus Serve (OVS) Guides for Adult Day Care Centers and At-risk Afterschool Programs

The CSDE's previous OVS handouts are now replaced with the new OVS guides below, dated October 2026.

- **Adults:** Guide to Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in Adult Day Care Centers in the CACFP
- **At-risk Afterschool Centers:** Guide to Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in At-risk Afterschool Programs in the CACFP

OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that applies only to adult day care centers and CACFP at-risk afterschool programs. OVS cannot be implemented in any other CACFP child care centers, institutions, or family day care homes.

OVS allows participants to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS cannot be implemented at snack. Adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs that choose to implement OVS must notify the CSDE and receive approval prior to beginning implementation.

On-Demand CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Webinar, Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the CACFP

USDA's Team Nutrition recently announced a new, on-demand CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays webinar, Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the CACFP, with accompanying training slides, and worksheet. These resources support CACFP operators in choosing foods that meet the current CACFP meal pattern requirements and demonstrate how these standards align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 and the accompanying Real Food Pyramid. They explain how to use the Nutrition Facts label to check serving sizes, added sugars, and sodium, so CACFP operators can select cereals, yogurts, and other foods that meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. The webinar also includes a frequently asked questions section addressing common questions related to using the Nutrition Facts label in the CACFP.

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_10_special_edition.pdf.

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