

# Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

## School Year 2023-24 (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has different requirements for the milk component in the meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP). The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

The milk requirements for grades K-12 are defined by the USDA regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210](#)), SBP ([7 CFR 220](#)), and SMP ([7 CFR 215](#)). The preschool meal patterns follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns. The milk requirements for the preschool meal patterns are defined by the USDA's Final Rule, *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*.

In addition to the USDA's meal pattern requirements, milk and nondairy milk substitutes sold to students in public schools must also comply with the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). These requirements apply to all milk and nondairy milk substitutes sold as part of and separately from school meals.



This document summarizes the federal and state milk requirements for each school nutrition program and provides applicable resources. School food authorities (SFAs) must ensure that milk meets the specific requirements for each school nutrition program and grade group. For additional guidance, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Operational Memorandum No. 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\), School Breakfast Program \(SBP\), Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program \(SMP\)](#).

For information on complying with the meal patterns for school nutrition programs, refer to the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#) and [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#). For information on crediting foods, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages.

This information is subject to change as the USDA continues to issue policy guidance on the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. The CSDE will notify SFAs when new guidance is available.

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

| Requirement                           | Grades K-12  |             | Preschoolers (Ages 1-4)  |             |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|
|                                       | NSLP, SBP, and SSO   | ASP and SMP | NSLP, SBP, and SSO   | ASP and SMP |
| <b>R1:</b><br>Fat Content             | Must be low-fat or fat-free milk.  | Same        | <b>Age 1:</b> Must be whole milk<br><b>Ages 2-4:</b> Must be low-fat milk or fat-free milk   | Same        |
| <b>R2:</b><br>Flavored Milk           | Allowed: Must be low-fat or fat-free milk.   | Same        | Not allowed. Milk must be unflavored.  | Same        |
| <b>R3:</b><br>Allowable Types of Milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored</li> <li>Fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional state requirements for milk in public schools:</b> In addition to the USDA’s requirements, milk sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of <a href="#">C.G.S. Section 10-221q</a>. Milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce. Products that meet the federal and state requirements are in <a href="#">list 16</a> on the CSDE’s <a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> webpage.</p> <p><b>Resources</b><br/> <a href="#">Beverage Requirements</a> (CSDE webpage)<br/> <a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> (CSDE webpage)</p> | Same        | <p><b>Age 1:</b> Must be unflavored whole milk.<br/> <b>Ages 2-4:</b> Must be unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Breastmilk meets the milk component and may be served in place of fluid milk. A written request is not required.</p> <p><b>Additional state requirements for milk in public schools:</b> In addition to the USDA’s requirements, milk sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of <a href="#">C.G.S. Section 10-221q</a>. Milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce. Products that meet the federal and state requirements are in <a href="#">list 16</a> on the CSDE’s <a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> webpage.</p> <p><b>Resources</b><br/> <a href="#">Beverage Requirements</a> (CSDE webpage)<br/> <a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> (CSDE webpage)<br/> <a href="#">Serving Milk in the CACFP</a> (USDA)</p> | Same        |

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

| Requirement   | Grades K-12   |  | Preschoolers (Ages 1-4)   |             |
|---|---|--|---|-------------|
|   | NSLP, SBP, and SSO  | ASP and SMP  | NSLP, SBP, and SSO  | ASP and SMP |
| <b>R4:</b><br>Variety of Milk   | <b>Required:</b> SFAs must serve at least two different choices of milk. At least one choice must be unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk.   | <b>Not required:</b> SFAs may serve one type of allowable milk to all grades, such as unflavored low-fat milk. | <b>Not required:</b> SFAs may serve one type of allowable milk to each age group. For example, unflavored whole milk for age 1, unflavored low-fat milk for ages 2-5, and unflavored low-fat milk for ages 6 and older.   | Same        |
| <b>R5:</b><br>Nondairy Milk Substitutes for Children without a Disability | SFAs may choose to serve nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) to children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The child’s parent or guardian must submit a written request for a nondairy milk substitute. The nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes are defined by the NLSP regulations (7 CFR 210.10). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, <i>Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs</i> .<br><br><b>Note:</b> SFAs cannot offer any other beverages (including water and juice) in place of milk for reimbursable meals. | Same   | SFAs may choose to serve nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) to children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The child’s parent or guardian must submit a written request for a nondairy milk substitute. The nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes are defined by the NLSP regulations (7 CFR 210.10). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, <i>Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs</i> .<br><br><b>Note:</b> SFAs cannot offer any other beverages (including water and juice) in place of milk for reimbursable meals. | Same        |

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

| Requirement  | Grades K-12  |             | Preschoolers (Ages 1-4)  |             |
|--|--|-------------|--|-------------|
|  | NSLP, SBP, and SSO   | ASP and SMP | NSLP, SBP, and SSO   | ASP and SMP |
| <p><b>R5:</b><br/> <b>Nondairy Milk Substitutes for Children Without a Disability,</b><br/> <i>continued</i></p> | <p><b>Additional state requirements for nondairy milk substitutes in public schools:</b> In addition to the USDA’s requirements, nondairy milk substitutes sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. <a href="#">Section 10-221q</a>. Nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners or more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Products that meet federal and state requirements are included in <a href="#">list 17</a> on the CSDE’s <a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> webpage.</p> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs</a> (CSDE)</p> <p><a href="#">Beverage Requirements</a> (CSDE webpage)</p> <p><a href="#">Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA’s Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs</a> (CSDE)</p> <p><a href="#">Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs</a> (CSDE)</p> <p><a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> (CSDE webpage)</p> <p><a href="#">USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010, and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions</a></p> | <p>Same</p> | <p><b>Additional state requirements for nondairy milk substitutes in public schools:</b> In addition to the USDA’s requirements, nondairy milk substitutes sold in public schools (as part of and separately from school meals) must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. <a href="#">Section 10-221q</a>. Nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners or more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Products that meet federal and state requirements are included in <a href="#">list 17</a> on the CSDE’s <a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> webpage.</p> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the USDA School Nutrition Programs</a> (CSDE)</p> <p><a href="#">Beverage Requirements</a> (CSDE webpage)</p> <p><a href="#">Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA’s Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs</a> (CSDE)</p> <p><a href="#">Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs</a> (CSDE)</p> <p><a href="#">List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages</a> (CSDE webpage)</p> <p><a href="#">USDA Memo CACFP 17-2016: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the CACFP, Q&amp;As</a></p> <p><a href="#">USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010, and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions</a></p> | <p>Same</p> |

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

## Regulations and Policy

Final Rule (77 FR 4088): Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs):

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

Final Rule (81 FR 24347): CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516>

National School Lunch Program Regulations (7 CFR 210):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210>

Program Legislation and Regulations (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/program-legislation-regulations>

School Breakfast Program Regulations (7 CFR 220):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220>

Special Milk Program Regulations (7 CFR 215):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-215>

USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/flexibility-co-mingled-preschool-meals-questions-and-answers>

USDA Memo SP 38-2019: Meal Requirements under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Q&As for Program Operators:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/meal-requirements-under-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program>

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

## Websites and Resources

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASP\\_Handbook.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASP_Handbook.pdf)

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM06-19.pdf>

Food Buying Guide Section 5: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Milk Component (USDA):

[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section5\\_Milk.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section5_Milk.pdf)

Food Buying Guide Section 5: Yield Table for Milk (USDA):

[https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA\\_FBG\\_Section5\\_MilkYieldTable.pdf](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section5_MilkYieldTable.pdf)

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs: Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_Preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf)

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Milk>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program/Documents#MilkK12>

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs

Milk Component for Preschoolers (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Milk>

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Policy Memos for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources\\_Preschool\\_Meal\\_Patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources_Preschool_Meal_Patterns.pdf)

Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Seamless-Summer-Option-SSO-of-the-NSLP>

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Special Milk Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Milk-Program>

# Comparison of Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages or contact the [school nutrition programs 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/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison\\_Milk\\_Requirements\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison_Milk_Requirements_SNP.pdf).

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

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

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

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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