Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool (ages 1-5) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP follows the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns.

For information on the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage, Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage, and the "Meal Patterns and Crediting" section of the ASP webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.



Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Contents

Definition of Breakfast Cereals 3
Overview of Crediting Requirements 3
- Meal patterns for grades K-12 3
- Preschool meal patterns 5
- Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the preschool meal patterns 5
- Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the K-12 meal patterns 3

Whole grain-rich (WGR) Requirement 6
- Weekly WGR requirement and limit for enriched grains for K-12 menus 6
- WGR requirement for preschool menus 7

Limit for Added Sugars 7
Methods to Determine Added Sugars per Serving 7
- Method 1: USDA's added sugars limit chart 7
- Method 2: Calculation of grams of added sugars per serving 8

Creditable Breakfast Cereals 10
WGR Breakfast Cereals 10
- WGR criteria for breakfast cereals in K-12 menus 10
- WGR criteria for breakfast cereals in preschool menus 11
- Crediting example for WGR breakfast cereals 11

Enriched Breakfast Cereals 12
- Crediting enriched breakfast cereals in K-12 menus 12
- Crediting enriched breakfast cereals in preschool menus 12
- Crediting examples for enriched breakfast cereal 12

Fortified Breakfast Cereals 13
- Crediting fortified breakfast cereals in K-12 menus 13
- Crediting fortified breakfast cereals in preschool menus 13
- Crediting examples for fortified breakfast cereals 14

Bran and Germ 15
Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals 15
- Guidance for PFS forms 16
- Storing crediting documentation 16

Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals 17
- Table 2. Required quantities of breakfast cereals for the school nutrition programs 17

Resources 18

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Definition of Breakfast Cereals

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations (21 CFR 170.3(n)(4)) define breakfast cereals as ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola) and instant and regular hot cereals (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). RTE breakfast cereals can be eaten as sold and are typically fortified with vitamins and minerals.

Overview of Crediting Requirements

School food authorities (SFAs) may serve creditable breakfast cereals as the grains component at any meal or afterschool snack. The crediting requirements for breakfast cereals in the meal patterns for grades K-12 are different from the preschool meal patterns and are summarized below. In addition to meeting the crediting requirements, the serving must provide the minimum required volume or weight (refer to "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

Breakfast cereals must meet the three criteria below to credit as the grains component in the meal patterns for grades K-12.

1. The cereal must be whole grain-rich (WGR), enriched, or fortified.
2. Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion. Examples of noncreditable grains include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For a detailed list of noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Grains for the School Nutrition Programs and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards*.
3. Added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. document.

These criteria apply to RTE and cooked breakfast cereals. CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to verify that all breakfast cereals meet these criteria (refer to "Storing crediting documentation" in this document").

Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the K-12 meal patterns

Menu planners may use the steps below to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the K-12 meal patterns.

1. Does the serving meet the added sugars limit of no more than 6 grams per dry ounce?
    - Yes: Go to step 2.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.

2. Is the first ingredient a whole grain?
    - Yes: Go to step 6.
    - No: Go to step 3.

3. Is the first ingredient an enriched grain, bran, or germ?
    - Yes: Go to step 6.
    - No: Go to step 4.

4. Does the breakfast cereal's product formulation statement (PFS) indicate that creditable grains are the primary ingredient by weight? Refer to "Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: Go to step 6.
    - No: Go to step 5.

5. Is the breakfast cereal fortified with vitamins and minerals? Refer to "Fortified breakfast cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: Go to step 6.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.

6. Does the breakfast cereal contain any noncreditable grains? Refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Grains for the School Nutrition Programs and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards*.
    - Yes: Go to step 7.
    - No: The cereal is creditable.

7. Does the breakfast cereal's product formulation statement (PFS) indicate that the total weight of all noncreditable grains does not exceed 6.99 grams?
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.

To credit as a WGR food in the meal patterns for grades K-12, RTE and cooked breakfast cereals must meet additional requirements (refer to" WGR criteria for breakfast cereals in K-12 menus" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Preschool Meal Patterns

Breakfast cereals must meet the two criteria below to credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. The limit for noncreditable grains does not apply.

1. A creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient or the cereal must be fortified.
2. Added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.

Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the preschool meal patterns

Menu planners may use the steps below to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the preschool meal patterns.

1. Does the serving meet the added sugars limit of no more than 6 grams per dry ounce?
    - Yes: Go to step 2.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.
2. Is the first ingredient a whole grain?
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: Go to step 3.
3. Is the first ingredient an enriched grain, bran, or germ?
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: Go to step 4.
4. Does the breakfast cereal's product formulation statement (PFS) indicate that creditable grains are the primary ingredient by weight? Refer to "Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: Go to step 5.
5. Is the breakfast cereal fortified with vitamins and minerals? Refer to "Fortified breakfast cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.

To credit as a WGR food in the preschool meal patterns, RTE and cooked breakfast cereals must meet additional requirements (refer to" WGR criteria for breakfast cereals in preschool menus" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Whole grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

The NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns require minimum servings of WGR menu items. This requirement and the WGR criteria are different for the meal patterns for grades K-12 and the preschool meal patterns.

Weekly WGR requirement and limit for enriched grains for K-12 menus

WGR foods are required in the meal patterns for grades K-12. At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack must be WGR. This percentage is based on the total ounce equivalents (oz eq) of grains offered during the week and is calculated separately for each weekly breakfast, lunch, and snack menu.

Grains that are not WGR must be enriched and cannot exceed 20 percent of the grains offered each week. Enriched breakfast cereals (including fortified breakfast cereals that are not WGR) count with all other enriched grains toward this weekly limit.

> Foods are WGR foods if they contain at least 50 percent whole grains and meet the limit for noncreditable grains. Noncreditable grains for breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.



WGR requirement for preschool menus

The preschool meal patterns require at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For guidance on menu planning considerations for the preschool WGR requirement, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

The WGR criteria for the preschool meal patterns are different from the WGR criteria for the meal patterns for grades K-12 because they do not require a limit for noncreditable grains. Breakfast cereals that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 will meet the preschool WGR criteria. However, breakfast cereals that meet the preschool WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Limit for Added Sugars

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires a limit for added sugars in breakfast cereals. RTE and cooked breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. This limit applies to all school nutrition programs and grade groups (preschool and grade K-12).

Methods to Determine Added Sugars per Serving

SFAs may use any of the methods below to determine if breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars.

Method 1: USDA's added sugars limit chart

Common serving sizes of breakfast cereals and the corresponding limit for grams of added sugars per serving are provided in the Institute of Child Nutrition's resource for the meal patterns for grades K-12, *Nutrition Standards for Added Sugars: Breakfast Cereals Fact Sheet*, and the USDA's resource for the preschool meal patterns, *Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. SFAs may use these charts to compare the added sugars per serving in the Nutrition Facts label with the added sugars limit for the specific serving weight of cereal.

Method 2: Calculation of grams of added sugars per serving

The steps below show how to calculate the grams of added sugars per serving based on the ounces or grams of the breakfast cereal's serving size. SFAs may use either calculation method to document that a breakfast cereal meets the added sugars limit.

Steps for serving size in ounces

A breakfast cereal meets the limit for added sugars if it does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

1. List the grams (g) of added sugars per serving from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 12 grams
2. List the serving size in ounces (oz) from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 2 ounces
3. Divide the grams of added sugars per serving (from step 1) by the ounces of the serving size (from step 2).
    - 12 grams divided by 2 ounces = **6 grams** of added sugars per ounce
4. Does the serving meet the limit of no more than 6 grams of added sugars per ounce?

    ☑ Yes
    ☐ No

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size:	1½ cups (2 ounces)
Servig per Container:	1
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	**220**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3 g	4%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 320mg	14%
Total Carbohydrates 47g	17%
Dietary Fiber 3g	10%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 12g Added Sugars	23%
Protein 3 g	

This cereal meets the limit for added sugars. To credit in the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs, this cereal must also meet the applicable meal pattern requirements for creditable grains and provide the required weight or volume (refer to "Overview of Crediting Requirements" and "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Steps for serving size in grams

A breakfast cereal meets the limit for added sugars if it does not exceed 0.212 gram of added sugars per gram of cereal. This is the gram equivalent of no more than 6 grams of added sugars per ounce (28.35 grams).

1. List the grams (g) of added sugars per serving from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 4 grams
2. List the serving size in grams from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 28 grams
3. Divide the grams of added sugars per serving (from step 1) by the grams of the serving size (from step 2).
    - 4 grams divided by 28 grams = **0.143 gram** of added sugars per gram of cereal
4. Does the serving meet the limit of no more than 0.212 gram of added sugars per gram of cereal?

    ☑ Yes
    ☐ No

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size:	¾ cup (28 g)
Servig per Container:	**about 1**
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	**110**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0.5 g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 140mg	2%
Potassium 35mg	6%
Total Carbohydrates 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	8%
Protein 3 g	

This cereal meets the limit for added sugars. To credit in the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs, this cereal must also meet the requirements for creditable grains and provide the required weight or volume (refer to "Creditable grains" and "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Creditable Breakfast Cereals

The three types of creditable RTE and cooked breakfast cereals for the school nutrition programs include whole grain-rich (WGR) breakfast cereals, enriched breakfast cereals, and fortified breakfast cereals. Crediting guidance and examples for each type of breakfast cereal are indicated below.

> Menu planners must check the ingredients statement and Nutrition Facts label to determine if breakfast cereals meet these crediting criteria. The CSDE recommends checking the cereal's added sugars content first, before determining if the cereal contains creditable grains. Breakfast cereals that exceed the limit for added sugars do not credit in the school nutrition programs.

WGR Breakfast Cereals

WGR breakfast cereals include cereals that are 100 percent whole grain and cereals that contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel (starchy endosperm, fiber-rich bran, and nutrient-rich germ) after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. For information on identifying whole grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

The WGR criteria for breakfast cereals are different for the meal patterns for grades K-12 and the preschool meal patterns. RTE and cooked breakfast cereals also have different WGR criteria. These requirements are summarized below.

WGR criteria for breakfast cereals in K-12 menus

The WGR criteria below apply to breakfast cereals in the meal patterns for grades K-12.

- **WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals, e.g., oatmeal (including regular and instant):** 1) The cereal is 100 percent whole grain or contains a blend of whole and enriched grains that is at least 50 percent whole grain; 2) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion (½ cup cooked or 28 grams dry); and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.

- **WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals:** 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; 2) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion; and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Fortification is not required for RTE breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain.

These criteria are stricter than the preschool meal patterns. Breakfast cereals that meet the WGR criteria for the meal patterns for grades K-12 will meet the preschool WGR criteria.

WGR criteria for breakfast cereals in preschool menus

The WGR criteria below apply to breakfast cereals in the preschool meal patterns.

- **WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals:** 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain; 2) the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable; and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.

- **WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals:** 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Fortification is not required for 100 whole grain cereals.

Breakfast cereals that meet the preschool WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. Menu planners must determine if these cereals meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 before serving them to both grade groups.

Crediting example for WGR breakfast cereals

Breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain credit as WGR foods. A breakfast cereal that is 100 percent whole grain contains only whole grains and will list a whole grain as the first ingredient. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a whole-grain breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Whole grain rolled oats, sugar, natural flavors, salt.

  This cooked cereal is 100 percent whole grain because the first and only grain ingredient (whole grain rolled oats) is a whole grain. This breakfast cereal credits as a WGR food in all school nutrition programs.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Enriched Breakfast Cereals

Enriched breakfast cereals contain five vitamins and minerals added in amounts required by the FDA to replace some of the nutrients lost during processing. The enrichment nutrients include thiamin (vitamin B_1, thiamin mononitrate, or thiamin hydrochloride), riboflavin (vitamin B_2); niacin (vitamin B_3 or niacinamide), folic acid (folate), and iron (reduced iron, ferrous sulfate, or ferric orthophosphate). A breakfast cereal is enriched if the food is labeled as "enriched" or an enriched grain is the first ingredient.

Crediting enriched breakfast cereals in K-12 menus

To credit in the meal patterns for grades K-12, enriched breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6.99 grams of noncreditable grains per portion. Enriched breakfast cereals count with all other enriched grains toward the 20 percent weekly limit for enriched grains at breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack (refer to "Weekly WGR requirement and limit for enriched grains for K-12 menus" in this document).

Crediting enriched breakfast cereals in preschool menus

Enriched breakfast cereals credit in the preschool meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack. The limit for noncreditable grains does not apply to the preschool meal patterns.

Crediting examples for enriched breakfast cereal

The ingredients statement below shows an example of an enriched breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Puffed rice, ferrous sulfate (a source of iron), niacinamide, citric acid, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid.

  This cereal is enriched because the ingredients statement lists the five enrichment nutrients (ferrous sulfate, niacinamide, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, and folic acid). It does not contain any noncreditable grains. This breakfast cereal credits in all school nutrition programs as an enriched grain and counts toward the weekly limit for enriched grains in the breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack meal patterns for grades K-12.

For information on identifying enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Fortified Breakfast Cereals

Fortified breakfast cereals contain nutrients added by the manufacturer that were not originally present, or that are at higher levels than originally present. Manufacturers may choose which additional nutrients to use for fortification. Fortified breakfast cereals typically contain the five enrichment nutrients plus other vitamins and minerals that do not exist naturally in grains.

Different cereal brands may list different fortification nutrients. The USDA does not specify a minimum number of nutrients or a minimum percentage for the level of fortification for breakfast cereals in the Child Nutrition Programs. A fortified breakfast cereal is not required to be enriched.

A breakfast cereal is fortified if the food is labeled as "fortified" or the ingredients statement lists the vitamins and minerals added to the product. These nutrients are typically listed after "Vitamins and Minerals."

If the ingredients statement does not list any vitamins and minerals, the breakfast cereal is not fortified. Breakfast cereals that are not fortified must contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient (or the greatest ingredient by weight).

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the cereal contains more than one creditable grain, the SFA must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer. The PFS must indicate that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. For more information, refer to "Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in this document.

Crediting fortified breakfast cereals in K-12 menus

To credit in the meal patterns for grades K-12, fortified breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6.99 grams of noncreditable grains per portion. Fortified breakfast cereals that are not WGR count with all other enriched grains toward the weekly limit for enriched grains in the breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack meal patterns for grades K-12 (refer to "Weekly WGR requirement and limit for enriched grains for K-12 menus" in this document).

Crediting fortified breakfast cereals in preschool menus

Fortified breakfast cereals credit in the preschool meal patterns for breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack. The limit for noncreditable grains does not apply to the preschool meal patterns.

Crediting examples for fortified breakfast cereals

The ingredients statements below show some examples of fortified breakfast cereals.

- Ingredients: Milled corn, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Iron, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate, ascorbic acid), niacinamide, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B12.

  This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (listed after "Vitamins and Minerals") but it is not WGR because milled corn is not a whole grain. It does not contain any noncreditable grains. This cereal credits as an enriched grain in all school nutrition programs and counts toward the weekly limit for enriched grains in the breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack meal patterns for grades K-12.

- Ingredients: Whole-grain wheat, raisins, wheat bran, sugar, brown sugar syrup, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Potassium chloride, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin B_6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), zinc oxide, vitamin B_2 (riboflavin), vitamin B_1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B_{12}.

  This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (listed after "Vitamins and Minerals"). It is WGR because whole-grain wheat is the first ingredient, and it does not contain any noncreditable grains. This cereal credits as a WGR food in all school nutrition programs.



Bran and Germ

Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains. Bran is the seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Some examples include oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran. Germ (such as wheat germ) is the vitamin-rich embryo of the grain kernel. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a bran breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Wheat bran, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Calcium carbonate, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid), reduced iron, niacinamide, vitamin B_6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B_2 (riboflavin), folic acid, vitamin B_1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B_{12}, vitamin D.

  This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (listed after "Vitamins and Minerals") but it is not WGR because wheat bran credits the same as enriched grains. It does not contain any noncreditable grains. This cereal credits as an enriched grain in all school nutrition programs and counts toward the weekly limit for enriched grains in the breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack meal patterns for grades K-12.

Bran cereals that are not WGR count with all other enriched grains toward the weekly limit for enriched grains in the breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack meal patterns for grades K-12 (refer to "Weekly WGR requirement and limit for enriched grains for K-12 menus" in this document).

Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals

SFAs must be able to document that all breakfast cereals served in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks meet the requirements for the grains component, including the limit for added sugars. A PFS from the manufacturer is required if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if the product meets the applicable crediting or WGR criteria for each meal pattern. For guidance on when a PFS is required and the information it must include, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*

The USDA requires that SFAs must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the breakfast cereal in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Guidance for PFS forms

For information on the requirements for PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*, and USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. Additional information and resources are available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

For guidance on reviewing PFS forms, 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 School Nutrition Programs*.

Training on the requirements for 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*.

Storing crediting documentation

SFAs must maintain all PFS forms and other crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the school nutrition programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs*. This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.



Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals

Cooked breakfast cereals (regular and instant) are in group H and cold RTE breakfast cereals are in group I of the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (known as Exhibit A). The Exhibit A oz eq quantities for RTE and cooked breakfast cereals are the same for all school nutrition programs. The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is ¼ oz eq.

The table below summarizes the required quantities for 1 oz eq and ½ oz eq. The required preschool meal pattern serving for the grains component is ½ oz eq.

Cereal grains in group H (e.g., oatmeal) typically credit based on the cooked serving, but menu planners may choose to use the dry uncooked weight. The serving for RTE cereals in group I is based on weight or volume, whichever is less. If the appropriate volume of cereal weighs less than 1 ounce (28 grams), it still credits as 1 oz eq. For example, 1 cup of flaked cereal that weighs 26 grams credits as 1 oz eq.

Table 2. Required quantities of breakfast cereals for the school nutrition programs

Exhibit A group	Type of cereal	1 oz eq =	½ oz eq =
H	Cooked hot	½ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) dry	¼ cup cooked or ½ ounce (14 grams) dry
I	RTE flakes or rounds	1 cup or 1 ounce	½ cup or ½ ounce
I	RTE puffed	1¼ cups or 1 ounce	¾ cup or ½ ounce
I	RTE granola	¼ cup or 1 ounce	⅛ cup or ½ ounce

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_snp.pdf

CACFP Best Practices (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp

Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/calculate_wgr_percentage_snp.pdf

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp.pdf

Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs

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

Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_enriched_grains_snp.pdf

Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_snp.pdf

Exhibit A Grains Tool of the Food Buying Guide (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/Exhibit_A_Grain_Requirements_For_Child_Nutrition_Programs.pdf

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp.pdf

Grains Component (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/grains

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/wgr_requirement_cacfp.pdf

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/guide_wgr_requirement_snp_grades_k-12.pdf

Instructions for the Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/worksheet_calculate_wgr_percentage_snp_grades_k-12_instructions.pdf

Noncreditable Grains for the School Nutrition Programs and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_grains_snp.pdf

Nutrition Standards for Added Sugars: Breakfast Cereals Fact Sheet (Institute of Child Nutrition):
https://theicn.org/resources/2582/sugar-reduction-for-schools-fact-sheets/127722/nutrition-standards-for-added-sugars-breakfast-cereals-fact-sheet.pdf

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 School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/records_retention_snp.pdf

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 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 School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

What's in a Meal Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module8

What's in a Meal Module 13: Grains Component (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module13

What's in a Meal Module 14: Whole Grain-rich Requirement (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module14

What's in a Meal Module 15: Grains Ounce Equivalents (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module15

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage 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/credit_cereals_snp.pdf.

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2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
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