

Crediting Soups in the School Nutrition Programs

School Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025)

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), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For information on the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements for grades K-12, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on the preschool meal pattern and crediting requirements, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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Meal Pattern Contribution of Commercial Soups

Commercial vegetable soups credit based on the yields in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). One cup of an allowable commercial vegetable soup credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component ("additional" vegetables). One cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup).

Effective with school year 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the name of the previous "legumes (beans and peas)" vegetable subgroup to the "beans, peas, and lentils" vegetable subgroup.

Table 1 shows the types of commercial vegetable soups that credit as the vegetables component based on the FBG. The 1-cup serving refers to the amount of the ready-to-eat cooked soup, e.g., heated canned or frozen ready-to-serve soup, reconstituted dried soup, and reconstituted condensed soup.

Table 1. Allowable commercial vegetable soups

Vegetable soups 1 cup = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of additional vegetables	Bean, pea, and lentil soups 1 cup = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of beans, peas, and lentils subgroup
Minestrone soup	Bean soup, e.g., black bean, navy bean, and mixed bean
Tomato soup	Pea soup, e.g., split pea
Tomato soup with other basic components such as rice	Lentil soup
Vegetable soup (contains only vegetables)	
Vegetable soup with other basic components such as meat or poultry	

To credit a commercial soup not listed in table 1, school food authorities (SFAs) must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer stating the specific contribution of each vegetable subgroup per serving. The PFS must provide the information indicated in the USDA's [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs](#) (meal patterns for grades K-12) or [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting](#)

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Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (preschool meal patterns).

For more information on 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 the USDA's *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement*. For additional guidance on documentation for commercial products, visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's *Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs* webpage or *Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

Training on the PFS requirements and how to evaluate a PFS is available in Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Serving size considerations for commercial soups

The served portion of soup must be sufficient to provide the amount of vegetables being credited in school menus. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for different grade groups and meals, and the size of the container used to serve the soup.

- **Meal pattern contribution:** The large serving required for a commercial soup to provide the full meal pattern serving of vegetables might be unreasonable. For example, the lunch meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component. This equals 3 cups of a commercial vegetable soup or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup.



When the serving of soup required to provide the full vegetables component is too large, the CSDE recommends offering a smaller serving of soup and supplementing it with another food from the vegetables component. For example, a lunch for grades K-5 and 6-8 could offer 1 cup of tomato soup (credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli to meet the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of the vegetables component.

- **Container size:** A 1-cup container (8 fluid ounces) does not provide 1 cup of soup unless it is filled to the top, which is impractical. To avoid spilling and ensure that the served portion meets the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving size of soup. For example, SFAs could use a 10-fluid ounce bowl to hold 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of soup and a 6-fluid ounce bowl to hold 4 fluid ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of soup.

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Table 2 indicates the vegetables component contribution of different serving sizes of commercial soups.

Table 2. Crediting commercial vegetable soups

Vegetable soup serving ¹	Bean/pea/lentil soup serving ²	Credits as	Meets the meal pattern requirements for
½ cup	¼ cup	⅛ cup of vegetables	Lunch for ages 1-2
1 cup	½ cup	¼ cup of vegetables	Breakfast for ages 1-2 Lunch for ages 3-5
2 cups	1 cup	½ cup of vegetables	Breakfast for ages 3-5 ASP snack for ages 1-5
3 cups	1½ cups	¾ cup of vegetables	Lunch for grades K-5 Lunch for grades 6-8 ASP snack for grades K-12
4 cups	2 cups	1 cup of vegetables	Lunch for grades 9-12 Breakfast for grades K-12

¹ For grades K-12 in the NSLP, vegetable soups credit only as “additional vegetables” unless a PFS documents the product’s contribution to the other vegetable subgroups (refer to “[Crediting commercial soups using manufacturer documentation](#)” in this document).

² For grades K-12 in the NSLP, bean, pea, and lentil soups credit as the beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroup. The vegetable subgroups are not required in the preschool meal patterns.

Crediting commercial soups using manufacturer documentation

To credit an allowable commercial vegetable soup differently from the FBG yields, SFAs must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating the specific contribution of each vegetable subgroup in the serving. The PFS must provide the information specified in the USDA’s [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs](#) (meal patterns for grades K-12) or [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks](#) (preschool meal patterns).

SFAs cannot use any other type of manufacturer product information, such as sales literature or product specification sheets, to document compliance with the vegetable subgroups. These materials do not provide the specific crediting information that is required on a PFS. For example, a company’s product information indicates that their tomato soup provides ½ cup of the red/orange vegetable subgroup. Based on the FBG, 1 cup of commercial tomato soup

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credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of “additional” vegetables. Tomato soup cannot credit as the red/orange vegetable subgroup unless the manufacturer supplies a PFS with the appropriate crediting information.

Noncreditable Commercial Soups

Commercial beef barley soup, chicken or turkey noodle soup, chicken or turkey rice soup, and cream vegetable soups (such as cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom) do not credit in the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs.

Crediting Soups Made from Scratch

Soups made from scratch credit based on the amount of each meal component in one serving of the standardized recipe. Examples of meal components in soups include vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (MMA). SFAs must determine crediting information based on the FBG yields for each soup ingredient. For information on standardized recipes, visit the [“Crediting Foods Made from Scratch”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

To credit toward the meal patterns, one serving of the standardized recipe must contain at least the minimum creditable amount of a meal component. The minimum creditable amounts are $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetables, $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits, $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains, and $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq of MMA. If the meal component in the serving of soup is less than the full serving, the menu must include additional foods from that meal component to meet the full serving for each grade group.

Crediting Vegetable Soups in School Meals and Snacks

Soups that meet the requirements for the vegetables component may be served at any meal or ASP snack. The NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal pattern requirements for the vegetables component are summarized below.

- **Lunch for grades K-12:** The NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12 requires a daily serving of the vegetables component, weekly servings of the five vegetable subgroups (dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other), and weekly servings of “additional” vegetables required to meet the minimum weekly amounts of vegetables for each grade group. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#).
- **Breakfast for grades K-12:** The SBP meal pattern for grades K-12 does not require the vegetables component. Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), continues to allow vegetables to substitute for the fruits component at any breakfast. SFAs that choose to offer vegetable substitutions on one day per school week

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have the option to offer any vegetable, including a starchy vegetable. SFAs that choose to offer vegetable substitutions on two or more days per school week must offer vegetables from at least two different subgroups.

- **Snack for grades K-12:** The ASP meal pattern requires any two of the four meal components (MMA, grains, vegetables/fruits, and milk). Vegetables may be served as one of the two required meal components at any snack.

Effective with school year 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern. The vegetables/fruits component will change to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component) and reimbursable snack must include two of the five meal components.

- **Lunch for preschoolers:** The NSLP preschool meal pattern requires a serving of the vegetables component but does not require the vegetable subgroups. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend that preschool meals include at least one weekly serving of each of the five vegetable subgroups. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
- **Breakfast for preschoolers:** The SBP preschool meal pattern requires a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both.
- **Snack for preschoolers:** The ASP preschool meal pattern requires any two of the five meal components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, fruits, and milk). Vegetables may be served as one of the two required meal components at any snack. The [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one of the two required snack components.



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Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting_procossed_product_documentation_snp.pdf

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_snp.pdf

Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#CommercialProducts>

Crediting Commercial Processed Products ("Related Resources" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#CommercialProducts>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Grains Component for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#Grains>

Grains Component for Preschoolers ("Related Resources" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Grains>

Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#GrainsBreadsK12>

Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#MMA>

Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#MMAK12>

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Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Preschoolers (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#MMA>

Reviewer’s Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

Standardized Recipes (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#StandardizedRecipes>

Standardized Recipes (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFS_tipsheet.pdf

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines For Americans (89 FR 31962):
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/cn_labels_snp.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf

Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/vegetable_subgroups_nslp.pdf

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#Vegetables>

Vegetables Component for Preschoolers (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Vegetables>

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Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#VegetablesK12>

What’s in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

What’s in a Meal Module 8: Meats/Meat Alternates Component (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

What’s in a Meal Module 10: Vegetables Component (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

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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/credit_soups_snp.pdf.

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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

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