

Crediting Yogurt in the Preschool Meal Patterns for 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) preschool meal patterns (ages 1-5) for 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 preschool meal patterns. The requirements for the preschool meal patterns are the same as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns for children. For information on the preschool meal patterns and crediting foods, refer to the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the “Grains Component for Preschoolers” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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Overview of Crediting Requirements

Commercial yogurt and soy yogurt that meet the USDA’s sugar limit credit as meat alternates toward the meats/meat alternates (MMA) component of the preschool meal patterns (refer to “[Sugar Limit for Yogurt](#)” in this document). Yogurt includes plain yogurt, flavored yogurt, and yogurt with added fruit, either blended or on the bottom. Yogurt must meet the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) standard of identity for yogurt ([21 CFR 131.200](#)).



Serving size

The required serving for yogurt is based on volume (cups) or weight (ounces) and is the same for all types, flavors, and fat contents. A ½-cup serving (volume) or 4 ounces (weight) credits as 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the MMA component in the preschool meal patterns. Table 1 shows the meal pattern contribution for different serving sizes of yogurt.

Table 1. Meal pattern contribution of yogurt

Serving size (volume or weight)	MMA contribution
⅛ cup or 1 ounce	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
¼ cup or 2 ounces	½ oz eq
½ cup or 4 ounces	1 oz eq
¾ cup or 6 ounces	1½ oz eq
1 cup or 8 ounces	2 oz eq

Nutrition guidance

The CSDE encourages school food authorities (SFAs) to read labels and consider fat content when purchasing yogurt for preschool meals and snacks. The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends serving low-fat and fat-free yogurt for ages 2 and older. These types of yogurt provide the same nutrients as whole milk yogurt but contain less saturated fat and fewer calories.

The CSDE encourages SFAs to choose yogurt without nonnutritive sweeteners (such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia) or sugar alcohols. These products are often labeled as “light” or “lite.”

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Sugar Limit for Yogurt

Yogurt and soy yogurt served in preschool meals and ASP snacks cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). Menu planners can use the Nutrition Facts panel to determine if yogurt meets the limit for sugars.

Sample calculation

The steps below show how to calculate if a yogurt product meets the preschool sugar limit, using the sample Nutrition Facts panel on the right.

1. List the grams (g) of sugar per serving from the Nutrition Facts label.

13 grams

2. List the serving size in ounces (oz) from the Nutrition Facts label.

5.3 ounces

3. Calculate the grams of sugar per ounce: divide grams (from step 1) by ounces (from step 2).

13 grams divided by 5.3 ounces = 2.45 grams of sugar per ounce

This yogurt contains 2.45 grams of sugar per ounce, which complies with the sugar limit for yogurt in preschool meals and ASP snacks.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 5.3 oz. container (113 g)	
Servings per Container: about 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0 g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 40mg	2%
Potassium 190mg	6%
Total Carbohydrates 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 0g 0%	
Sugars 13g	
Including 0g Added Sugars	
Protein 13 g	26%

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the product-based limit for yogurt from total sugars to added sugars. Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

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For more information on the sugar limits for yogurt, refer to the handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish on the USDA's webpages, [Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP](#) and [Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Sugar](#).

Fruits in Yogurt

Fruits in commercially prepared yogurt (either blended or on the bottom or top) do not credit toward the fruits component. Menu planners may credit fruits offered as a separate component, such as yogurt topped with fresh blueberries or sliced strawberries in a yogurt-fruit parfait.

Yogurt in Smoothies

Yogurt and soy yogurt that meets the preschool sugar limit may credit as the MMA component when served in smoothies. To credit smoothies made from scratch, SFAs must have a standardized recipe that documents the amount of yogurt per serving. For example, to credit a smoothie as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, the SFA's standardized recipe must indicate that each serving contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt. For information on standardized recipes, visit the "[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.



To credit yogurt in commercial smoothies, SFAs must obtain a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) stating the amount of yogurt (cups or weight) contained in one serving of the product. Commercial smoothies cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS. For more information on smoothies, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [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, visit the "[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk in the preschool meal patterns. Fluid milk must be offered in all meals to meet the milk component requirement.

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Noncreditable Yogurt

Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and frozen yogurt do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. The FDA's definition and standard of identity requires that yogurt must be "coagulated," not liquid. The FDA does not have a standard of identity for frozen yogurt. Homemade yogurt does not credit for food safety reasons. Yogurt-flavored products (such as yogurt bars and yogurt-covered fruit or nuts) do not meet the FDA's definition and standard of identity for yogurt, and do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.

Serving the Same Types of Yogurt to Preschool and Grades K-12

The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 do not require a sugar limit for yogurt and soy yogurt. However, the preschool meal patterns require that yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce).

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a sugar limit for yogurt in the meal patterns for grades K-12 (no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce) and changes the product-based limit for yogurt in the preschool meal patterns from total sugars to added sugars, consistent with the NSLP and SBP product-based added sugars limit.

When SFAs serve the same types of yogurt or soy yogurt to grades K-12 and preschoolers, these foods must comply with the preschool sugar limit unless the meals are co-mingled, i.e., meals are served to preschoolers and older grades in the same service area at the same time. For more information on the criteria for co-mingled meals, refer to section 1 of the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and the "Preschoolers Eating with Other Grades: Co-mingled Meals" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on co-mingled meals is available in "Module 2: Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns" of the CSDE's [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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For more information on the differences between the preschool meal patterns and the meal patterns for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program](#), and "Module 3: Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12" of the CSDE's [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Resources

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP in English and Spanish (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt-cacfp>

Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp_comparison_snp_preschool_grades_k-12pdf

Comparison of Lunch and Breakfast Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_snp.pdf

Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs:

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Meats/Meat Alternates Component ("Related Resources" section of 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#Fruits>

Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu_planning_guide_preschool.pdf

Module 3: Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12 (CSDE's Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs)

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/how-to>

Preschoolers Eating with Other Grades (Co-mingling) (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

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Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf

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 Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nsfp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_schools.docx

Standardized Recipes (Documents/Forms 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#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming_Meal_Pattern_Changes

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>

USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, and SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs, CACFP, and SFSP:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nsfp/crediting/cn_labels_snp.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nsfp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers 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_yogurt_snp_preschool.pdf.

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