Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of 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, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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Meeting the Meal Component Requirements

School food authorities (SFAs) must be able to document the preschool meal pattern contribution of foods and beverages served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

This document summarizes the crediting requirements and methods for the five meal components of the NSLP and SBP preschool meal patterns, including the updates required by the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (89 FR 31962).

> Effective with school year 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024), July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the previous terminology for "food component" to "meal component." A meal component is one of the food groups that comprise reimbursable meals and snacks in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs.

Chart 1 provides an overview of the crediting requirements for the five meal components (milk, meats/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). Charts 2 through 6 summarize the specific crediting considerations for each meal component.

For detailed guidance on the preschool meal patterns and the crediting requirements for the meal components, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Required Crediting Documentation

SFAs must use appropriate crediting methods and maintain the applicable documentation for commercial products and foods made from scratch. Menu planners should follow the guidance below to ensure that school menus comply with the crediting requirements of the preschool meal patterns.

- **Use the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG):** The USDA's FBG determines food yields and crediting information, and indicates the specific contribution of foods toward the meal pattern requirements. The FBG indicates how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide, what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe, and how much food to buy to provide a specific meal pattern contribution.

- **Obtain a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) for all commercial processed products:** SFAs must have a CN label or PFS to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial processed foods with added ingredients, such as combination foods (e.g., pizza and chicken nuggets), deli meats, hot dogs, and breaded vegetables. Commercial processed foods without this documentation do not credit. For more information, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) 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. Additional resources are available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs Programs webpage.

Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms 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*.

- **Maintain standardized recipes for foods made from scratch:** SFAs must have standardized recipes that document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch. Determine the recipe's meal pattern contribution per serving by: 1) using the FBG to determine the weight or volume of each creditable ingredient in the recipe; and 2) dividing the weight or volume of each creditable ingredient by the number of servings. The FBG's Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) allows menu planners to search for creditable ingredients and calculate the recipe's meal pattern contribution. For more information, visit the "Crediting Foods Made from Scratch" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs Programs webpage.

Remember to round down all crediting amounts for commercial products and standardized recipes to the nearest minimum creditable amount (refer to chart 1).

Training on the preschool meal patterns and crediting requirements is available in the CSDE's Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs.

Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, changes the preschool meal pattern's product-based limits for yogurt and breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars.

- Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

For more information on the final rule, visit the "Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Chart 1 – Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Meal Components

Criteria	Milk	Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA)	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains
Meal pattern measure	Volume: cups	Ounce equivalents (oz eq): Weight (ounces [oz]) for most foods; volume (cups) for some foods (e.g., beans, peas, and lentils and peanut butter); and either weight or volume for some foods (e.g., yogurt and tofu)	Volume: cups	Volume: cups	Oz eq: • weight (groups A-E) • volume (groups H-I)
Minimum creditable amount	Full serving: 1 cup	¼ oz eq	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ oz eq
Crediting methods: Round down all crediting amounts for products and standardized recipes to the nearest minimum creditable amount	Credit based on allowable types of milk for each age group (refer to chart 2).	**MMA without added ingredients:** Credit based on cooked weight, e.g., 1 ounce of cooked lean meat credits as 1 oz eq of MMA. Use the FBG to determine the cooked yields or edible portions. **Processed MMA with added ingredients:** Credit based on the CN label, PFS, or FBG. **Note:** The manufacturer's serving weight is not the same as the MMA contribution because processed foods contain non-MMA ingredients in addition to their MMA component.	Credit based on volume (cups) using the yields in the FBG. Credit raw leafy greens as half the volume served.	Credit based on volume (cups) using the yields in the FBG. Credit dried fruit credits as twice the volume served.	**Method 1:** Use the weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs*). **Method 2:** Determine the weight (grams) of the creditable grains per serving (refer to *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs*): 1 oz eq = 16 grams of creditable grains (groups A-G) or 28 grams of creditable grains (group H).
Documentation for unprocessed commercial products	Not applicable	Use the FBG to determine and document food yields and crediting information (or USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets for USDA Foods).	Same	Same	Same
Documentation for processed commercial products	Not applicable, except for milk in smoothies.	Must have CN label or PFS (or USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets for USDA Foods). CSDE webpage: Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus	Same	Same	Same
Documentation for foods made from scratch	Not applicable, except for milk in smoothies.	Must have standardized recipe. CSDE webpage: Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in Preschool Menus	Same	Same	Same

Milk Component

The milk component includes only fluid milk. Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements, and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). For information on the meal pattern requirements for the milk component, refer to the CSDE's chart, *Comparison of the Milk Component Requirements in the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs,* and to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs.* For more resources, visit the "Milk Component" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Noncreditable foods: Examples of foods that do not credit as the milk component include flavored milk; reduced fat (2%) milk and whole milk for ages 2-5; low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free, and reduced fat milk for age 1; nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, such as rice milk, almond milk, and cashew milk; milk that is cooked or baked in prepared foods, e.g., cereals, puddings, and cream sauces; nutrition supplement beverages, e.g., Abbott's Pediasure; powdered milk beverages, e.g., Nestle's NIDO; and for public schools only, milk and nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the state beverage requirements of Connecticut General Statute Section 10-221q. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs.*

Change for school year 2024-25: Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans,* updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements. For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces. For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces. The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements.

Chart 2 – Crediting Foods in the Milk Component

Milk component food item	Crediting requirements	Crediting resources

Fluid milk	• The preschool meal patterns require fluid milk as a beverage. Milk does not credit when cooked or baked in foods, such as cereals, puddings, cream sauces, and other foods.
	• Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements, and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
	• Allowable types of milk:
	  ○ **Age 1:** Whole milk, unflavored
	  ○ **Ages 2-5:** Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, unflavored
	• Allowable types of milk include any of the following that meet the fat content restrictions: lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.
	• **Public schools only:** Milk must also meet the state beverage requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S). The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugars per fluid ounce.
	• Preschool menus must document the type of milk served to each age group.
		• USDA webpage: Serving Milk in the CACFP
		• CSDE handout (applies only to public schools): Allowable Beverages for Connecticut Public Schools

Milk component food item	Crediting requirements	Crediting resources
Iron-fortified infant formula for ages 12-13 months	• Meals and ASP snacks that contain an allowable iron-fortified infant formula are reimbursable for a one-month transition period, when children ages 12 to 13 months are weaning from infant formula to whole cow's milk. Iron-fortified infant formula does not meet the fluid milk requirement of the preschool meal patterns for any other age group.	• USDA guide: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program • USDA Memo 01-2023: Creditability of Infant Formulas Imported Through the Food and Drug Administration's 2022 Infant Enforcement Discretion Policy in the Child and Adult Care Food Program • USDA Memo CACFP 02-2018: Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Questions and Answers
Whole milk or reduced-fat for ages 24-25 months	• Meals and ASP snacks that contain unflavored whole milk or unflavored reduced-fat milk may be claimed for reimbursement when served to children ages 24-25 months who are transitioning from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk. Whole milk and reduced-fat milk do not meet the fluid milk requirement of the preschool meal patterns for children for any other age.	• USDA guide: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program • USDA Memo CACFP 02-2018: Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Questions and Answers
Breastmilk	• Breastmilk is allowed as the milk component in the preschool meal patterns for children at any age. Meals and ASP snacks are reimbursable when a parent provides expressed breastmilk, or a mother breastfeeds her child on site.	• USDA guide: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program • USDA Memo CACFP 02-2018: Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Questions and Answers
Milk in fruit/vegetable smoothies	• The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is ¼ cup. If a smoothie contains less than the full serving of milk, the meal must include additional milk to provide the full serving. **Note:** This crediting applies only to milk in smoothies. The minimum creditable amount of the milk component is the full 1-cup serving.	• CSDE handout: Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs

Milk component food item	Crediting requirements	Crediting resources
Milk substitutes for children without a disability	• The USDA allows two types of milk substitutions: 1) nondairy milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes; and 2) lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk that meets the required fat content and flavor restrictions, i.e., low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored (refer to "Fluid milk" in this section). • **Change for school year 2024-25:** Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements. For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces. For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces. The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements. • **Public schools only:** Nondairy milk substitutes must also meet the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. The state beverage statute requires that nondairy milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugars per fluid ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. • Juice, water, and other beverages cannot substitute for milk in meals for children without a disability.	• CSDE handout: Milk Substitutes for Children with Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout (applies only to public schools): Allowable Beverages for Connecticut Public Schools

Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component

The MMA component includes fresh and frozen meats (e.g., lean beef, pork, poultry, fish, and shellfish), processed meats (e.g., chicken nuggets, deli meats, and fish sticks), canned meats (e.g., chicken, tuna, and salmon), and meat alternates such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, nuts and seeds and their butters, beans, peas, and lentils, tofu, and tempeh. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend limiting processed meats to no more than one serving per week; and serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils. For information on the meal pattern requirements for the MMA component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Meats/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

> The manufacturer's serving weight is not the same as the MMA contribution, i.e., 1 ounce does not equal 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of MMA, because processed foods (such as combination foods, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) contain non-MMA ingredients in addition to their MMA component. SFAs must obtain a CN label or PFS for all commercial processed products (refer to "Crediting Documentation" in this document).

Noncreditable foods: Examples of foods that do not credit as the MMA component include bacon, commercial canned soups (e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice), cream cheese, drinkable yogurt, egg whites, frozen yogurt, imitation cheese, products made with tofu that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes or that contain less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces, and sour cream. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs.*

Changes for school year 2024-25: Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans,* implements the changes below to the NSLP and SBP preschool meal patterns.

- Updates the quantities for MMA in the preschool meal patterns from ounces to oz eq.
- Allows nuts and seeds to credit for the full MMA component in all meals, removing the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch and supper.
- Changes the name of the previous "legumes (beans and peas)" vegetable subgroup to the "beans, peas, and lentils" vegetable subgroup.

Change for school year 2025-26: Effective 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).

Chart 3 – Crediting Foods in the MMA Component

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Alternate protein products (APPs), e.g., veggie burgers, meatless chicken nuggets, and soy hotdogs	• 1 ounce of APP: Must have a CN label or PFS from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1 and "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section).	• CSDE handout: Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs • USDA handout: Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products • CSDE training module: What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation
Beans, peas, and lentils, e.g., kidney beans, black beans, and chickpeas	• ¼ cup of cooked beans, peas, and lentils • 1 ounce of roasted beans, peas, and lentils, e.g., roasted chickpeas and roasted soybeans (soy nuts)	• Effective 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. • The liquid served with beans, peas, and lentils does not credit, such as the sauce in baked beans. • Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal or snack. Refer to chart 4 for information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables. • Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils (such as roasted soybeans or roasted chickpeas) credit the same as nuts and seeds. A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried beans, peas, or lentils credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. • CSDE handout: Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Cheeses, e.g., cheddar, mozzarella, provolone, American, and cottage cheese	• 1 ounce of natural cheese and pasteurized process cheese, e.g., American. • ¼ cup of cottage or ricotta cheese. • 2 ounces of cheese substitute, cheese food substitute, and cheese spread substitute.	• Cream cheese does not credit. • Foods that contain cheese (such as pizza and macaroni and cheese) require a CN label or PFS for commercial products and a standardized recipe for foods made from scratch (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1). • The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving only natural cheeses and choosing low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses. • USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP
Commercial combination foods, e.g., pizza and chicken nuggets	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the amount of MMA per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1 and "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section).	• CSDE handout: Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE webpage: Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients, e.g., hotdogs, deli meats, and sausages	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the amount of MMA per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1 and "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section).	• Regular bacon does not credit. Some brands of turkey bacon might credit with the appropriate documentation from a CN label or PFS. • CSDE handout: Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE webpage: Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus • USDA handout: Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products • USDA handout: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement
Cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, i.e., without bone, skin, or added ingredients	• 1 ounce: Refer to the FBG for cooked yields of meat, poultry, and fish.	

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Deli meats, e.g., turkey, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the amount of meat per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1 and "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section). • Many deli meats contain added binders, extenders, and liquids, and do not credit based on serving weight. Some deli meats require several ounces to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA.	• The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend limiting processed meats to no more than one serving per week. • USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP • CSDE handout: Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program • USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP
Dried meat, poultry, and seafood products, e.g., jerky and summer sausage	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the amount of meat per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1 and "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section).	• Must evaluate the product's PFS to ensure it meets the following USDA crediting principles: 1) the creditable meat ingredient must match, or have a similar description to, the ingredient listed on the product's label; 2) the creditable meat ingredient must have a similar description to a food item in the FBG; and 3) the creditable amount cannot exceed the finished weight of the product. For example, a 1-ounce serving of beef jerky cannot credit for more than 1 oz eq of MMA. • Ground pork and beef ingredients must include the percent fat because the fat content has a direct correlation to the cooking yield. To credit in Child Nutrition Programs, the fat content of ground beef or ground pork in dried meat products cannot exceed 30 percent. • USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs • USDA webinar: Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Eggs	• ½ large	• Only whole eggs credit. Liquid egg substitutes are not whole eggs and do not credit. Egg whites served alone do not credit. • Foods that contain eggs (such as quiche or frittata) require a CN label or PFS for commercial products and a standardized recipe for foods made from scratch (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1).
Foods made from scratch, e.g., pizza and macaroni and cheese	• Varies by food: Must have a standardized recipe to document the amount of MMA per serving.	• CSDE webpage: Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in Preschool Menus
Hummus or bean dip made with beans, peas, and lentils) and tahini (or other nut/seed butters)	• Varies by commercial product and standardized recipe. The serving must contain at least ¼ oz eq of MMA combined from the beans, peas, and lentils and tahini (sesame paste) or other nut/seed butters. • Commercial products require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of meat alternate per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1 and "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section). • Hummus and bean dips made from scratch must have a standardized recipe to document the amount of meat alternate per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1).	• Bean dip is a spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness. • A ¼-cup serving of beans, peas, and lentils credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is 1 tablespoon (¼ oz eq). • Two tablespoons of tahini or other nut/seed butters credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is ½ tablespoon (¼ ounce). • The beans/peas/lentils in hummus or bean dips may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal. Refer to chart 4 for information on crediting hummus as the vegetables component. • CSDE handout: Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Nut/seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, sunflower seed butter, and soy nut butter	• 2 tablespoons	• The CACFP meal patterns require volume (tablespoons) not weight (ounces). Measuring 1 ounce by weight does not provide 1 oz eq of MMA. The FBG indicates that 1.1 ounces of nut/seed butter is required to credit as 1 oz eq of MMA. • Consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of a nut or seed butter in one menu item. For example, a peanut butter sandwich must contain 3 tablespoons of peanut butter to credit as 1½ oz eq of MMA for ages 3-5 at lunch. • CSDE handout: Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs
Nuts/seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, soy nuts, and sunflower seeds	• 1 ounce	• Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, removes the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch. Nuts and seeds may credit for the full MMA component at any meal or snack. • CSDE handout: Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs
Pasta products made of 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flour, e.g., chickpea flour pasta and lentil flour pasta	• ¼ cup of cooked 100 percent bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta	• School menus must offer an additional MMA (such as tofu, cheese, or meat) with bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta. • Pasta made of 100 percent beans, peas, or lentils may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal. Refer to chart 4 for information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables.

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Surimi	• 3 ounces	• A PFS is required to credit a surimi product differently (refer to "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section).
Tempeh	• 1 ounce	• A PFS is required if the product's ingredients contain anything other than soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs (refer to "Commercial meat, poultry, or fish products with added ingredients" in this section). • USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs • USDA webinar: Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi
Tofu (commercial)	• 1 ounce	• Products must meet three crediting criteria: 1) must be commercially prepared; 2) must be easily recognized as meat substitutes, such as tofu burgers and tofu sausages; and 3) must contain 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces. • CSDE handout: Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs • 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

MMA component food item	1 oz eq of MMA =	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Yogurt and soy yogurt, plain or flavored; sweetened or unsweetened; and with or without added fruit, either blended or on the bottom or top	• ½ cup or 4 ounces weight	• Yogurt cannot exceed 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). • **Change for school year 2025-26:** Effective 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). • Yogurt mixed in smoothies credits as the MMA component. Crediting requires a standardized recipe for foods made from scratch, and a PFS or CN label for commercial products. Refer to Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs. • 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 (refer to chart 5). • Homemade yogurt does not credit. • Commercial yogurt products do not credit. Examples include drinkable or squeezable yogurt, frozen yogurt, yogurt bars, yogurt-covered fruits and nuts, and yogurt-flavored products. • CSDE handout: Crediting Yogurt in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs • 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

Vegetables Component

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables; rehydrated dried vegetables; and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength vegetable juices. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend providing at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*).

For information on the meal pattern requirements for the vegetables component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Vegetables Component" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Juice limit: Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day.

Noncreditable foods: Examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables component include chili sauce; dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning; cream vegetable soups, e.g., cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom; home-canned products (for food safety reasons); ketchup; pickle relish; and snack-type foods made from vegetables, such as potato chips. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs.*

Change for school year 2024-25: Effective 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.

Chart 4 – Crediting Foods in the Vegetables Component

Vegetables component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Beans, peas, and lentils, e.g., kidney beans, black beans, and chickpeas	• Served volume: Includes cooked beans, peas, and lentils and roasted beans, peas, and lentils (e.g., roasted chickpeas and soy nuts)	• Effective 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. • Refer to the FBG for yields. • The liquid served with beans, peas, and lentils does not credit, such as the sauce in baked beans. • Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the vegetables component or MMA component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal or snack. Refer to chart 3 for information on crediting beans, peas, and lentils as MMA. • CSDE handout: Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs
Canned vegetables, e.g., corn, peas, and kidney beans	• Served volume, e.g., ½ cup = ½ cup of the vegetables component	• Must be drained. The packing liquid does not credit, e.g., water in canned corn or sauce in baked beans. • Refer to the FBG for yields.

Vegetables component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Commercial products containing vegetables, e.g., hummus, vegetable pizza, vegetable egg rolls, breaded onion rings, and soups	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the amount of vegetables per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1). **Note**: CN labels are available only for main dish commercial products that contribute to the MMA component, but they typically also indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, fruits, and grains) that are part of these products.	• CSDE handout: Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE webpage: Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus • USDA handout: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement
Commercial vegetable soups, e.g., vegetable soups (such as minestrone and tomato) and soups made with beans, peas, and lentils (such as split pea, lentil, and black bean)	• Yields in FBG: ○ **Vegetable soup:** 1 cup = ¼ cup of the vegetables component ○ **Bean, pea, and lentil soup:** 1 cup = ½ cup of the vegetables component	• Only certain types of vegetable soups credit (refer to the FBG). • Cream vegetable soups (such as cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom) do not credit. • Must have a PFS to credit a commercial soup differently. Refer to "Commercial products containing vegetables" in this section. • CSDE handout: Crediting Soups in the School Nutrition Programs
Dried vegetables, e.g., potato flakes and dried soup mix	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a PFS to document the rehydrated volume of vegetables per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1).	• Credits based on the rehydrated volume (cups) of each vegetable subgroup. • Dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning (such as dried parsley and onion flakes) do not credit.
Fresh vegetables, e.g., broccoli, carrots, and spinach	• Served volume (except raw leafy greens such as lettuce, kale, and spinach) and vegetable subgroup. • Raw leafy greens: Credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup = ¼ cup of the vegetables component (refer to "Leafy greens" in this section).	• Refer to the FBG for yields.

Vegetables component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Frozen vegetables, e.g., corn, peas, and green beans	• Served volume.	• Refer to the FBG for yields.
Hominy, drained canned or cooked whole hominy from dried hominy	• Served volume, e.g., ½ cup = ½ cup of the vegetables component (starchy subgroup)	• Hominy grits credit as the grains component (refer to chart 6). • USDA Memo SP 22-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs
Hummus or bean dip made with beans, peas, and lentils and tahini (or other nut/seed butters)	• Varies by commercial product and standardized recipe. The serving must contain at least ⅛ cup of beans/peas/lentils to credit toward the vegetables component. • Commercial products require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of beans, peas, and lentils per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1). • Hummus and bean dips made from scratch must have a standardized recipe to document the amount of beans, peas, and lentils per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1).	• Bean dip is a spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness. • Hummus and bean dips credits as the vegetables component based on the amount of beans, peas, and lentils per serving. For example, hummus that contains ¼ cup of chickpeas per serving credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup). The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup. • Beans/peas/lentils in hummus and bean dips may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal. Refer to chart 3 for information on crediting hummus and bean dips as the MMA component. • CSDE handout: Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs

Vegetables component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Leafy greens, e.g., kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce such as iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix	• **Raw leafy greens:** half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup = ¼ cup of the vegetables component • **Cooked, roasted, or dried leafy greens (such as cooked spinach and roasted kale):** served volume, e.g., ½ cup = ½ cup of the vegetables component	
Mixed vegetables, e.g., three-bean salad and peas and carrots	• Served volume.	• Refer to the FBG for yields. • To credit as different subgroups, commercial products require a PFS that documents the amount of each type of vegetable in the mixture (refer to "Commercial products containing vegetables" in this section).
Mixtures of vegetables and fruits, e.g., carrot-raisin salad	• May credit toward both the vegetables component and fruits component if the serving contains at least ⅛ cup of recognizable vegetables and at least ⅛ cup of recognizable fruits.	• Refer to the FBG for yields. • To credit as both the vegetables component and fruits component, commercial products require a PFS to document the amount of each type of vegetable and fruit in the mixture (refer to "Commercial products containing vegetables" in this section).
Pasta products made of 100 percent vegetable flours, e.g., chickpea flour pasta, lentil flour pasta.	• Served volume: ½ cup of pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flour credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.	• Pasta products made of 100 percent vegetable flours may credit as either the vegetables component or MMA component but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal. Refer to chart 3 for information on crediting 00 percent bean, pea, and lentil flour pasta products as MMA. • Pasta products made of vegetable flour with other non-vegetable ingredients require a PFS detailing the volume of vegetable flour per serving (refer to "Commercial products containing vegetables" in this section).

Vegetables component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Pureed vegetables, e.g., sweet potatoes, tomato sauce, and butternut squash	• Served volume.	• Must be recognizable (visible), e.g., tomato sauce, split pea soup, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, and pureed butternut squash. • Pureed vegetables do not credit as the vegetables component when they are not recognizable unless the food also provides at least ⅛ cup of a visible creditable vegetable. For example, a serving of macaroni and cheese that contains ⅛ cup of diced butternut squash (visible) and ⅛ cup of pureed carrots (not visible) credits as ¼ cup of the red/orange vegetables subgroup. • Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to "Vegetable juice, pasteurized full-strength" in this section). • CSDE handout: Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs
Vegetable juice, pasteurized full-strength, e.g., tomato juice and mixed vegetable juice	• Served volume.	• **Juice limit:** Juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes all sources of juice, e.g., 100 percent juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. • **Juice blends:** Fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the first ingredient. If the first ingredient is a fruit juice or fruit puree, it credits as the fruits component. If the first ingredient is a vegetable juice or vegetable puree, it credits as the vegetables component. • CSDE handout: Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

Fruits Component

The fruits component includes fresh fruit; frozen fruit; dried fruit; canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup; and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, and frozen) more often than juice; and making at least one of the two required snack components a vegetable or fruit. For information on the meal pattern requirements for the fruits component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Fruits Component" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Juice limit: Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day.

Noncreditable foods: Examples of foods that do not credit as the fruits component include banana chips; dried coconut; fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups, fruit leathers, fruit wrinkles, fruit twists, yogurt-covered fruit snacks); home-canned products (for food safety reasons); jams, jellies, and preserves; and juice drinks that are not 100 percent juice such as grape juice drink, orange juice drink, pineapple-grapefruit drink, cranberry juice cocktail, and lemonade. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs.*

Chart 5 – Crediting Foods in the Fruits Component

Fruits component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Food item	**Credits based on**	**Additional crediting requirements and resources**
Canned fruits in juice, water, or syrup, e.g., canned peaches and pineapple tidbits	• Served volume, e.g., ½ cup = ½ cup of the fruits component	• The serving may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup. If the menu planner credits the juice from canned fruit toward the fruits component, it also counts toward the weekly juice limit (refer to "Juice limit" under "Fruit juice, pasteurized full-strength" in this section). Drained canned fruit and canned fruit in water or light syrup do not count toward the juice limit. • Refer to the FBG for yields. • CSDE handout: Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs
Coconut	• **Fresh and frozen coconut:** Served volume, e.g., ½ cup = ½ cup of the fruits component • **Dried coconut:** Twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup = ½ cup of the fruits component • **Coconut water labeled as 100 percent juice** (credits as juice): Served volume, e.g., ½ cup = ½ cup of the fruits component	• Coconut flour, coconut oil, and coconut milk do not credit. • SFAs must count coconut water with all other juices toward the weekly juice limit (refer to "Juice limit" under "Fruit juice, pasteurized full-strength" in this section).

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Fruits component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Food item	**Credits based on**	**Additional crediting requirements and resources**
Commercial products containing fruits, e.g., fruit turnover, trail mix with dried fruit, and fruit smoothies	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the amount of vegetables per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1). **Note**: CN labels are available only for main dish commercial products that contribute to the MMA component, but they typically also indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, fruits, and grains) that are part of these products.	• CSDE handout: Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE webpage: Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus • USDA handout: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement
Dried fruits, e.g., raisins, apricots, and cherries	• Twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup = ½ cup of the fruits component	• Dried banana chips, and fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups and yogurt-covered fruit snacks) do not credit.
Fresh fruits, e.g., apples, bananas, and pears	• Served volume	• Refer to the FBG for yields. • Depending on the size, one piece of fresh fruit might not provide the full serving of the fruits component. For example, one clementine credits as ⅜ cup of the fruits component. Check the FBG to ensure proper crediting.
Frozen fruits, e.g., frozen berries and melon	• Served volume	• Refer to the FBG for yields.

Fruits component food item	Credit based on	Additional crediting requirements and resources
Food item	**Credits based on**	**Additional crediting requirements and resources**
Fruit juice, pasteurized full-strength, e.g., apple juice, orange juice, and grape juice	• Served volume	• **Juice limit:** Juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes all sources of juice, e.g., 100 percent juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. • **Juice blends:** Fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the first ingredient. If the first ingredient is a fruit juice or fruit puree, it credits as the fruits component. If the first ingredient is a vegetable juice or vegetable puree, it credits as the vegetables component. • CSDE handout: Crediting Juice in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs
Pureed fruits, e.g., applesauce	• Served volume	• Must be recognizable (visible), e.g., applesauce. • Pureed fruits do not credit as the fruits component when they are not recognizable, e.g., using applesauce or prune puree to replace the oil in muffins. • Pureed vegetables and fruits in smoothies credit only as juice (refer to "Smoothies made of fruits/vegetables/juice" in this chart).
Smoothies made of fruits/ vegetables/juice	• Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice and must meet the same requirements as juice (refer to "Fruit juice, pasteurized full-strength" in this chart). • Crediting is based on the volume (cups) of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving.	• Commercial smoothies require a PFS to credit. Commercial smoothies cannot contain dietary or herbal supplements. Refer to "Commercial products containing fruits" in this section. • CSDE handout: Crediting Smoothies in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

Grains Component

The grains component includes breads and bread products (e.g., biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins), snack products (e.g., crackers, animal crackers, graham crackers, hard pretzels, tortilla chips, and popcorn); cereal grains (e.g., buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa); ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals; cooked breakfast cereals (e.g., oatmeal); bread products used as an ingredient in another menu item such as combination foods (e.g., breading on fish or poultry and pizza crust in pizza); and pasta. Grain-based desserts (such as cookies, brownies, cakes, and granola bars) do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. For information on the meal pattern requirements for the grains component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Grains Component" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Commercial grain products and standardized recipes must meet the crediting, whole grain-rich (WGR), and oz eq requirements indicated below.

- **Crediting requirements:** Grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran), and germ (such as wheat germ). Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains. For guidance on creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs, Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs.*
- **Daily whole WGR requirement:** At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two WGR serving per day. Grains that are not WGR must be enriched. For guidance on the preschool WGR criteria and how to identify WGR foods, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.* **Note:** Foods that meet the WGR criteria for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 will also meet the preschool WGR criteria.
- **Oz eq:** The oz eq contribution of creditable commercial grain products and standardized recipes must be determined using one of the two allowable methods: 1) the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and *How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*); or 2) the creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*). **Note:** The CSDE's *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* does not include groups F and G (grain-based desserts) of the USDA's Exhibit A chart because these foods do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.

Noncreditable foods: Examples of foods that do not credit as the grains component include commercial products that do not contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient; standardized recipes that are not made with creditable grains; breakfast cereals that contain more than 6 grams of sugars per ounce; and grain-based desserts. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs.*

Change for school year 2024-25: Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans,* adds the following definition for "whole grain-rich" in NSLP, SBP, and CACFP regulations: Whole grain-rich is the term designated by FNS to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched. This definition does not change the meaning of whole grain-rich, and program operators can continue to identify whole grain-rich products as described in current guidance.

Change for school year 2025-26: Effective 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 breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Chart 6 – Crediting Foods in the Grains Component

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Breakfast cereals: cold RTE in group I, e.g., flaked cereals, round cereals, puffed cereals, and granola	• **Crediting criteria:** 1) The first ingredient must be a creditable grain or the cereal must be fortified; and 2) the cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. • **Change for school year 2025-26:** Effective 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 breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. • CSDE handout: Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criteria:** 1) The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified, or the cereal must be 100 percent whole grain; and 2) the cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. • **Change for school year 2025-26:** Effective 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 breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. • CSDE handout: Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• 1 cup of flaked or round cereal • 1¼ cups of puffed cereal • ¼ cup of granola • CSDE handout: Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Breakfast cereals: cooked hot in group H, e.g., oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina	• **Crediting criteria:** 1) The first ingredient must be a creditable grain or the cereal must be fortified; and 2) the cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. • **Change for school year 2025-26:** Effective 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 breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. • CSDE handout: Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criteria:** 1) The first ingredient must be a whole grain; 2) the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be creditable grains; and 3) the cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. • **Change for school year 2025-26:** Effective 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 breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. • CSDE handout: Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• ½ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) dry • CSDE handout: Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Cereal grains in group H, e.g., pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, and other cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat	• **Crediting criteria:** 1) The first ingredient must be a creditable grain. • CSDE handout: Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs. • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criteria:** 1) The first ingredient must be a whole grain; and 2) the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be creditable grains. • CSDE guide: Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• ½ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) dry • CSDE handout: Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Commercial products: grain foods in groups A-E, e.g., crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, pancakes, and sweet crackers like animal crackers and graham crackers	• The first ingredient (excluding water) must be a creditable grain. • CSDE handout: Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs. • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criteria:** 1) At least half of the grains in the product must be whole grains; and 2) any other grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. • **Six methods to identify WGR products:** 1) Rule of Three; 2) WIC whole-grain foods list; 3) Documentation; 4) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) WGR criteria; 5) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) whole grain health claim; and 6) FDA Standard of Identity (only for certain types of whole-grain products). • CSDE guide: Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• Varies by commercial product: Use method 1, USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the oz eq in CSDE's Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs), and follow the instructions in the CSDE's How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. • **Use method 2 (creditable grains per serving) and obtain a PFS if any of the following apply:** 1) the first ingredient is not a creditable grain, but the product contains more than one creditable grain; 2) for WGR foods only, the first ingredient is not a whole grain, but the product contains more than one whole grain; 3) for WGR foods only, the first ingredient is a whole grain, and the product contains two or more enriched grains; 4) for WGR foods only, the first ingredient is a flour blend of whole and enriched flour; 5) a combination food that contains a grain portion is not CN labeled; 6) the manufacturer claims that a commercial grain product can provide the required creditable grains using a serving that is less than the amount in the USDA's Exhibit A chart; and 7) the product is not listed the USDA's Exhibit A chart. Refer to the

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Commercial products: grain foods in groups A-E, ***continued***			CSDE's resource, When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs and Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs .
Commercial products: combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-E or H-I, e.g., pizza, breaded chicken nuggets, and macaroni and cheese	• **Ingredients listed together:** The first grain ingredient must be a creditable grain. • **Grain portion listed separately:** The first ingredient in the grain portion must be a creditable grain. • CSDE handout: Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE resource: How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criteria:** 1) At least half of the grains in the grain portion of the product must be whole grains; and 2) any other grain ingredients in the grain portion must be enriched, bran, or germ. • **Six methods to identify if grain portion is WGR:** 1) Rule of Three; 2) WIC whole-grain foods list; 3) Documentation; 4) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) WGR criteria; 5) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) whole grain health claim; and 6) FDA Standard of Identity (only for certain types of whole-grain products). • CSDE guide: Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.	• Varies by commercial product: Must have a CN label or PFS to document the creditable grains per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1). **Note**: CN labels are available only for main dish commercial products that contribute to the MMA component, but they typically also indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, fruits, and grains) that are part of these products. • CSDE handout: Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE webpage: Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus • USDA handout: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement • CSDE training module: What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Foods made from scratch: grain foods in groups A-E, e.g., crackers, breads, rolls, muffins, waffles, and pancakes	• The grain portion of the recipe must be made with creditable grains. • CSDE handout: Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE resource: How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criterion:** The amount of whole grains in the grain portion is equal to or more than the total amount of enriched grains, bran, and germ. • **Method to identify WGR recipes:** Compare the amount of the whole grain ingredients to the total amount of enriched grains, bran, and germ. • CSDE guide: Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program • USDA handout: Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the CACFP?	• Varies by standardized recipe. • **If serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (group H-I) of the grain portion is known:** Use method 1, USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the oz eq in CSDE's Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs), and follow the instructions in the CSDE's How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. • **If serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (group H-I) of the grain portion is not known:** Use method 2 (creditable grains per serving). Refer to the CSDE's Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs. • CSDE webpage: "Standardized Recipes" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage

Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Foods made from scratch: combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-E or H-I, e.g., pizza, breaded chicken nuggets, and macaroni and cheese	• SFAs must have a standardized recipe to document the amount of creditable grains per serving (refer to "Crediting Documentation" on page 1). The grain portion of the standardized recipes must be WGR or enriched. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains. • CSDE handout: Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE resource: How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • CSDE handout: When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs	• **WGR criterion:** The amount of whole grains is equal to or more than the total amount of enriched grains, bran, and germ. • **Method to identify WGR recipes:** Compare the amount of the whole grain ingredients to the total amount of enriched grains, bran, and germ. • CSDE guide: Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program • CSDE handout: Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs • USDA handout: Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the CACFP?	• Varies by standardized recipe. • **If serving weight is known:** Use method 1 (USDA's Exhibit A chart, Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs), following the instructions in the CSDE's How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. **Note:** To use the oz eq chart for foods made from scratch, SFAs must know the serving weight. If the standardized recipe does not provide this information, SFAs must either determine the average serving weight by weighing several portions (refer to the CSDE's Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs) or use method 2 (creditable grains). • **If serving weight is not known:** Use method 2 (creditable grains per serving). Refer to the CSDE's Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs . • CSDE webpage: "Standardized Recipes" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage

Grains food item	Crediting requirements	WGR requirements	1 oz eq of grains =
Grain-based desserts in groups C-G, e.g., plain brownies, cookies, cakes, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, and toaster pastries	• Not applicable: Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. • Sweet crackers (graham crackers and animal crackers) are not grain-based desserts. As a best practice, the USDA encourages CACFP menus to limit sweet crackers because of their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers.	• Not applicable: Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.	• Not applicable: Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.
Hominy grits	• Dried hominy credits as a whole grain. • USDA Memo SP 22-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs • Refer to chart 5 for information on crediting canned or cooked whole hominy as the vegetables component.	• Varies by commercial product or standardized recipe. • For commercial products, refer to "Commercial products: grain foods in groups A-G)" in this chart. • For foods made from scratch, refer to "Foods made from scratch: grain foods in groups A-G" in this chart.	• ½ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) dry

Resources

Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Preschool Menus (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#CommercialProducts

Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in Preschool Menus (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#ScratchFoods

Crediting Guidance for the Meal Pattern Components for Preschoolers (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#MealPatternComponents Preschoolers

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-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

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

Noncreditable Foods in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp_preschool.pdf

Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs (“How To” section of CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Program webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/how-to

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.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

Updates to the School Nutrition Standards (USDA webpage): https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/school-nutrition-standards-updates

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

For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus" section of 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/crediting_summary_charts_snp_preschool.pdf.

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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

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