

How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

School Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through Jun 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 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 guide, [Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Overview of Crediting Requirements for Grains

To credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns, grain products and standardized 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.

Creditable grain foods include commercial grain products and foods made from scratch that are whole-grain rich (WGR) or enriched. Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified. For information on identifying whole and enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Products that are 100 percent whole grain, such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice, provide the best nutrition and should be served most often.

For detailed guidance on the grains component, visit the "[Grains Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Allowable Grain Foods

The grains component includes a variety of WGR and enriched foods, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard breadsticks, tortilla chips, and popcorn;
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal and cream of wheat;
- 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 products, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.

These foods have different crediting requirements, depending on the type of food and whether it is a commercial product or made from scratch.

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Grain-Based Desserts

Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns. Examples of grain-based desserts include breakfast bars, brownies, cakes (including cupcakes and coffee cakes), cereal bars, cinnamon rolls, cinnamon streusel quick breads, cookies (all kinds, including vanilla wafers), doughnuts, gingerbread, granola bars, ice cream cones, marshmallow cereal treats, pastries (such as cinnamon buns, Danish, sweet buns, sweet rolls, and eclairs) piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), sweet biscotti (such as those made with fruits, chocolate, or icing) sweet bread pudding, sweet croissants (e.g. chocolate filled), sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), rice pudding, and toaster pastries.

Sweet crackers (like graham crackers and animal crackers) are not grain-based desserts. However, as a best practice, the USDA encourages SFAs to limit sweet crackers due to their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week, between all meals and snacks served to preschoolers. For more information on grain-based desserts, refer to [USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and visit the USDA's [Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP](#) webpage.

Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

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

The WGR criteria for the preschool meal patterns are different from the WGR criteria for the meal patterns for grades K-12. Except for grain-based desserts (which do not credit in the preschool meal patterns), grain foods that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 also meet the preschool WGR criteria. However, grain foods that meet the preschool WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs](#).

To simplify menu planning, the CSDE encourages SFAs to use the WGR criteria for grades K-12 to identify acceptable WGR grain foods for the preschool meal patterns.

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Preschool WGR criteria

WGR foods for the preschool meal patterns must contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. To credit as a WGR food in the preschool meal patterns:

- **commercial grain products** (such as breads, crackers, pancakes, pasta, and cooked breakfast cereals) must contain a whole grain as the greatest ingredient by weight;
- **commercial combination foods** (such as pizza and breaded chicken nuggets) must contain a whole grain as the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion;
- **RTE breakfast cereals** must list a whole grain as the first ingredient, be fortified, and meet the sugar limit (refer to [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs](#)); and
- **standardized recipes** must contain an amount of whole grains that is equal to or more than the combined amount of all other creditable grains.

For more information on the WGR criteria and how to determine if commercial products and standardized recipes are WGR, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), and [USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Questions and Answers](#). Additional guidance is available in the "[Whole Grain-rich Requirement](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving the same WGR foods to preschoolers and grades K-12

If SFAs serve the same grain foods to preschoolers and grades K-12, these foods must meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. If SFAs serve the same cooked and RTE breakfast cereals to preschoolers and grades K-12, these cereals must meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 and the preschool sugar limit.

The only exceptions to these requirements are when SFAs choose one of the following menu planning methods: 1) use the K-5 meal pattern for preschoolers and grades K-5 who eat in the same service area at the same time; or 2) use the ASP K-12 meal pattern for preschoolers and grades K-12 who eat in the same service area at the same time. For more information on the meal pattern requirements for preschoolers and grade K-12 eating together, visit the "[Serving the Same Menu to Preschoolers and Grades K-12](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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SFAs cannot serve the same grain-based desserts to preschoolers and grades K-12 because grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. For more information, refer to [“Grain-based Desserts”](#) in this document.

Crediting Requirements

The preschool meal patterns have different crediting requirements for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion, breakfast cereals, and grain foods made from scratch. The crediting requirements for each type of grain food are summarized below.

Crediting requirements for commercial grain products

To credit as the grains component, commercial grain products must contain a creditable grain as the greatest ingredient by weight. Commercial grain products meet this requirement if 1) a creditable grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a creditable grain is the next ingredient); or 2) the manufacturer’s product formulation statement (PFS) indicates that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight (refer to [“Crediting Documentation for Commercial Grain Products”](#) in this document).

Below are some examples of commercial grain products that contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient and credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains are in *italics*. When reviewing the first ingredient on the product’s label, water is ignored.

- Ingredients: *Enriched wheat flour* (*flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid*), canola and/or sunflower oil, salt, contains 2% or less of: yeast, nonfat milk, sugar, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, paprika, spices, celery, onion powder.
- Ingredients: Water, *whole-wheat flour*, yeast, wheat gluten, contains less than 2% of each of the following: soybean oil, sugar, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), fumaric acid, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate.
- Ingredients: Water, *enriched flour* (*wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, vitamin B1 [thiamin mononitrate], vitamin B2 [riboflavin], folic acid*), *whole-wheat flour*, vegetable oil (soybean, palm, and/or canola oil), egg whites, wheat bran, sugar, contains 2% or less of leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate, monocalcium phosphate), salt, malt flavoring, whey, soy lecithin.

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Steps for identifying creditable commercial grain products in groups A-E and H

The steps below show how to identify creditable commercial grain products in groups A-E (baked goods such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, and waffles) and group H (pasta and cereal grains such as quinoa, rice, and millet) of the USDA's Exhibit A chart.

1. Is the food product labeled as whole grain?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 2.
2. Is the food product labeled as enriched?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 3.
3. Is the first ingredient (excluding water) a whole grain?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 4.
4. Is the first ingredient (excluding water) an enriched grain?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 5.
5. Does the product's PFS state that whole or enriched grains are the greatest ingredient by weight?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 6.
6. Does the ingredients statement list any other creditable grains?
 - Yes: Go to step 7.
 - No: The food is not creditable.
7. Does the product's PFS indicate that the grams of creditable grains per serving provide at least $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce equivalent?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: The food is not creditable.

If the food is creditable, the SFA must provide the required weight or volume (refer to ["Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes"](#) in this document).

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Crediting requirements for commercial combination foods

Commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion (such as pizza, breaded fish sticks, and lasagna) credit as the grains component if they meet one of the criteria below.

- A creditable grain is the first *grain* ingredient (or if the grain portion is listed separately, a creditable grain is the first ingredient in the *grain portion*). **Note:** When reviewing the first ingredient, water is ignored.
- The product's Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer's PFS indicates that the combined weight of all creditable grains in the *grain portion* is the greatest ingredient by weight in the *grain portion*. For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to "[Crediting Documentation for Commercial Grain Products](#)" in this document.

Below are some examples of combination foods that contain a grain portion. Creditable grains are in *italics*.

- **Example 1: Grain ingredients listed together with other ingredients**

Ingredients: Boneless, skinless chicken breast with rib meat, water, *enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid)*, contains 2% or less of the following: dried garlic, dried onion, salt, sea salt, soybean oil, spice, sugar, torula yeast, turmeric, yeast, yeast extract. Breeding set in vegetable oil.

This product credits as an enriched grain because the first grain ingredient is enriched flour.

- **Example 2: Grain ingredients listed as separate grain portion**

Ingredients: Chicken, water, salt, and natural flavor. Breaded with: *enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid)*, water, wheat starch, salt, contains 2% or less of the following: yellow corn flour, corn starch, dried onion, dried garlic, dried yeast, brown sugar, extractives of paprika, and spices. Breeding set in vegetable oil.

The grain portion (breeding) of this product credits as an enriched grain because the first ingredient in the breeding is enriched flour.

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Steps for identifying creditable commercial combination foods with a grain portion

The steps below show how to identify creditable commercial grain products that contain a grain portion.

1. Is the grain portion of the food product labeled as whole grain?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 2.
2. Is the grain portion of the food product labeled as enriched?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 3.
3. Is the first grain ingredient (or first ingredient in the grain portion, if grain portion is listed separately) a whole grain?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 4.
4. Is the first grain ingredient (or first ingredient in the grain portion, if grain portion is listed separately) an enriched grain?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 5.
5. Does the product's PFS state that enriched or whole grains are the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 6.
6. Does the ingredients statement list any other creditable grains in the grain portion?
 - Yes: Go to step 7.
 - No: The food is not creditable.
7. Does the product's CN label or PFS indicate that the grams of creditable grains per serving in the grain portion provide at least $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce equivalent?
 - Yes: The food is creditable.
 - No: The food is not creditable.

If the food is creditable, the SFA must provide the required weight or volume (refer to ["Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes"](#) in this document).

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Crediting requirements for breakfast cereals

Breakfast cereals include RTE cereals in group I (such as puffed rice cereals, round or flaked cereal, and granola) and cooked cereals in group H (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). Breakfast cereals must meet two criteria to credit as the grains component: 1) a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient or the cereal must be fortified; and 2) sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry 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](#), 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.

To credit as a WGR food, breakfast cereals must meet the sugar limit and comply with the requirements below.

- **WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified, or the cereal must be 100 percent whole grain. Fortification is not required for RTE breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain.
- **WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** Cooked breakfast cereals must meet the USDA's Rule of Three criteria for WGR foods. The Rule of Three requires that the first ingredient must be a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be whole grain, enriched, bran, or germ. Noncreditable grains (such as yellow corn flour, wheat flour, and soy flour) cannot be one of the first three grain ingredients. For guidance on the Rule of Three, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

For more information on the crediting requirements for breakfast cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Breakfast cereals that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 will also meet the preschool WGR criteria. To simplify menu planning, the CSDE encourages SFAs to use the WGR criteria for grades K-12 to identify acceptable WGR breakfast cereals for the preschool meal patterns.

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The preschool meal pattern requirements are the same as the CACFP. SFAs may use the CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets (*Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP* and *Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*) to evaluate breakfast cereals for compliance with the preschool crediting requirements. The CACFP grain crediting worksheets are available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

Crediting requirements for grain foods made from scratch

Standardized recipes credit as the grains component based on the grams of creditable grains per serving. The required grams of creditable grains for 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) depend on whether the grain food is enriched or WGR.

- **Enriched grain foods:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, standardized recipes for foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 16 grams of creditable grains per serving and standardized recipes for foods in group H must contain 28 grams of creditable grains per serving.
- **WGR foods:** To credit as 1 oz eq of a WGR food, standardized recipes for foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 16 grams of creditable grains (including at least 8 grams of whole grains) per serving and standardized recipes for foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains (including at least 14 grams of whole grains) per serving.

SFAs must determine the standardized recipe's oz eq contribution per serving using one of the following methods: 1) the grams of creditable grains; or 2) if the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving is known, the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to "[Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes](#)" in this document). The examples below illustrate these crediting requirements.

- Pasta is in group H. To credit a SFA's standardized recipe for macaroni and cheese as 1 oz eq of the grains component, the recipe must indicate that each serving contains ½ cup of cooked enriched, whole grain, or WGR pasta; or 28 grams of creditable grains.
- Muffins (except corn muffins) are in group D. To credit a SFA's blueberry muffin recipe as 1 oz eq of the grains component, the standardized recipe must indicate that each muffin weighs 2 ounces or contains 16 grams of creditable grains.



For resources that help menu planners determine the oz eq contribution of creditable recipes, refer to "[Grain crediting tools](#)" in this document.

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Crediting Documentation for Commercial Grain Products

SFAs must be able to document that commercial grain foods meet the crediting requirements of the CACFP meal patterns. Acceptable documentation includes a CN label or a manufacturer's PFS. Grain items are not eligible for a CN label unless they are part of main dish entrees that contain at least ½ oz eq of the meats/meat alternates component.

A PFS from the manufacturer is required if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if it meets the crediting or WGR criteria. For guidance on when a PFS is required and the information it must include, refer to the CSDE's resource, [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

SFAs must verify the accuracy of the PFS before including the commercial grain product in reimbursable meals and snacks. Crediting documentation must be maintained on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the product cannot credit as the grains component in the meal patterns for school nutrition programs.

For more information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and the USDA's [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks](#) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). Additional guidance is available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition 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](#).

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Crediting Documentation for Grain Foods Made from Scratch

SFAs must be able to document that grain foods made from scratch meet the crediting requirements of the preschool meal patterns. Standardized recipes that document crediting information must be on file for all grain foods made from scratch, including foods made on site by the SFA and foods prepared by vendors. Menu planners should use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine food yields and crediting information for all school recipes.

Standardized recipes credit as the grains component based on the amount of creditable grains per serving. SFAs must determine the standardized recipe's oz eq contribution per serving using the grams of creditable grains; or if the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving is known, the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group in the USDA's Exhibit A chart. For guidance on each method, refer to "[Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes](#)" in this document.

Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. The amount of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, a roll (group B) must weigh 28 grams (1 ounce), a corn muffin (group C) must weigh 34 grams (1.2 ounces), and a blueberry muffin (Group D) must weigh 55 grams (2 ounces). The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq.

The USDA allows two methods for determining the oz eq or servings of a creditable grain product or standardized recipe. SFAs may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. These methods are summarized below.

Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (Exhibit A) to determine the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the commercial product or standardized recipe belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving.

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The Exhibit A grain quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#), lists the Exhibit A grain oz eq that apply to the preschool meal patterns. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns.

For detailed guidance on determining the oz eq of a grain menu item, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and module 13 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](#).

Method 2: creditable grains

Method 2 determines oz eq from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for standardized recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products with a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving. The required grams of creditable grains for 1 oz eq depend on whether the grain food is enriched or WGR.

- **Enriched grain foods:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 16 grams of creditable grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains.
- **WGR foods:** To credit as 1 oz eq of WGR grains, foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain 16 grams of creditable grains (including at least 8 grams of whole grains) and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains (including at least 14 grams of whole grains).

There are some situations when SFAs must use method 2 to determine if a commercial product meets the crediting or WGR criteria for grain menu items, and a PFS is required. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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Grain crediting tools

The tools below help menu planners determine the oz eq contribution of creditable grain products and recipes.

- **USDA’s Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** This [online tool](#) of the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) determines the oz eq of commercial grain products. For more information, watch the USDA’s webinars, *Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue* and *How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool*.
- **CSDE’s CACFP crediting worksheets:** These Excel worksheets determine if grain products and recipes meet the CACFP crediting requirements and WGR criteria (which are the same as the preschool meal patterns) and calculate the oz eq contribution of the serving.
 - Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP
 - Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP
 - Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP

The CACFP grain crediting worksheets are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

- **CSDE’s How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the NSLP and SBP:** The CSDE’s resource, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, reviews the steps for using the Exhibit A quantities to determine the meal pattern contribution of three types of commercial products and standardized recipes. These include grain menu items in groups A-G that contain multiple small pieces per serving (e.g., crackers, hard pretzels, and animal crackers), multiple large pieces per serving (e.g., pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles), and one piece per serving (e.g., muffins, bagels, and rolls).
- **USDA’s Recipe Analysis Workbook:** The FBG’s online [Recipe Analysis Workbook](#) allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the recipe’s meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA’s FBG website.

For more information on oz eq, visit the “[Ounce Equivalents](#)” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Examples of grain foods that may cause choking include hard pretzels; pretzel chips; corn chips; breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels (such as wheat berries), and hard chunks (such as granola); and crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels.

Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of grain foods to offer in preschool menus and modify foods and menus as appropriate. For additional guidance, visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Resources

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs:

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

Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Determining Ounce Equivalents of Grains in Child and Adult Care Food Program Recipes (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/determining-ounce-equivalents-grains-cacfp-recipes>

Food Buying Guide Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool>

Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue (USDA webinar):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue>

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Grain Crediting Worksheets for CACFP Child Care Programs (Worksheets 1-5)

("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents/#CreditingWorksheets>

How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp>

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

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

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/wgr_requirement_cacfp.pdf

How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA webinar):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/how-maximize-exhibit-grains-tool>

How to Spot Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/how-spot-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp>

How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/identifying-whole-grain-rich-foods-cacfp>

Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the CACFP? (USDA handouts in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/my-recipe-whole-grain-rich-cacfp>

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

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf

Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

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 CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers>

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp>

USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

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

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

Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the CACFP (USDA handouts and webinars in English and Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/using-wic-food-lists-identify-grains-cacfp>

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Whole Grain-rich Requirement ("Related Resources" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

For more information, visit the “Grains Component” 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/cacfp/crediting/identify_creditable_grains_snp_preschool.pdf.

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