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

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

For information on the preschool meal patterns, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Contents

Overview of Crediting Requirements for Grains 2
Allowable Grain Foods 2
Grain-Based Desserts Prohibited 3
Crediting Sweet Crackers 3
Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement 4
- Preschool WGR criteria 4
- Serving the same WGR foods to preschoolers and grades K-12 5

Crediting Requirements 6
- Crediting requirements for commercial grain products 6
- Steps for identifying creditable commercial grain products in groups A-E and H 7
- Crediting requirements for commercial combination foods 8
- Steps for identifying creditable commercial combination foods with grain portion 9
- Crediting requirements for breakfast cereals 10
- Crediting requirements for grain foods made from scratch 11
- Oz eq contribution of grain foods made from scratch 11

Required Crediting Documentation 12
- Documentation for commercial grain products 12
- Documentation for grain foods made from scratch 13
- Storing crediting documentation 13

Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes 14
- Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart 14
- Method 2: creditable grains 15
- Grain crediting tools 15

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children 16
Resources 16

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 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" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Allowable Grain Foods

The grains component for the preschool meal patterns 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.

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

Grain-Based Desserts Prohibited

Grain-based desserts do not credit 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.

> School food authorities (SFAs) cannot serve the same grain-based desserts in menus for preschool and grades K-12 because grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.

For more information about 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.

Crediting Sweet Crackers

Sweet crackers (like graham crackers and animal crackers) are not included in the restrictions for grain-based desserts. They may be served at any preschool meal or afterschool snack. However, as a best practice, the USDA encourages preschool menus 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 afterschool snacks served to preschoolers.



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

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 simply 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.

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, grain foods must meet the requirements below.

- **Commercial grain products** (such as breads, crackers, pancakes, pasta, and cooked breakfast cereals) must contain a whole grain as the greatest ingredient by weight and any other grains must be enriched.
- **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 and any other grains in the grain portion must be enriched.
- **RTE breakfast cereals** must list a whole grain as the first ingredient, be fortified, and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Cooked breakfast cereals** must be 100 percent whole grain or contain a blend of whole and enriched grains that is at least 50 percent whole grain; and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **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 preschool 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 05-2025: *Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers*. Additional guidance is available in the "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

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

SFAs must consider the different meal pattern requirements for preschool and grades K-12 when making menu planning and purchasing decisions for WGR grain foods that will be served to both groups. Grain foods served to both groups must meet the stricter WGR criteria for grades K-12.

The USDA allows an exception for co-mingled meals or afterschool snacks. "Co-mingling" is the practice of serving meals or afterschool snacks to a variety of grades in the same service area at the same time. This typically occurs due to operational constraints within a school, such as limited time and space. An example of co-mingling is preschoolers and grades K-5 eating meals or afterschool snacks in the same service area at the same time.

When preschoolers and older grades are co-mingled, SFAs may use the meal pattern of the older grades for preschoolers if the meal service meets three criteria: 1) the preschoolers and students from older grade groups are served together in the same place at the same time; 2) it is hard to tell the preschoolers from older students; and 3) it would be operationally difficult to serve different foods or different amounts of foods during the combined meal service.

For more information, visit the "Co-mingled Meals and Afterschool Snacks" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on co-mingled meals is available in Module 10: Co-mingled Meal Service of the CSDE's *Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs.*

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

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).

Some examples of commercial grain products are below. 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.

These products credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns.

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

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

Menu planners may use the steps below 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 chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (known as Exhibit A).

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 ¼ ounce equivalent of the grains component?
    - Yes: The food is creditable.
    - No: The food is not creditable.

If the food is creditable, the SFA must determine the required weight or volume needed to meet the meal pattern requirements (refer to "Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes" in this document).

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

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). 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.

Some examples of combination foods that contain a grain portion are below. 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. Breading 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. Breading set in vegetable oil.

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

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

Steps for identifying creditable commercial combination foods with grain portion

Menu planners may use the steps below 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 ¼ ounce equivalent of the grains component?
    - Yes: The food is creditable.
    - No: The food is not creditable.

If the food is creditable, the SFA must determine the weight or volume needed to meet the meal pattern requirements (refer to "Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes" in this document).

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) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.

To credit as a WGR food, breakfast cereals must meet the limit for added sugars 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 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

> Breakfast cereals that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 will also meet the preschool WGR criteria. To simply 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.

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

Crediting requirements for grain foods made from scratch

Grain foods made from scratch must be WGR or enriched.

- **Enriched grain foods:** A grain food made from scratch is enriched if enriched grains are the greatest ingredient by weight in the SFA's standardized recipe.

- **WGR foods:** A grain food made from scratch is WGR if the combined amount of all whole grains in the SFA's standardized recipe is equal to or more than the combined amount of all other creditable grains (enriched grains, bran, and germ).

SFAs must maintain standardized recipes that document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch used in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks.

Oz eq contribution of grain foods made from scratch

SFAs must determine the oz eq contribution of the standardized recipe's 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 show how these crediting requirements apply.

- **Example 1:** 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 pasta (enriched, whole grain, or WGR) or 28 grams of creditable grains.

- **Example 2:** 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.

Refer to "Grain crediting tools" in this document for resources that help menu planners determine the oz eq contribution of creditable standardized recipes.

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

Required Crediting Documentation

SFAs must be able to document that all grain menu items served in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks meet the crediting requirements for the grains component. The guidance below summarizes the required documentation for commercial grain products and grain foods made from scratch. Documentation must be based on the food yields and crediting information in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG).

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

Documentation for commercial grain products

A PFS from the manufacturer is required if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if the grain product meets the crediting criteria.

> When a PFS is required, the USDA requires that SFAs must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks. 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*.

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

For guidance on reviewing PFS forms, visit the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement webpage. Guidance on how to review a grain PFS is available in the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Training on the requirements for PFS forms is available in Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Note: SFAs may also document meal pattern compliance with a Child Nutrition (CN) label if the creditable grain portion is part of a CN-labeled meat or meat alternate product such as pizza or breaded chicken nuggets. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Documentation for grain foods made from scratch

SFAs must have standardized recipes on file that document the crediting information 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 school recipes.

Standardized recipes for whole-grain foods credit as the grains component based on the grams of whole grains per serving. If the standardized recipe indicates the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving, menu planners may use the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) for the applicable grain group in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to "Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes" in this document). For guidance on determining oz eq, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs*.

For information on standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Storing crediting documentation

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

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

Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*, indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements.

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 ¼ 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.

For detailed guidance on how to use each method, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs.* Training on oz eq is available in Module 15: Grain Ounce Equivalents of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs.*

Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's Exhibit A chart 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.

For guidance on determining the oz eq of a grain menu item, refer to the CSDE's resource, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*.



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, enriched grain foods in groups A-E must contain 16 grams of creditable grains and enriched grain 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*.

Grain crediting tools

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

- **USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** The FBG's online *Exhibit A Grains Tool* determines the oz eq of commercial grain products.
- **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.
- **CSDE's resource for using the Exhibit A Grain Chart:** The CSDE's resource, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*, 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).

For additional guidance, visit the "Serving Requirements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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

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

Co-mingled Meals and Afterschool Snacks (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/meal-service#Comingled

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_cereals_snp.pdf

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

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

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.fna.usda.gov/tn/determining-ounce-equivalents-grains-cacfp-recipes

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

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg

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

Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp

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

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

How to Spot Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/spot-whole-grain-rich-foods

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

Identifying Whole Grain-Rich Foods for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Using the Ingredient List (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/identifying-whole-grain-rich-foods

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

Is My Recipe Whole Grain-Rich in the Child and Adult Care Food Program? (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/recipe-whole-grain-rich

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements

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

Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes

USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program

USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation

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

Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/wic-lists-grains

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

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

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

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

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/identify_creditable_grains_snp_preschool.pdf.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

CONNECTICUT
Education

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

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.