Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

School Year 2026-27 (July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027)

This guidance helps school food authorities (SFAs) meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 and encourage student selections of reimbursable meals with offer versus serve (OVS). The NSLP meal patterns also apply to the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP.

For detailed guidance on the NSLP meal pattern requirements, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Menu Planning Guide for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program* and visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. The CSDE's training program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12, provides comprehensive guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements.



Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Contents

Lunch Meal Patterns 3
Required Crediting Documentation 4
- Documentation for commercial processed products 4
- Documentation for foods made from scratch 4
- Storing crediting documentation 5

Milk Component 5
- Additional milk requirements for public schools 6

Vegetables Component 6
Fruits Component 7
- Fruit and vegetables juices 7

Grains Component 7
- Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement 7
- WGR criteria 8
- Required ounce equivalents (oz eq) of grains 9

MMA Component 9
- Required oz eq of MMA 9

Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards) 11
- Changes for school year 2027-28 11

Offer versus Serve (OVS) at Lunch 12
- Sample OVS daily lunch menu for grades 9-12 12
- Staff training for OVS 13
- Required cafeteria signage 13

Resources 14

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Lunch Meal Patterns

The NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12 use a food-based menu planning approach for three required grade groups (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). The lunch meal patterns for each grade group require minimum daily and weekly amounts of five meal components, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (MMA).

The weekly requirements for vegetables, fruits, and milk are the sum of the daily requirements. The weekly requirements for grains and MMA are ranges; menus must provide at least the minimum but may exceed the maximum. The maximum provides a guide for planning meals that meet the weekly dietary specifications.

School food authorities (SFAs) may offer larger amounts of any meal component if the weekly lunch weekly menu meets the dietary specifications (refer to "Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards)" in this document).

The NSLP meal patterns are available in the "Lunch Meal Patterns" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For guidance on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.



Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Required Crediting Documentation

SFAs must be able to document that all menu items in reimbursable lunches meet the crediting requirements of NSLP meal patterns. Documentation must be based on the food yields and crediting information in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG).

Documentation for commercial processed products

SFAs must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) on file for all commercial processed products that are not listed in the FBG. For guidance on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*. Training on the requirements for CN labels and 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*.

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*.

For more information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, *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 guidance is available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Documentation for foods made from scratch

SFAs must have standardized recipes on file that document meal pattern contribution for all foods prepared from scratch. For information on standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs* and the Institute of Child Nutrition's USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs, and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the requirements for standardized recipes is available in Module 7: Meal Pattern Documentation for School Menus of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Storing crediting documentation

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.

Milk Component

Effective January 14, 2026, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 revised the NSLP meal patterns to allow whole and reduced fat (2%) milk, in addition to low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. Allowable types of milk also include lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT). These types of milk may be unflavored or flavored.

The USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires that flavored milk in reimbursable meals cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

Lunch menus must offer at least 1 cup of milk daily for all grades. SFAs may choose which types of milk to offer but must provide a variety (at least two different choices) including at least one unflavored milk choice. For additional guidance, refer to USDA Memo SP 01-2026: Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 – Implementation Requirements for the National School Lunch Program.

For more information on the milk component, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Comparison of the Milk Component Requirements in the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs*, and *USDA Memo SP 01-2025: Fluid Milk Requirements for School Meals*, and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Additional milk requirements for public schools

Milk available for sale to students in public schools must also meet the requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). The state beverage requirements apply to milk sold as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and snacks in the school nutrition programs. The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or residential child care institutions (RCCIs). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, Allowable Beverages for Connecticut Public Schools, and visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot exceed 4 grams of sugars per ounce. Products that meet the federal and state requirements for milk are in list 16 on the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage. This webpage includes brand-specific lists of foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that meet the requirements of the state beverage statute.

Vegetables Component

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent vegetable juices. Vegetable juices cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings (refer to "Fruit and vegetables juices" in this document).

Lunch menus must offer at least ¾ cup of vegetables daily for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 1 cup daily for grades 9-12. Lunch menus for each grade group must also include minimum weekly amounts of the five vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program*.

All vegetables credit based on volume except raw leafy greens, which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of spinach or lettuce credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

The meal pattern serving refers to the amount of vegetables before added ingredients, such as the sauce in baked beans or mayonnaise in potato salad. A serving of canned vegetables must be drained. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on their rehydrated volume and require a PFS. For more information on the vegetables component, visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Fruits Component

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits; canned fruits in juice, water, or light syrup; and pasteurized 100 percent fruit juices. All fruits credit based on volume except dried fruits, which credit as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of raisins or dried apricots credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

Lunch menus must offer at least ½ cup of fruits daily for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 1 cup daily for grades 9-12. For more information on the fruits component, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Fruit and vegetables juices

Fruit and vegetable juices must be pasteurized 100 percent juices. Fruit juices cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings and vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades 6-8 offers 2½ cups of the fruits component, the weekly amount of all offered fruit juices cannot exceed 1¼ cups.

The juice limit applies to all sources of 100 percent juice served at lunch during the week, including fruit and vegetable juices, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Grains Component

Commercial grain products and grain foods made from scratch must be whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched. Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified, and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For more information on the grains component, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement

At least 80 percent of the grains offered at lunch must be WGR based on the total oz eq of all offered grains (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the School Nutrition Programs*). For more information on the WGR requirement and criteria, visit "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Grains that are not WGR must be enriched and cannot exceed 20 percent of the offered weekly grains. For guidance on enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

WGR criteria

The WGR criteria depend on the grain group where the grain item belongs in the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*, indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements.

- **Commercial grain products (groups A-H):** Grain products in groups A-G (such as breads, muffins, pancakes, and crackers) and group H (such as rice, pasta, and quinoa) must meet two WGR criteria: 1) the product is 100 percent whole grain or contains a blend of whole and enriched grains that is at least 50 percent whole grain; and 2) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for group H.

- **RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** RTE breakfast cereals must meet three WGR criteria: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; 2) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion; and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Fortification is not required for RTE breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** Cooked breakfast cereals must meet three WGR criteria: 1) the product is 100 percent whole grain or contains a blend of whole and enriched grains that is at least 50 percent whole grain; 2) noncreditable grains cannot exceed 6.99 grams per portion; and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Commercial combination foods containing a grain portion from groups A-I:** The grain portion (such as pizza crust in pizza, noodles in lasagna, and breading on chicken nuggets) must meet two WGR criteria: 1) the grain portion is 100 percent whole grain or contains a blend of whole and enriched grains that is at least 50 percent whole grain; and 2) noncreditable grains in the grain portion cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H-I.

For comprehensive guidance on the WGR criteria, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Required ounce equivalents (oz eq) of grains

Lunch menus must offer at least 1 oz eq of grains daily for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 2 oz eq daily for grades 9-12. The weekly five-day menu must offer at least 8 oz eq of grains for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 10 oz eq for grades 9-12. The weekly seven-day menu must offer at least 1 oz eq of grains for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 14 oz eq for grades 9-12. The weekly maximum oz eq are not required but provide a guide for planning meals that meet the dietary specifications (refer to "Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards)" in this document).

The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*, indicates the Exhibit A oz eq for the grains component. The serving size of commercial grain products and standardized recipes used in school lunch menus must meet the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart or provide the minimum creditable grains. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs*, and *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*.

MMA Component

MMA must be served in a main dish or a main dish and one other food item. Lunch menus must offer at least 1 oz eq of MMA daily for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 2 oz eq daily for grades 9-12. The weekly five-day menu must offer at least 8 oz eq of MMA for grades K-5, at least 9 oz eq for grades 6-8, and at least 10 oz eq for grades 9-12. The weekly seven-day menu must offer at least 11 oz eq for grades K-5, at least 12½ oz eq for grades 6-8, and at least 14 oz eq for grades 9-12. The weekly maximum oz eq are not required but provide a guide for planning menus that meet the dietary specifications (refer to "Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards)" in this document).

Required oz eq of MMA

The MMA quantities in the NSLP meal patterns refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish without added liquid, binders, and extenders (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs*);
- 1 ounce of cheese;
- 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute;
- ¼ cup of cooked beans, peas, and lentils (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*);
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs*);
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs*);
- ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs*);
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains only soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs ingredients (tempeh products with other ingredients require a CN label or PFS);
- 3 ounces of surimi (alternate crediting amounts must be documented with a PFS);
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt that does not exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*); and
- 1 ounce of alternate protein product (APP) that meets the USDA's APP requirements (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs*).

Commercial processed products (such as combination foods, deli meats, and sausages) do not credit based on weight; 1 ounce does not equal 1 oz eq of MMA. These foods require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information (refer to "Crediting Documentation" in this document and the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs*).

For more information on the MMA component, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards)

Lunch menus for each grade group must meet the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. These nutrition standards are indicated at the bottom of each NSLP meal pattern. When selecting food items to help school lunch menus meet the dietary specifications, menu planners should consider nutrition information and limit noncreditable foods (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*).

For information on the nutrition standards for calories and sodium, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Weekly Calorie Ranges for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and *Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

For additional guidance on the dietary specifications, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and visit the "Dietary Specifications" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Changes for school year 2027-28

Effective with school year 2027-28 (July 1, 2027), the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires a new dietary specification for added sugars in school meals (less than 10 percent of calories) and the final sodium limit applies. Schools must implement a 15 percent reduction for lunch from the current sodium limits.

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Offer versus Serve (OVS) at Lunch

OVS allows students to decline a certain number of meal components in the meal and select the foods they prefer to eat, while reducing food cost and waste. OVS at lunch is required for senior high schools but is optional for all other grades.

For reimbursable meals with OVS, lunch menus must offer all five meal components and students must select at least three meal components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components. Except for fruits and vegetables, student selections of less than the minimum daily serving do not count as a meal component for reimbursable meals with OVS.

Sample OVS daily lunch menu for grades 9-12

Entrees: MMA and grains	**Vegetables**	**Fruits**	**Milk**
Choose one	**Choose two**	**Choose two**	**Choose one**
Baked chicken with enriched cornbread	Carrot sticks	Apple	Fat-free milk
Hamburger on whole grain-rich bun	Broccoli florets	Banana	Low-fat milk
Southwest chili with whole-grain roll	Garden salad	Blueberries	Low-fat chocolate milk (no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces)
	Green beans	Green grapes	
	Seasoned corn	Sliced peaches	

For more information about OVS, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Overview of Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in the School Breakfast Program* and *Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals*, and visit the CSDE's Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the OVS requirements for lunch is available in Module 18: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Staff training for OVS

SFAs must provide adequate training for school food service staff on how to recognize reimbursable meals with OVS. In addition to regular training, a recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is conducting a daily pre-service meeting with cashiers and servers to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. This helps to ensure that all food service staff (including substitutes) can accurately identify reimbursable meals.

Required cafeteria signage

SFAs are required to post two different types of cafeteria signage for lunch. This signage must clearly indicate the meal components for each daily menu choice and what students may select for a reimbursable meal.

1. **Signage to identify the foods and amounts offered for all planned reimbursable meals:** SFAs must post signage to identify all planned reimbursable meals (i.e., offered full meals), including the meal components and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each meal component. This signage must be located near or at the beginning of each serving line. This requirement applies to all schools, including schools that do not implement OVS and schools that implement family-style meal service.

2. **Signage that indicates the required student selections for reimbursable meals with OVS:** SFAs must post signage that indicates the required student selections for all reimbursable meal choices with OVS. This signage must be located at all applicable points in the serving line where the meal components are available. For example, if the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers all fruits in ½-cup servings, the serving line signage must indicate that students may select up to two choices but must select at least one choice. This requirement applies only to schools that implement OVS.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Signage Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and visit the "Required Signage for OVS" section of the CSDE's Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Resources

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

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs

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

Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_crediting_snp.pdf

Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_ charts_ snp.pdf

Dietary Specifications (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/dietary-specifications

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

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

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_snp.pdf

Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

Guide to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_meal_patterns_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal_pattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_snp.pdf

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs

Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/forms-for-school-nutrition-programs#m

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning

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

Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/offer-versus-serve-for-school-nutrition-programs

Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition//-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/ovs_guide_snp.pdf

Signage Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/signage_requirements_nslp_sbp.pdf

Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/sodium_limits_nslp_sbp.pdf

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

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 SP 01-2026: Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 – Implementation Requirements for the National School Lunch Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/nslp/wmfhka-implementation

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-042524

USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 25073):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-050826

USDA Memo SP 05-2026, CACFP 03-2026, SFSP 03-2026: 2026 Appropriations Act: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/schoolmeals/appropriations-act-effect-cnp2026

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

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

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

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

Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025:
https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/222/text

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

For more information, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage and 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/nslp/mealpattern/overview_menu_planning_nslp_grades_k-12.pdf.

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Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program

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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.