School Breakfast Program (SBP)
Preschool Meal Pattern

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

Breakfast meal components [1]	**Minimum for ages 1-2**	**Minimum for ages 3-5**
Milk, fluid [2]	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	6 fluid ounces (¾ cup)
Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both [3, 4, 5]	¼ cup	½ cup
Grains, ounce equivalents (oz eq) [6, 7, 8, 9]	**½ oz eq =**	**½ oz eq =**
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread or bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq [10]	½ oz eq [10]
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal [11], cereal grain [12], or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds [11]	½ cup	½ cup
Puffed [11]	¾ cup	¾ cup
Granola [11]	⅛ cup	⅛ cup

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Menu Planning Notes

[1] Breakfast must include the minimum serving of the three meal components. Use the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine how foods credit and the amount that provides the required meal pattern serving. Commercial processed foods not listed in the FBG require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to document crediting information. School food authorities must verify PFS forms for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. Foods made from scratch require a standardized recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. For information on crediting documentation, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resources, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*, and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. The CSDE's Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs provides comprehensive guidance on meeting the preschool meal pattern and crediting requirements.

[2] Milk must be pasteurized and meet state and local standards. Unflavored whole milk is required for age 1. Effective June 8, 2026, the U. S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, allows unflavored whole milk, reduced fat (2%) milk, low-fat (1%) milk, and fat-free milk for ages 2 and older. These allowable types of milk include lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT). For children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability, school food authorities may choose to offer optional nondairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk) that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (7 CFR 210.10(d)(2)(ii)). For guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs*. For more information, visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[3] The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent vegetable juice. Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of lettuce or spinach credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. 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. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend that preschool menus include at least one serving per week of each vegetable subgroup (dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other).

For information on the vegetables component, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[4] The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent fruit juice. The creditable serving of canned fruit in 100 percent juice may include the juice but cannot include water or syrup. Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. For information on the fruits component, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[5] Pasteurized 100 percent juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes all fruit and vegetable juices, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[6] Commercial grain products and standardized recipes must be made with creditable grains (whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ) and must be WGR or enriched. For information on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs*, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*, and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[7] At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. To meet the preschool meal pattern WGR criteria, foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and visit "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

[8] Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. Sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers) are allowed but the CSDE recommends limiting them to no more

than twice per week between all preschool meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the USDA's resource, *Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

[9] Meats/meat alternates (MMA) may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. One oz eq of MMA substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component. For more information, refer to the USDA's resource, *Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Breakfast*, and visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[10] To credit as the required oz eq, the serving of a commercial grain product or standardized recipe must provide either: 1) the required serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs* and *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*); or 2) the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs* and *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*). For more information, visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

[11] RTE and cooked breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified, and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

[12] Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

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For more information on the preschool meal patterns, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/breakfast_meal_pattern_preschool.pdf.

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