Guide to the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

National School Lunch Program • School Breakfast Program

Afterschool Snack Program • Seamless Summer Option

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



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About this Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Guide to the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs* provides detailed guidance and resources to assist school food authorities (SFAs) with planning menus to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) preschool meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. Meals and snacks offered in the SSO follow the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal pattern requirements.

The requirements in this guide apply to all public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that provide NSLP and SBP preschool meals and ASP preschool snacks.

> This guide reflects the USDA regulations and policies in effect as of the publication date. Please note that this information may change. The CSDE will update this guide whenever the USDA issues new guidance for the preschool meal patterns. Please check the "Menu Planning Guidance Series" section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage for the most current version. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/guide_preschool_meal_patterns.pdf.

Questions regarding this guide may be directed to Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, at 860-807-2075 or susan.fiore@ct.gov.

CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series

The CSDE's menu planning guidance series for the preschool meal patterns includes four comprehensive guides designed to assist SFAs with meeting the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns and meal service requirements.

- Guide to the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs
- Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs (applies to the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool)
- Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs (applies to the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool)
- Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs

These guides are available in the "Menu Planning Guidance Series" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Contact Information

For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and ASP, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. The CSDE's resource, *County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs,* indicates each Connecticut county's assigned CSDE school nutrition team member who provides technical assistance for the USDA school nutrition programs.

For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities*.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

APP	alternate protein product
AR	Administrative Review
ASP	Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CN	Child Nutrition
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG	Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FDP	Food Distribution Program
FNA	Food and Nutrition Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture
FR	Federal Register
ICN	Institute of Child Nutrition
LEA	local educational agency
MMA	meats/meat alternates
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
oz eq	ounce equivalents
PFS	product formulation statement

RCCI	residential child care institution
RTE	ready to eat
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SOP	standard operating procedure
SSO	Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP
SFA	school food authority
TCS	Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WGR	whole grain-rich
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Common Acronyms and Abbreviations in the School Nutrition Programs*.



1 — Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns

The goal of the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs is to improve and maintain children's health and nutrition while promoting the development of good eating habits. The preschool meal patterns for ages 1-5 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP are designed to meet children's calorie needs, provide key nutrients, and align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These meal patterns help young children eat the types and amounts of foods that best support their growth and development.

School food authorities (SFAs) are eligible for USDA reimbursement when preschool meals and afterschool snacks contain the minimum serving of each required meal component for each age group and meet all crediting requirements.

Meal Pattern Legislation

The preschool meal patterns are the same as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns for children. The current USDA preschool meal patterns were effective October 1, 2017, as legislated by the USDA final rule, *CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (81 FR 24347).

The preschool breakfast meal pattern requirements are defined in section 7 CFR 220.8(o) of the SBP regulations. The preschool lunch meal pattern is defined in section 7 CFR 210.10(p) of the NSLP regulations. The preschool snack meal pattern is defined in section 7 CFR 210.10(p) the NSLP regulations. The SSO follows the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns.

The current preschool meal patterns were effective October 1, 2017, as legislated by the USDA final rule, *CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*. This final rule updated the preschool meal patterns to align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* by including more whole grains and a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, and reducing added sugars and solid fats in preschool menus.

Meal pattern changes effective July 1, 2025

On April 25, 2024, the USDA published the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (89 FR 31962). This final rule implemented gradual updates to the Child Nutrition Programs in several key areas, including the preschool meal patterns.

Effective July 1, 2025, the final rule changed the product-based limits for sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars.

- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Breakfast cereals (ready-to eat and cooked) cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

For more information on the final rule changes, refer to the CSDE's *Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Meal pattern changes effective June 8, 2026

Effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, changes the fluid milk requirements for ages 2 and older in the preschool meal patterns. Allowable types of milk include unflavored whole milk and reduced fat (2%) milk in addition to the previously allowed low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk. SFAs may choose which type of fluid milk to offer in preschool menus for ages 2-5. Unflavored whole milk is still required for age 1.

Required Age Groups

The preschool meal patterns include two age groups: 1-2 and 3-5. When a 5-year-old is in preschool or a 4-year-old is in kindergarten, SFAs may serve the appropriate meal pattern for that grade. If a 5-year-old is in preschool, the preschool meal patterns apply.

If a 4-year-old is in kindergarten, the appropriate meal pattern for that school's grade grouping applies. The breakfast meal pattern grade groups could be grades K-5, grades K-8, or grades K-12. The lunch meal pattern grade groups could be grades K-5 or grades K-8. The ASP meal pattern grade group is K-12.

Reimbursable Meals and Snacks

The preschool meal patterns consist of minimum servings of specific meal components for each age group. Meals and afterschool snacks served to children are eligible for USDA reimbursement when they contain the minimum serving of each required meal component. Reimbursable meals may also contain additional foods beyond the minimum requirements (refer to "Additional Foods" in this section).

Meal Components

A meal component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks. These meal components include milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (MMA).

- **Breakfast:** The breakfast meal pattern consists of three meal components: 1) milk; 2) vegetables, fruits, or both; and 3) grains. MMA may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week.

- **Lunch:** The lunch meal pattern consists of five meal components: 1) milk; 2) MMA; 3) vegetables; 4) fruits; and 5) grains. Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch

- **Snack:** The snack meal pattern consists of an4 two of the five meal components: 1) milk; 2) MMA; 3) vegetables; 4) fruits; and 5) grains.

Each meal component has specific crediting requirements. All foods and beverages must meet these requirements to credit as a meal component of reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks. This includes commercial products, foods made from scratch by the SFA, and foods prepared by vendors.

Section 2 provides an overview of the five meal components. For information on the specific crediting requirements for each meal component, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs*.







Menu Items

Menu items contribute to the meal components. A menu item is any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk.

Menu items may contribute to one or more meal components. For example, a hamburger (MMA component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one menu item that contributes to two meal components.

Required Servings

The preschool meal patterns require minimum servings of each meal component. Meals and afterschool snacks that contain less than the minimum serving of any meal component do not meet the preschool meal patterns and are not reimbursable.

For example, the breakfast meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both. If the breakfast menu contains less than ½ cup, these meals are not reimbursable.

Additional Foods

Preschool menus may include additional (extra) foods or larger servings beyond the minimum meal pattern requirements. Additional foods include creditable and noncreditable foods served in addition to the minimum meal pattern requirements.

- Creditable foods are additional servings of a meal component, such as larger servings of fruits and vegetables.
- Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not credit toward the meal patterns (refer to "Noncreditable Foods" in this section).

Preschoolers have small appetites. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of additional foods based on the nutritional needs of each age group. When offering additional foods, the CSDE encourages menu planners to choose nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to the nutritional needs of each age group. Examples include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat milk products, beans, peas, and lentils, and lean meats, fish, poultry.

Nutrition Standards and Restrictions

The preschool meal patterns require nutrition standards for some specific foods and prohibit certain foods. These requirements are summarized below.

Nutrition standards

The nutrition standards for the preschool meal patterns include product-based limits for sugars in yogurt and breakfast cereals and a minimum protein requirement for tofu.

- Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (¼ cup).

Products that do not meet these requirements do not credit in preschool meals and snacks.

Prohibited foods

Grain-based desserts are not allowed in the preschool meal patterns (refer to "Grain-based desserts prohibited" in section 2). The preschool meal patterns also prohibit deep-fat frying foods on site, i.e., cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat.

Noncreditable foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the meal components of the preschool meal patterns. These include foods and beverages that:

- are offered in quantities too small to credit (such as 1 tablespoon of applesauce or ⅛ ounce of cheese); or
- do not belong to the five meal components.

Some examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. Some noncreditable foods cannot be served or should be served only in moderation.

For guidance and more examples of noncreditable foods, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*.

Preschool Meal Patterns

The charts in this section show the preschool meal patterns for breakfast (table 1-1), lunch (table 1-2), and snack (table 1-3). Menu planning notes for each meal component are provided in the online versions of the preschool meal patterns, which are available on the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Training on the preschool meal patterns is available in Module 2: Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns, of the CSDE's Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs.



Table 1-1. Preschool breakfast meal pattern

Breakfast meal components	Minimum for ages 1-2	Minimum for ages 3-5
Milk, fluid	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	6 fluid ounces (¾ cup)
Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both	¼ cup	½ cup
Grains, ounce equivalents (oz eq)	**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	½ oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup

Table 1-2. Preschool lunch meal pattern

Lunch meal components	Minimum for ages 1-2	Minimum for ages 3-5
Milk, fluid	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	6 fluid ounces (¾ cup)
Meats/meat alternates (MMA), ounce equivalents (oz eq)	**1 oz eq =**	**1½ oz eq =**
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs); or tempeh	1 ounce	1½ ounces
Surimi	3 ounces	4.4 ounces
Tofu	2.2 ounces (¼ cup)	3.3 ounces (⅜ cup)
Cottage cheese	2 ounces (¼ cup)	3 ounces (⅜ cup)
Egg, large	½	¾
Beans, peas, and lentils	¼ cup	⅜ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut/seed butters	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1 ounce	1½ ounces
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 ounces (½ cup)	6 ounces (¾ cup)
Vegetables, cups	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits, cups	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains, oz eq	**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	½ oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup

Table 1-3. Preschool afterschool snack meal pattern

Snack meal components ***Serve any two***	**Minimum for ages 1-2**	**Minimum for ages 3-5**
Milk, fluid	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)	4 fluid ounces (½ cup)
Meats/meat alternates (MMA), ounce equivalents (oz eq)	**½ oz eq =**	**½ oz eq =**
Lean meat, poultry, or fish; cheese; alternate protein products (APPs); or tempeh	½ ounce	½ ounce
Surimi	2 ounces	2 ounces
Tofu	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)	1.1 ounces (⅛ cup)
Cottage cheese	1 ounce (⅛ cup)	1 ounce (⅛ cup)
Egg, large	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils	⅛ cup	⅛ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut/seed butters	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	½ ounce	½ ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	2 ounces (¼ cup)	2 ounces (¼ cup)
Vegetables, cups	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits, cups	½ cup	½ cup
Grains, oz eq	**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	½ oz eq
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified RTE breakfast cereal (dry, cold): Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup
Puffed	¾ cup	¾ cup
Granola	⅛ cup	⅛ cup

Overview of Preschool Meal Pattern Requirements

This section summarizes the requirements for the preschool meal patterns. Section 2 provides an overview of the crediting requirements for each meal component.

Breakfast requirements

Breakfast menus for preschoolers must meet the requirements below.

- **Required meal components:** Breakfast menus must include three meal components (milk component, vegetables and fruits component, and grains component). The serving of each meal component must be at least the minimum quantity for each age group in the preschool breakfast meal pattern (refer to table 1-2 in this section).

- **Breakfast cereals:** Cooked and RTE breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in this section). This information may be listed on the preschool menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all cereals served in preschool menus.

- **Cereal with milk:** The preschool menu must list the specific type of cereal as one meal component (e.g., whole-grain granola) and the specific type of fluid milk as another (e.g., unflavored low-fat milk). "Cereal with milk" does not indicate that the breakfast menu provides the required amount of cereal or the required amount and appropriate type of milk for each age group.

- **Documenting types of juices, fruits, and vegetables:** SFAs must document the specific types of juices, fruits, and vegetables served at breakfast. For example, the menu planner should indicate "orange juice" instead of "juice," and "banana or diced peaches" instead of "fresh fruit choice." This information may be listed on the preschool menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of juices, fruits, and vegetables served in preschool menus.

- **Juice limit:** Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. If the menu planner credits juice as the vegetables and fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other meal or snack that same day (refer to "Juice limit" in section 2).

- **Substituting MMA for grains:** The MMA component may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component. This provision applies regardless of the number of days in the week. For example, the menu planner could

choose to substitute the MMA component for the entire grains component three times during a three-day week or three times during a five-day week. For more information, refer to the USDA's resource, *Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast*.

- **Water availability:** SFAs must make water available during the meal service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components. For guidance on the requirements for water, refer to section 7 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

For additional guidance and breakfast menu ideas, refer to the USDA's *It's Breakfast Time! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age*. More resources are available under "Breakfast" in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Lunch requirements

Lunch menus for preschoolers must meet the requirements below.

- **Required meal components:** Lunches must include five meal components (milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits (or vegetable substitutions), and grains). The serving offered for each meal component must be at least the minimum quantity in the preschool lunch meal pattern (refer to table 1-3 in this section).

- **Substituting vegetables for fruits:** Vegetables may substitute for the fruits component at any lunch. Lunch menus must include one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component, or two different servings of the vegetables component. Lunches cannot contain two servings of only the fruits component.

- **Documenting types of vegetables and fruits:** SFAs must document the specific types of vegetables and fruits served at lunch. For example, the menu planner should indicate "garden salad with lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes" instead of "salad," and "fresh fruit salad (apples, oranges, bananas, and strawberries)" instead of "fruit salad." This information may be listed on the preschool menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of vegetables and fruits served in preschool menus.

- **Juice limit:** Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. If the menu planner credits juice as the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast or snack that same day (refer to "Juice limit" in section 2).

- **Water availability:** SFAs must make water available during the meal service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components. For guidance on the requirements for water, refer to section 7 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs*.

For additional guidance and lunch menu ideas, refer to "Lunch" in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Afterschool snack requirements

Afterschool snack menus for preschoolers must meet the requirements below.

- **Required meal components:** Afterschool snack menus must include two of the five meal components (milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains). These meal components must be different. Snacks cannot include two foods from the same meal component. For example, orange juice and applesauce are both from the fruits component, and do not provide a reimbursable snack. The serving offered for each meal component must be at least the minimum quantity in the preschool snack meal pattern (refer to table 1-4 in this section).

- **Best practice for vegetables and fruits:** Afterschool snack menus should include a vegetable or fruit as often as possible. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend offering a vegetable or fruit for at least one of the two required meal components.

- **Beverage limit:** Only one of the two meal components may be a creditable beverage such as milk, juice, or a smoothie. For example, the snack menu cannot include juice when milk is the only other meal component.

- **Juice limit:** Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. If the menu planner credits juice as the vegetables component or fruits component at snack, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast or lunch that same day (refer to "Juice limit" in section 2).

- **Offering milk with yogurt:** If the snack menu includes milk, the other meal component should not be yogurt. The CSDE recommends this practice to increase nutrient variety.

- **Offering more than two food items:** If the snack menu includes more than two different food items, at least two food items must meet the required meal components and servings. An example is a snack that contains yogurt (MMA component), strawberries (fruits component), and granola (grains component). The snack menu or other documentation must clearly indicate the serving size of each menu item and which items contribute to the snack meal pattern.

- **Water availability:** SFAs must make water available during the snack service but cannot offer water in place of the required meal components. Water should be offered as a beverage when the snack menu does not include milk or juice. For guidance on the requirements for water, refer to section 7 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs*.

For additional guidance and snack menu ideas, refer to the USDA's *Let's Make a Snack! Child and Adult Care Food Program Breakfast Menu Planner for Children 3 Through 18 Years of Age* and visit the USDA's Serving Snacks in the CACFP webpage. For more resources, visit "Snacks" in the "Menu Planning" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Meal pattern documentation

SFAs must maintain appropriate documentation to indicate that preschool meals and afterschool snacks meet the applicable meal pattern and crediting requirements for each meal and age group. An overview of these requirements is below. For detailed guidance on the menu documentation requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

- **Menu:** All sites must have a written menu to document that preschool meals and afterschool snacks provide the required meal components and quantities for each age group. For information on preschool menus, refer to section 2 of the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Production records:** SFAs must have daily production records on file for all preschool meals and afterschool snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Production Records in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and section 3 of the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs*. Additional guidance and template forms are available on the CSDE's Production Records for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

- **Commercial processed foods:** SFAs must maintain Child Nutrition (CN) labels or production formulation statement (PFS) forms on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial processed products that are not listed in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). Examples include entrees like pizza, chicken nuggets, deli meats, and hotdogs; and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients (e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad). CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, but they usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of the product, such as vegetables, fruits, and grains. For more information 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*, and visit the "Child Nutrition Labels" section and "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

- **Foods made from scratch:** SFAs must maintain standardized recipes on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods prepared from scratch. Vendors that prepare scratch foods for SFAs must also be able to document the preschool meal pattern contribution of their standardized recipes. Examples of foods prepared from scratch include entrees (such as pizza, macaroni and cheese, and sandwiches), grains (such as pancakes, muffins, and breads), and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients (e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad). For information on standardized recipes, refer to section 4 of 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.

- **Alternate protein products (APPs):** SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that APPs meet the requirements in appendix A of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210) and appendix A of the SBP regulations (7 CFR 220). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Breakfast cereals:** SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that all cooked and RTE breakfast cereals are WGR, enriched, or fortified and meet the limit for added sugars (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in this section). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Tofu and tofu products:** SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that tofu and tofu products contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **WGR foods:** SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that at least one serving of grains per day is WGR. Required documentation for the WGR criteria includes a PFS for commercial foods and a standardized recipe for foods made from scratch. Menu planners must identify WGR foods using one of the USDA's six allowable methods for determining if foods meet the preschool WGR criteria. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> The preschool meal patterns have different WGR criteria from the meal patterns for grades K-12. Grain foods that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 will meet the preschool WGR criteria, excluding grain-based desserts (which do not credit in the preschool meal patterns). For more information, refer to "Grain-based Desserts Prohibited" and "WGR requirement" in section 2.

- **Yogurt and soy yogurt:** SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that yogurt and soy yogurt products meet the limit for added sugars (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in this section). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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 *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.

Offer versus Serve (OVS) is Not Allowed

OVS is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service for breakfast and lunch that allows children in grades K-12 to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable meal. The USDA does not allow OVS for preschool meals in the NSLP and SBP unless the meal service is co-mingled (refer to "Co-mingled meals or snacks" in this section). OVS is not allowed in the ASP.

Meal Modifications for Children with Special Dietary Needs

SFAs must comply with the federal nondiscrimination laws and requirements for meal modifications for children with special dietary needs.

- **Disability reasons:** The USDA requires that SFAs must make reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on written documentation from a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. Case-by-case basis means that the meal modifications are specific to the individual medical condition and dietary needs of each child.

- **Non -disability reasons:** SFAs may choose to make optional meal modifications within the meal patterns on a case-by-case basis for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Optional modifications for non-disability reasons include requests related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences. Meal modifications for non-disability reasons that are within the meal patterns (such as texture modifications or substitutions within the same meal component) do not require a medical statement. Meal modifications for non-disability reasons that are outside the meal patterns require a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

These requirements are summarized in the CSDE's resource, *Overview of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs*. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Choking Prevention for Young Children

Children younger than age 4 are at the highest risk of choking while eating. SFAs should consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer in preschool menus and modify menus as appropriate.

Avoid foods that are choking hazards (such as small marble-sized, sticky, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole). Prepare foods so they are easy for young children to chew and swallow (such as changing the shape, size, and texture of foods). For additional guidance, refer to the USDA's resource, *Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes*, and visit the "Choking Prevention" section of the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving the Same Menu to Preschool and Grades K-12

SFAs must consider the different meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 and preschool when making menu planning and purchasing decisions for foods and beverages that will be served to both groups. Foods and beverages served to both groups must comply with whichever meal pattern requirements are stricter. The examples below show how these requirements apply.

- The meal patterns for grades K-12 require stricter WGR criteria than the preschool meal patterns. Grain foods served to both groups must comply with the WGR criteria for grades K-12.
- The preschool meal patterns do not allow grain-based desserts (refer to "Grain-based Desserts Prohibited" in section 2). If the same menu is served to both groups, it cannot include grain-based desserts.
- The preschool meal patterns do not allow flavored milk. Milk served to both groups must be unflavored.

Preschool menus must meet these requirements unless meals are co-mingled.

Co-mingled meals or snacks

"Co-mingling" is the practice of serving reimbursable meals or snacks to a variety of grades in the same service area at the same time. Examples include preschool and grades K-5 eating together or preschool and grades K-8 eating together. This practice typically occurs due to operational constraints within a school, such as limited time and space.

When meals or afterschool snacks are co-mingled, SFAs may serve the foods and beverages for the meal pattern of the older grades to both grade groups. For guidance on the meal pattern requirements for co-mingled meals, refer to section 4 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Comparison of meal pattern differences for grades K-12 and preschool

A comparison of the meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool is available in the CSDE's resources, *Comparison of Lunch and Breakfast Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool*. Training is available in Module 3: Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12, of the CSDE's Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs.

Guidance on Meeting the Preschool Meal Pattern Requirements

The resources below provide SFAs with information and guidance on the meal pattern requirements for the school nutrition programs.

- Links to the USDA's regulations and final rules for the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs are available on the CSDE's Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
- The USDA provides guidance for implementing the school nutrition programs through the policy memos on their Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) Documents & Resources webpage.
- The CSDE's Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs webpage provides links to relevant USDA memos by year and includes memos from the CSDE Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs on the requirements for the school nutrition programs.
- The CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs webpage provides an alphabetical listing of links to information and guidance on the federal and state requirements for the school nutrition programs, including the meal patterns and dietary specifications, crediting foods and beverages, menu documentation, and meal service.
- The CSDE's weekly e-newsletter for school nutrition programs, School Lunch Tray (SLT), provides important guidance and resources to help SFAs comply with the federal and state requirements, and identifies deadlines for completing required activities and submitting required reports.
- The CSDE's Training for Child Nutrition Programs webpage provides links to recorded trainings on a variety of topics, including the CSDE's training program, *Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs*.
- The CSDE's Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs webpage provides links to guides on a variety of topics, including food safety, menu planning and meal patterns, program administration, school wellness, and special diets.

SFAs may contact their assigned school nutrition team member for more information and program-specific questions.

Menu Planning Resources

The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on planning meals and afterschool snacks to meet the preschool meal patterns.

- CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinars
- CACFP Meal Pattern Posters (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/trainers-tools/posters
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Slides (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-slides
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets
- CACFP Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards
- CACFP Training Tools (USDA webpage): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/trainers-tools
- Choking Prevention (CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs/choking-prevention
- Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_asp.pdf
- Comparison of Lunch and Breakfast Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/comparison_preschool_grades_k-12_snp.pdf
- Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/resources/1575/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers/118740/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers.pdf
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg

- Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/guide_meal_modifications_snp.pdf
- Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources_school_meal_patterns.pdf
- Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents
- Meal Service (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/meal-service
- Menu Forms and Production Records (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/menu-forms-and-production-records
- Menu Planning (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/menu-planning
- Menu Planning Basics: A Guide for CACFP Operators in Child Care (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menu-planning-basics-cacfp/
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning
- Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/preschool-meal-pattern-training
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf

- Serving School Meals to Preschoolers (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers
- 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/menu-planning#Snacks
- Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs
- USDA Final Rule Correction: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the HHFKA of 2010 (81 FR 75671): https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/01/2016-26339/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act
- USDA Final Rule: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24347): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516
- USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 25073): https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-050826
- USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/qas-updated-meal-pattern-requirements
- USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP: https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp
- USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers" https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/flexibility-co-mingled-preschool-meals-questions-and-answers

The CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs* provides a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the preschool meal pattern and crediting requirements.


1%
LOW-FAT
MILK

2 — Overview of Meal Components

This section provides an overview of the requirements for each meal component. For detailed crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Milk Component

Milk must be pasteurized and meet state and local standards. The preschool meal patterns require fluid milk as a beverage. Milk does not credit when used as an ingredient in other foods, such as quiche, puddings, and cream sauces.

Milk is required at breakfast and lunch and may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

Crediting guidance for milk

SFAs must ensure that milk offered in preschool menus meets the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** The minimum creditable amount is the full serving, except for milk in smoothies (refer to "Crediting milk in smoothies" below).
- **Allowable types of milk:** The preschool meal patterns require unflavored whole milk for age 1. The allowable types of milk for ages 2-5 include whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, and fat-free milk. These allowable types of milk include cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk; acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk; and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. Preschool menus must document the type of milk served to each age group.
- **Milk transition for infants and preschoolers:** Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months and 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk. Breastmilk may be used to meet the fluid milk component in the preschool meal patterns.
- **Crediting milk in smoothies:** Milk credit as the milk component when served in smoothies. For smoothies only, the minimum creditable amount of milk is ¼ cup. If a smoothie contains less than the full serving of milk, preschool menus must offer

additional milk to meet the minimum for each age group. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Allowable milk substitutes for non-disability reasons:** The USDA allows two types of milk substitutes for children who do not consume regular cow's milk due to non-disability reasons: 1) lactose-free/reduced milk; and 2) fluid milk substitutes (such as soy milk) that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Lactose-free milk and lactose-free reduced milk are fluid milk and credit the same as regular milk. Fluid milk substitutes require a written request from the parent/guardian, a state licensed healthcare professional, or a registered dietitian that identifies the reason for the milk substitute. For detailed guidance on the requirements and considerations for fluid milk substitutes, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs*. More resources are available in the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **Additional requirements for public schools:** In addition to meeting the meal pattern requirements for milk and milk substitutes, milk and nondairy milk substitutes offered public schools must meet the state beverage requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes. The state beverage statute applies to all beverages available for sale to students on school premises, as part of and separately from reimbursable meals and snacks. Lactose-free/reduced milk cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugar per ounce. Fluid milk substitutes cannot contain artificial sweeteners and cannot exceed 4 grams of sugar per ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. For more information on the state beverage statute, visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the milk component are available in the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

MMA Component

The preschool meal patterns require the MMA component at lunch. MMA are optional at breakfast. MMA may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

The MMA component includes fresh and frozen meats (e.g., lean beef, pork, poultry, fish, and shellfish), processed meats (e.g., chicken nuggets, deli meats, and fish sticks), canned meats (e.g., chicken, tuna, and salmon), and meat alternates (e.g., eggs, cheese, yogurt, nuts and seeds and their butters, beans, peas, and lentils, tofu, and tempeh).

Crediting guidance for MMA

SFAs must ensure that meats and meat alternates offered in preschool menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** MMA credit based on ounce equivalents (oz eq). The minimum creditable amount is ¼ oz eq.
- **Edible portion:** The MMA servings refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Menu planners must use the FBG to determine the yield and edible portion of different types of MMA.
- **Quantity for 1 oz eq:** The quantity that credits as 1 oz eq is based on weight or volume, depending on the type of MMA. A 1-oz eq serving of MMA equals 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 ounce of cheese; 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute; ¼ cup of cooked beans, peas, or lentils; ½ large egg; 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butter; 1 ounce of nuts or seeds; 1 ounce of commercial tofu (must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces);1 ounce of tempeh; 3 ounces of surimi; ½ cup or 4 ounces of yogurt or soy yogurt (cannot exceed 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce); and 1 ounce of alternate protein product (APP).
- **MMA at lunch:** MMA at lunch must be served in the main dish or in the main dish and one other menu item.
- **MMA at breakfast:** T The MMA component is optional at breakfast. Menu planners may choose to substitute MMA for the entire grains component up to three times per week. A 1-oz eq serving of MMA substitutes for 1 oz eq of the grains component. For example, 1 cup of yogurt (1 oz eq) may substitute for ½ cup (1 oz eq) of oatmeal.

- **Alternate protein products (APPs):** Products that contain APPs (such as soy flour, soy concentrate, soy isolate, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein) must meet the USDA's requirements specified in appendix A of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210) and appendix A of the SBP regulations (7 CFR 220). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Pasta made from bean or legume flours:** Pasta made from bean or legume flours may credit toward the MMA component when served with another MMA, such as meat or cheese. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Tofu:** Tofu and tofu products must be commercially prepared, easily recognized as meat substitutes (such as tofu burgers and tofu sausages), and 3contain 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces. or crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Yogurt and soy yogurt:** Yogurt cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

- **Commercial processed MMA products:** Commercial processed MMA products that are not listed in the FBG require a CN label or PFS to document their meal pattern contribution (refer to "Meal pattern documentation" in section 1). Some examples include combination entrees like pizza and chicken nuggets, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages; products formulated with APPs (such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolate and casein), and dried meat, poultry, and seafood products (e.g., jerky and summer sausages). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs*.

> The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend limiting processed meats to no more than one serving per week; and serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the MMA component are available in the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Vegetables Component

The preschool meal patterns require vegetables at lunch. Vegetables and fruits are one meal component at breakfast and may include a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. Vegetables may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength vegetable juice.

The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend that preschool menus include at least one serving per week of the vegetable subgroups recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These include dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information on the vegetable subgroups, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Crediting guidance for vegetables

SFAs must ensure that vegetables offered in preschool menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens and tomato paste and puree. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup.
    - Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of lettuce or spinach credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.
    - Tomato paste and tomato puree credit using the whole food equivalency (volume of tomatoes prior to pureeing) instead of the actual volume served (refer to the FBG for crediting guidance). All other vegetable purees credit based on the finished volume served.
- **Vegetable substitutions at lunch:** Vegetables may replace the fruits component at any lunch. SFAs may offer one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component, or two different servings of the vegetables component. A lunch cannot contain two servings of only the fruits component, without offering vegetables.

- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the MMA component or vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Canned vegetables:** A serving of canned vegetables must be drained.

- **Dried vegetables:** Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit based on their rehydrated volume and require a PFS.

- **Vegetable juices:** Vegetable juices must be pasteurized full-strength juices. Juice credits at only one meal or snack per day. Vegetable juice does not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, except for smoothies.

- **Pureed vegetables in smoothies:** Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit based on the volume (cups) after pureeing. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit as juice and count toward the juice limit. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Mixtures of vegetables and fruits:** Mixtures of vegetables and fruits (such as carrot-raisin salad) credit separately toward the vegetables component and fruits component. The serving must contain at least ⅛ cup of visible vegetables and at least ⅛ cup of visible fruits.

- **Commercial vegetable soups:** Commercial vegetable soups credit based on the yields in the FBG. One cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as ½ cup of vegetables. One cup of commercial vegetable soup (such as tomato and minestrone) credits as ¼ cup of vegetables. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Soups in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the vegetables component are available in the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Fruits Component

The preschool meal patterns require fruits at lunch. Vegetables and fruits are one meal component at breakfast and may include a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. Fruits may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruits, canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice.

Crediting guidance for fruits

SFAs must ensure that fruits offered in preschool menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits. The minimum creditable amount is ⅛ cup.
- **Canned fruits:** The creditable serving of canned fruit in 100 percent juice may include the juice but cannot include water or syrup. For example, ½ cup of diced peaches in juice credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- **Dried fruits:** Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- **Fruit juices:** Fruit juices must be pasteurized full-strength juices. Juice credits at only one meal or snack per day. The daily juice limit applies to all sources of 100 percent juice, including juices that are fresh, frozen, and made from concentrate, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies. Juice does not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, except for 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*.
- **Pureed fruits in smoothies:** Pureed fruits in smoothies credit based on the volume (cups) after pureeing. Pureed fruits in smoothies credit as juice and count toward the juice limit. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.
- **Beverage restriction at snack:** Only one meal component at snack may be a creditable beverage, such as milk or juice. For example, juice cannot be served when milk is the only other meal component at snack.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the fruits component are available in the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Grains Component

The preschool meal patterns require grains at breakfast and lunch. Grains may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack. The grains component includes a variety of foods, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including sweet crackers, such as animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard breadsticks, tortilla chips; and popcorn;
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- RTE breakfast cereals, such as puffed cereals, whole-grain round or flaked cereal, and granola (cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce);
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat (cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce);
- 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.

To credit as the grains component, these foods 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.

Crediting guidance for grains

SFAs must ensure that grains offered in preschool menus meet the requirements below.

- **Meal pattern serving:** The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. The amount that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For more information, refer to "Methods to determine oz eq" in this section.

- **Crediting requirements:** Grain menu items 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*.

- **Breakfast cereals:** Cooked and RTE breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to "Nutrition Standards and Restrictions" in section 1). For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **WGR requirement:** Preschool menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, 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 Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

- **Grain-based desserts are prohibited:** Grain-based desserts are not allowed in the CACFP. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. For more information, visit the USDA's Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

- **Sweet crackers:** Sweet crackers graham crackers and animal crackers may be served in reimbursable meals and snacks. They may be served in reimbursable meals and snacks. 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 in the CACFP.

Additional guidance and crediting resources for the grains component are available in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Methods to determine oz eq

The USDA allows two methods for determining the oz eq of creditable grain products and standardized recipes. These methods are summarized below. SFAs may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. For detailed guidance on how to use each method, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* chart to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the food belongs. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs,* indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements.

This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked)

serving. For more information, 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 the oz eq from the 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 grams of creditable grains are listed in the commercial product's PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the CACFP facility's standardized recipe.

- **Enriched grains:** 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 a WGR food, foods in groups A-E 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 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*.

For more information on oz eq, visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Crediting Resources

The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on the crediting requirements for the meal components of the preschool meal patterns.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_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
- 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 Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/crediting-handbook
- 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
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/training
- Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_snp.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

- 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
- Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/preschool-meal-pattern-training
- Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) for Standardized Recipes (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool
- Standardized Recipe Form for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_schools.docx
- 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 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
- USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs (Institute of Child Nutrition): https://theicn.org/cicn/usda-recipe-standardization-guide-for-school-nutrition-programs/
- 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
- Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA): https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/nutrition-facts-label
- Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/yield_study_form.pdf

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. The CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs* provides a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the preschool meal pattern and crediting requirements.

3 — Resources

This section includes additional resources and websites for the school nutrition programs. More links to information on the federal and state requirements and guidance for school meals are available on the CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs webpages. For a list of resources on the preschool meal patterns and crediting requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs*.

Meal Pattern Legislation and Requirements

C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Sale of beverages:
https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_170.htm#sec_10-221q

CACFP Meal Pattern Updates (CSDE's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-and-adult-care-food-program#MealPatternUpdates

Child Nutrition Programs Legislation and Regulations (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/legislation-regulations

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the CHild and Adult Care Food Prgram (CACFP) (7 CFR 226):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-226

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the School Breakfast Program (7 CFR 220):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs

Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Meal_Pattern_Changes

Meal Patterns (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs#MealPatterns

Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/questions_answers_connecticut_statutes_school_foods_beverages.pdf

Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/summary_final_rule_snp_meal_patterns.pdf

USDA Final Rule: Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24347):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516

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 CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/qas-updated-meal-pattern-requirements

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp

USDA Memo SP 01-2019 and CACFP 01-2019: Guidance for FY19: Updated CACFP Meal Patterns and Updated NSLP and SBP Infant and Preschool Meal Patterns:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/updated-cacfp-meal-patterns-and-updated-nslp-sbp-infant-and-preschool-meal

USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/initial-implementation-meal-patterns-dga

USDA Memo SP 37-2017: Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/flexibility-co-mingled-preschool-meals-questions-and-answers

Program Guidance

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program

Beverage Requirements (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/beverage-requirements

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-nutrition-programs

CT Fresh Ed (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/ct-fresh-ed

Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) Documents and Resources (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/resources

Food Labeling & Nutrition (FDA):
https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/manuals-and-guides-for-child-nutrition-programs

National School Lunch Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/national-school-lunch-program

Nutrition Education (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/nutrition-education

Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/operational-memoranda-for-school-nutrition-programs

Procurement for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/procurement-for-school-nutrition-programs

Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/production-records-for-school-nutrition-programs

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-school-nutrition-programs

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs

School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-breakfast-program

School Lunch Tray and Table Talk (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-lunch-tray-and-table-talk

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/seamless-summer-option-sso-of-the-nslp

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs

Training for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/training-for-child-nutrition-programs

Glossary

a la carte sales: Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs.

added sugars: Sugars and syrups added to foods in processing or preparation, as opposed to the naturally occurring sugars found in nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy products. Names for added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup.

Administrative Review (AR): The state agency's comprehensive offsite and onsite evaluation of all SFAs participating in the NSLP and SBP. The review cycle is every three years for each SFA and includes a review of critical and general areas. For more information, visit the CSDE's Administrative Review for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP): The USDA's federally assisted snack program implemented through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities, e.g., mentoring/tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, visit the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program webpage.

alternate protein products (APPs): APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for crediting APPs in Child Nutrition Programs. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

artificial sweeteners: A category of nonnutritive sweeteners used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. The six artificial sweeteners approved by the FDA include acesulfame potassium (Ace-K) (e.g., Sweet One®, Sunett ®, and Sweet & Safe®); advantame; aspartame (e.g., Nutrasweet®, Equal®, and Sugar Twin®; neotame (e.g., Newtame®); saccharin (e.g., Sweet and Low®, Sweet Twin®, and Necta Sweet); and sucralose (Splenda®). These nonnutritive sweeteners are calorie-free except for aspartame, which is very low in calories. For more information, refer to "nonnutritive sweeteners" in this section.

beans, peas, and lentils (pulses): The dried edible seeds of legumes (such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas) that are one of the five vegetable subgroups recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow beans, peas, and lentils to credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.

bran: The seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Examples include oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran. Bran credits the same as enriched grains.

cereal grains: The seeds that come from grasses. Cereal grains can be whole grain (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rolled wheat, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and wheat berries) or enriched (such as enriched cornmeal, corn grits, and farina).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program providing nutritious meals and afterschool snacks to children in child care centers, family day care homes, and emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to children participating in eligible at-risk afterschool care programs. The CACFP also provides meals and afterschool snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. For more information, visit the USDA's CACFP webpage and the CSDE's CACFP webpage.

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Child Nutrition Labels" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA's federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and afterschool snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and afterschool snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE's Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

combination foods: Foods that contain more than one meal component, such as pizza, burritos, tacos, lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and smoothies made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains component) and cheese (MMA component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza and burritos) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

co-mingling: The practice of serving meals or afterschool snacks to a variety of grades in the same service area at the same time, such as preschoolers and grades K-5. This practice typically occurs due to operational constraints within a school, such as limited time and space. For guidance on the meal pattern requirements for co-mingled meals, refer to section 4 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs* and visit "Co-mingled Meals and Afterschool Snacks" in the "Meal Service" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

corn masa: Dough made from masa harina that is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Corn masa is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, refer to "nixtamalization" in this section.

cornmeal: Meal made from ground, dried corn.

creditable food: A food or beverage that counts toward the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or afterschool snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

creditable grains: The ingredients in a commercial grain product or standardized recipe that credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

deep-fat frying: Cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat. The preschool meal patterns prohibit deep-fat frying foods on site.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans: A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines* every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education and information programs. For more information, visit the Dietary Guidelines for Americans webpage.

disability: A condition in which a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs*.

edible portion: The portion of a food that can be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

enriched grains: Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B_1), riboflavin (B_2), niacin (B_3), folic acid, and iron. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

enrichment: Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, refer to "enriched grains" in this section.

Exhibit A chart: The USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* chart that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for different types of grain foods to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component. For guidance on applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for each school nutrition program, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*.

flour: Finely ground and sifted wheat or other grains such as rye, corn, rice, or buckwheat.

fluid milk substitutes: Plant-based beverages designed to replace cow's milk, such as soy milk, almond milk, rice milk, and oat milk. Fluid milk substitutes may replace regular cow's milk in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks for children who do not consume regular milk due to non-disability reasons, if they meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to "nutrition standards for milk substitutes" in this section and the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Determining if Nondairy Milk Substitutes Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs*.

food item: A specific food offered within the meal components that comprise reimbursable meals in the CACFP. A food item may contain one or more meal components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, macaroni and cheese is one food item that provides two meal components (grains and MMA). A 2-ounce whole grain bagel is one food item that provides 2 oz eq of grains.

food-based menu planning: A type of menu planning for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs that uses a meal pattern with specific meal components in certain amounts based on specific age/grade groups. For more information, refer to "meal components" in this section.

fortification: Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (e.g., fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body's absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., an "energy" bar made from processed flour that is fortified with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

fruits component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. For more information, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

full component: The minimum quantity required in the preschool meal patterns for each meal and age group.

full serving: Refer to "full component" in this section.

full-strength fruit or vegetable juice: An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: "juice," "full-strength juice," "100 percent juice," "reconstituted juice," or "juice from concentrate." **Note:** Juice may credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs*.

germ: The vitamin-rich sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel. Germ credits the same as enriched grains.

grain-based desserts: Desserts that are made primarily of grains and that do not credit in preschool menus. Examples include brownies, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, orange cranberry, and chocolate chip), sweet croissants (e.g., chocolate or almond filled), sweet rice puddings (e.g., cinnamon and vanilla), sweet bread puddings (e.g., made with cinnamon, fruits, chocolate, or icing), and sweet pita chips (e.g., cinnamon sugar). Sweet crackers (like graham crackers and animal crackers) are not included in the restrictions for grain-based desserts.

grains component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. Creditable grain foods include products and recipes that are WGR or enriched. Creditable cooked and RTE breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified; and do not exceed 6 grams of added sugar per dry ounce. For more information, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

grains: Plants in the grass family that produce a dry, edible fruit commonly called a kernel, grain, or berry.

lactose: The naturally occurring sugar found in milk. Lactose contains glucose and galactose. For more information, refer to "simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

lean meat and poultry: Defined by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* as meat and poultry that contains less than 10 grams of fat, no more than 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 grams and per labeled serving size, based on the USDA's definitions for food label use. Examples include 95% lean cooked ground beef, beef top round steak or roast, beef tenderloin, pork top loin chop or roast, pork tenderloin, ham or turkey deli slices, skinless chicken breast, and skinless turkey breast.

legumes: A type of plant that includes pods, e.g., soybeans, peanuts, fresh peas, fresh beans, and pulses (beans, peas, and lentils). For more information, refer to "beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)" and "pulses" in this section.

main dish: The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. Examples of main dish items include pizza, chicken stir-fry, and chef's salad with ham, hard-boiled egg, and cheese.

meal components: The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates. For information on the individual meal components, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

meal pattern: The required meal components and minimum servings that schools and institutions participating in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and afterschool snacks served to children. For more information, refer to section 1.

meals: Refer to "reimbursable meals" in this section.

meat alternates: Foods that provide similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), tofu and other soy products that contains at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume), tempeh, and yogurt or soy yogurt that does not exceed 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

meats/meat alternates component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, and nuts, and seeds. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

medical statement: A document signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate dietary accommodations for children with special dietary needs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

menu item: Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items.

milk component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes pasteurized fluid milk that meets the fat content and flavor restrictions of the USDA regulations. The milk component also includes fluid milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to "fluid milk substitutes" in this section and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE's National School Lunch Program webpage.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that that do not count toward the meal patterns for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods include foods and beverages in amounts that are too small to credit and foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal components. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*.

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients and products that do not contribute toward the grains component of the preschool meal patterns. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For a list of noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

nonnutritive sweeteners: Ingredients without calories that are hundreds of times sweeter than sugars and that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners include the six FDA-approved artificial sweeteners (acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), advantame, aspartame, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose) and three plant-based sweeteners (stevia, monk fruit, and thaumatin) that are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) by the FDA. For more information on nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to "Additional Information about High-Intensity Sweeteners Permitted for Use in Food in the United States" on the FDA's webpage.

nutrient-dense foods: Foods and beverages that provide vitamins, minerals, and other substances that contribute to adequate nutrient intakes or may have positive health effects, and contain little or no solid fats, added sugars, refined starches, or sodium. Ideally, these foods and beverages are also in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. Examples include all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry (when prepared with little or no added solid fats, sugars, refined starches, and sodium). The term "nutrient dense" indicates the nutrients and other beneficial substances in a food have not been "diluted" by the addition of calories from added solid fats, sugars, or refined starches, or by the solid fats naturally present in the food.

nutrient-rich foods: Refer to "nutrient-dense foods" in this section.

nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The nutrition requirements for nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and meet the following nutrients based on a 1-cup serving (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalents (RAE) of vitamin A; 2.5 mcg of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

nutritive sweeteners: Sugars and sweeteners that contain calories and are used to sweeten foods and beverages. Examples include brown rice syrup, brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, corn syrup solids, dextrin, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, maple syrup, nectars (e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar), raw sugar, sorghum syrup, sucrose, and syrup. For more information, refer to "added sugars" in this section.

ounce equivalent (oz eq): A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and MMA component of the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs. The amount of a grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. The amount of meat or meat alternate that provides 1 oz eq is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

potable water: Water that is safe for human consumption.

pre-fried foods: Commercially prepared foods such as meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables that are fried by the manufacturer during preparation. These foods are usually cooked by the food service operation in the oven or microwave. Pre-fried foods include refrigerated or frozen items that are breaded or battered, most frozen potato products, and most frozen products described as "crispy" or "crunchy." Examples include chicken nuggets, chicken patties, fish sticks, french fries, tater tots, hash browns, and onion rings.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in the PFS must match a description in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. A PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The USDA requires that SFAs must check the manufacturer's crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals. For more information, 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 visit the "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

production record: A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare school meals and afterschool snacks. Production records must demonstrate how meals contribute to the required meal components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. They must also provide sufficient documentation to determine how school meals contribute to meeting the weekly dietary specifications. The USDA's regulations require that all schools in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP must complete daily menu production records for all meals. For more information, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Production Records for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

pulses: The edible dry seeds from legumes, such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas. For more information, refer to "legumes" in this section.

recognizable food item: A food that is visible in the offered meal or afterschool snack and allows children to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the preschool meal patterns. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flour.

refined grains: Grains that have been processed to remove the bran and germ, making the product less nutritious than whole grains. Refined grains may or may not be enriched. For more information, refer to "enriched grains" in this section.

registered dietitian (RD) or registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN): The Commission on Dietetic Registration defines a RD and RDN as someone who has completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited or approved by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND); completed an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program at a health-care facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies; passed a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); and completed continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration. For more information, visit the AND's What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist website and the CDR's Registered Dietitian (RD) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) Certification website.

reimbursable meals: Meals that offer the required meal components and minimum servings for each age group of the preschool meal patterns and are eligible for USDA reimbursement.

reimbursable snacks: Afterschool snacks that offer the required meal components and minimum servings for each age group of the preschool meal patterns and are eligible for USDA reimbursement.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, or number of pieces or slices of a food or beverage. For meals and snacks to be reimbursable, SFAs must provide the minimum servings specified in the preschool meal patterns.

sodium: A mineral that helps maintain the body's fluid balance and blood pressure. Diets that are high in sodium can increase the risk of high blood pressure in individuals who are sodium sensitive.

standard of identity: A legal or regulatory definition that specifies the required ingredients, composition, and sometimes processing methods for a particular food product. These standards ensure that products labeled with a certain name meet specific criteria for quality and content, helping to protect consumers and maintain consistency in the marketplace. The USDA develops standards for meat and poultry products. The FDA develops standards for other food products. For more information, visit the FDA's Standards of Identity for Food webpage.

standardized recipe: A recipe that been tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, refer to the Culinary 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.

state-licensed healthcare professional: An individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law and is recognized by the State Department of Public Health (DPH). In Connecticut, recognized medical authorities include physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs*.

sugar alcohols (polyols): A type of carbohydrate used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Sugar alcohols are incompletely absorbed and metabolized by the body and contribute fewer calories than most sugars. They also perform other functions such as adding bulk and texture to foods. Common sugar alcohols include sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, maltitol syrup, lactitol, erythritol, isomalt, and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH). Products with sugar alcohols are often labeled "sugar free." Large amounts of sugar alcohols may cause bloating, gas, or diarrhea. For more information, refer to "nonnutritive sweeteners" in this section.

sugars: Refer to "added sugars" and "simple carbohydrates" in this section.

surimi: Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs.

vegetable subgroups: The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables food group that are recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These subgroups include dark green, red/ orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. The preschool meal patterns do not require the vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA's CACFP best practices recommend providing at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup per week. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

vegetables component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. For more information, visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

whole grain-rich (WGR): Foods that are 100 percent whole grain or contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any other grain ingredients are enriched. For more information, 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 Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

whole grains: Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

whole-grain flour: Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Flour or meal that does not contain all parts of the grain is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour.

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