

Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program

This document provides guidance on meeting the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the vegetables/fruits component of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) meal patterns](#). For information on the SFSP meal patterns, visit the “[Meal Patterns](#)” section of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) SFSP webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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Meal Pattern Requirements

The SFSP meal patterns require $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component at breakfast and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup for lunch and supper. A $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of fruits or vegetables may be offered as one of the two required meal components at snack.

- **Breakfast** may include vegetables, fruits, 100 percent full-strength juice, or any combination of these foods that total $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.
- **Lunch and supper** must include at least two different servings that total $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. This can be any combination of at least two different vegetables, at least two different fruits, or at least one vegetable and one fruit. For example, a lunch menu could include $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of carrots and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cucumbers; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of applesauce and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins; or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of strawberries.
 - The two servings cannot include two forms of the same fruit or vegetable. Some examples include orange and orange juice, apple and applesauce, and tomato sauce and sliced tomatoes.
 - Mixed vegetables (such as carrots, peas, and corn; three-bean salad; and a California mix of broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots), mixed fruits (such as fruit salad, fruit cocktail, and mixed berries), and mixed vegetables and fruits (such as carrot-raisin salad and Waldorf salad) count as only one of the two required servings.
 - Juice cannot credit for more than half of the vegetables/fruits component at lunch and supper.
- **Snack** may include vegetables, fruits, 100 percent full-strength juice, or any combination of these foods that total $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. Snack must include two different meal components. Fruits and vegetables cannot be the only two meal components, even if they are different kinds. For example, a snack that contains $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of apples and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of carrot sticks is not reimbursable because both food items are from the vegetables/fruits component.

The minimum creditable amount is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

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Requirement for visible components

The USDA requires that foods must be visible (recognizable) to credit toward the SFSP meal patterns. For example, SFSP sponsors cannot credit applesauce in muffins or pureed fruits and vegetables in entrees. The intent for this requirement is to ensure that children can easily identify the foods in SFSP menus. The nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs includes the goal of helping children recognize the food groups that contribute to healthy meals and snacks.

The USDA allows an exception to this requirement for pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flours. For more information, refer to [“Crediting pureed vegetables,”](#) [“Crediting smoothies,”](#) and [“Crediting pasta made of 100 percent legume flours”](#) in this document.

Determining Servings for Fresh Vegetables and Fruits

The USDA’s [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) provides food yields and crediting information for common types and customary sizes of vegetables and fruits. The FBG indicates how many servings a specific quantity of vegetable or fruit will provide and helps menu planners determine how recipes and commercial products contribute to the vegetables/fruits component.

Table 1 shows the FBG’s meal pattern contribution of some fresh vegetables and fruits. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE’s portion control charts for vegetables and fruits in the [“Portion Control”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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Table 1. Meal pattern contribution of fresh vegetables and fruits

Food ¹	FBG crediting information	Credits as ½-cup serving	Credits as ¾-cup serving
Apples, 100 count ²	1 apple = 1¼ cups 1/5 apple = ¼ cup	2/5 apple	3/5 apple
Apples, 125-138 count ²	1 apple = 1 cup ¼ apple = ¼ cup	½ apple	¾ apple
Banana, 150 count (petite) or 100-120 count ²	1 banana = ½ cup ½ banana = ¼ cup	1 banana	1½ bananas
Broccoli	1 medium spear = about ¼ cup	2 medium spears	3 medium spears
Carrot sticks	3 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch) = ¼ cup	6 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch)	9 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch)
Celery sticks	3 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch) = ¼ cup	6 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch)	9 sticks (4 inches by ½ inch)
Cucumber sticks, pared or unpared	3 sticks (4 inches by ¾ inch) = ¼ cup	6 sticks (4 inches by ¾ inch)	9 sticks (4 inches by ¾ inch)
Grapes, seedless, large	7 grapes = ¼ cup 14 grape halves = ¼ cup	14 grapes 28 grape halves	21 grapes 42 grape halves
Orange, 113 count ² (Arizona or California)	½ orange = ¼ cup 1 orange = 5/8 cup	1 orange	1½ oranges
Orange, 125 count ² (Florida or Texas)	½ orange = ¼ cup 1 orange = 5/8 cup	1 orange	1½ oranges
Orange, 138 count ² (Arizona or California)	½ orange = ¼ cup 1 orange = ½ cup	1 orange	1½ oranges

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Food ¹	FBG crediting information	Credits as ½-cup serving	Credits as ¾-cup serving
Pear, 100 count ² (D'Anjou or Bosc or Bartlett)	1 pear = 1¼ cups ½ pear = ⅝ cup	½ pear	⅔ pear
Pear, 120 count ²	½ pear = ⅜ cup 1 pear = ¾ cup	¾ pear	1 pear
Pear, 150 count ²	½ pear = ¼ cup 1 pear = ½ cup	1 pear	1½ pears
Radishes	7 small radishes = ¼ cup	14 small radishes	21 small radishes
Tomato slices, large (2½ to 2¾ inch diameter)	4 slices (⅛-inch thick) = ¼ cup	8 slices (⅛-inch thick)	12 slices (⅛-inch thick)
Tomato slices, medium (2⅛ to 2¼ inch diameter)	5 slices (⅛-inch thick) = ¼ cup	10 slices (⅛-inch thick)	15 slices (⅛-inch thick)
Tomatoes, cherry	3 whole cherry tomatoes = ¼ cup 5 half cherry tomatoes = ¼ cup	6 whole cherry tomatoes 10 half cherry tomatoes	9 whole cherry tomatoes 15 half cherry tomatoes

¹ Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what vegetables and fruits to offer. Prepare all vegetables and fruits to reduce the risk of choking. For more information, refer to "[Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children](#)" in this document.

² The count pack is the number of whole fruits that fit into a case. The smaller the count, the larger the size of the fruit.



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Required Crediting Documentation

SFSP sponsors must be able to document the meal pattern contribution of vegetables and fruits that are part of combination foods and vegetables and fruits that contain added ingredients. Some examples include hash brown patties, vegetable egg rolls, hummus and other bean dips, breaded onion rings, dried soup mix, and fruit-filled turnovers.

For example, to credit a commercial hummus product or a recipe as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the SFSP sponsor must have documentation indicating that the serving contains $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pureed chickpeas. The guidance below summarizes the required documentation for commercial processed products and foods made from scratch. Documentation must be based on the food yields and crediting information in the FBG.

Documentation for commercial processed products

The acceptable types of documentation includes any of the documents below.

- **Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A CN label is a USDA-approved statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements. CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute at least $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the MMA component. Allowable CN label documentation includes 1) the original CN label from the product carton; 2) a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or 3) a CN label copied with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor and the bill of lading (invoice). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

The SFSP meal patterns indicate the quantities for the MMA component in ounces instead of oz eq. The amount that credits as 1 oz eq or 1 ounce of MMA is the same.

- **Product formulation statement (PFS):** A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. The PFS must be signed by an official of the manufacturer and state the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product. For more information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#). For guidance on how to review a PFS, refer to the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating](#)

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a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement and Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products.

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in SFSP meals and snacks.

A PFS is required for all commercial processed products without a CN label. SFSP sponsors must obtain and verify this documentation for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks.

For more information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program](#), USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*, and the USDA's resource, [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#).

Additional guidance is available on the CSDE's [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Training on the requirements for PFS forms is available in the CSDE's Summer Meals annual training module, [Crediting Documentation for Summer Meals](#); Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation, Part B – Crediting Commercial Processed Products of the CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#); and the Institute of Child Nutrition's online training, [FBG Module 3: Product Formulation Statements](#).

Documentation for foods made from scratch

SFSP sponsors must have recipes on file that document the ounces of MMA per serving in all foods prepared from scratch. The USDA encourages SFSP sponsors to use standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements.

The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has 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.

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For more information, visit the “[Standardized Recipes](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Storing crediting documentation

SFSP sponsors must maintain all crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the SFSP (refer to the CSDE’s [Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Program](#)). This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the SFSP.

Crediting Requirements for Vegetables

Creditable vegetables include fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. Commercial vegetable products and SFSP recipes must meet specific criteria to credit as the vegetables/fruits component in the SFSP meal patterns. The guidance below addresses the crediting requirements for vegetables. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE’s [Crediting Summary Charts for the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns](#). Training on the crediting requirements for the vegetables/fruits component is available in the CSDE’s Summer Meals annual training module, [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns: Part 5: Vegetables/Fruits Component](#).

Crediting canned vegetables

Canned vegetables must be drained. The serving cannot include the packing liquid, such as water or sauce. For example, to credit canned peas as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving cannot include the packing water. To credit baked beans as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving cannot include the sauce. The serving must contain $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables before any added liquid.

Crediting dried vegetables

Dried or dehydrated vegetables (such as potato flakes and dried soup mix) credit a based on their rehydrated volume. The product’s PFS must provide specific documentation on the cups of vegetables per serving (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document). Dried vegetables used for seasonings (such as dried onion and dried parsley) do not credit.

Crediting hominy

Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). Hominy is available dried and in a fully cooked canned form. In

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its whole form, hominy credits toward the vegetables/fruits component as a starchy vegetable. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of drained canned hominy credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables/fruits component. For information on crediting hominy as the grains/breads component, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for the Grains/Breads Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns](#).

Crediting hummus as vegetables

Hummus and bean dips may credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables/fruits component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. Crediting toward the vegetables/fruits component is based on the cups of cooked beans, peas, and lentils per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

SFSP sponsors must maintain crediting documentation for hummus and bean dips that indicates the cups of cooked beans, peas, and lentils per serving. Commercial products require a CN label or PFS and foods made from scratch require a recipe (refer to "[Required Crediting Documentation](#)" in this document).

For guidance on crediting hummus as the meat/meats alternates component, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for the Meats/Meat Alternates Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns](#).

Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as vegetables

Beans, peas, and lentils (including roasted beans, peas, and lentils such as roasted chickpeas and soybeans) may credit as either the vegetables/fruits component or the MMA component, but one serving cannot credit as both meal components in the same meal or snack. A $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of cooked beans, peas, or lentils credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables/fruits component. The serving refers to the amount of cooked vegetable without added ingredients, such as the sauce and pork fat in canned baked beans. For example, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of baked beans that contains $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of sauce and pork fat credits as $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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Crediting pasta made of 100 vegetable flours

A ½-cup serving of pasta made of one or more 100 percent vegetable flours credits as ½ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. If the pasta product contains non-vegetable ingredients, the SFSP sponsor must obtain a PFS stating the amount of vegetable flours per serving (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document). Grain-based pasta products that contain small amounts of vegetable powder for color, such as spinach pasta or sun-dried tomato pasta, do not credit as the vegetables/fruits component. The requirements for crediting pasta products made of vegetable flours are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Crediting pureed vegetables

Pureed vegetables in foods must be visible (recognizable) to credit in the SFSP meal patterns. Examples include pureed foods made from one vegetable such as tomato sauce, split pea soup, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, and pureed butternut squash.

Foods that contain pureed vegetables (such as pureed carrots in macaroni and cheese) cannot credit as the vegetables/fruits component unless they also provide at least ⅛ cup of visible creditable vegetables. For example, a serving of macaroni and cheese that contains ⅛ cup of diced butternut squash (visible) and ⅛ cup of pureed carrots (not visible) could credit as ¼ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. For more information, refer to [“Requirement for visible components”](#) in this document.

Pureed vegetables credit based on the volume served, not the volume before pureeing. SFSP sponsors must document crediting information with a standardized recipe or PFS (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document).

Crediting commercial vegetable soups

Vegetable soups made from scratch credit based on the cups of vegetables contained in one serving. SFSP sponsors must document crediting information with a recipe based on the yields listed in the FBG (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document).

Creditable commercial vegetable soups include bean, pea, and lentil soup; minestrone soup; tomato soup; tomato soup with other basic components such as rice; vegetable soup (contains only vegetables); and vegetable soup with other basic components such as meat or poultry. The FBG indicates that a 1-cup serving of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as ½ cup of vegetables and a 1-cup serving of commercial vegetable soup credits as ¼ cup of vegetables.

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The serving refers to the amount of cooked soup, e.g., heated canned or frozen ready-to-serve soup, reconstituted dried soup, and reconstituted condensed soup.

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for soup. The large serving of a commercial soup needed to provide the full vegetables/fruits component might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. For example, to provide $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component at snack requires 3 cups of a commercial vegetable soup and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup.

Menu planners should consider the size of the container used to serve the soup. A 1-cup container (8 fluid ounces) does not provide 1 cup of soup unless it is filled to the top, which is impractical. To avoid spilling and ensure that the served portion meets the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving size of soup. For example, SFSP sponsors could use a 10-fluid ounce bowl to hold 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of soup and a 6-fluid ounce bowl to hold 4 fluid ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of soup.

Crediting vegetables with added ingredients

If a vegetable product or recipe contains added ingredients (such as mayonnaise, salad dressing, butter, and sauce), only the vegetable portion credits toward the SFSP meal patterns. Examples include baked beans with sauce and pork fat; coleslaw and potato salad made with mayonnaise and seasonings; carrot-raisin salad made with yogurt; and mashed potatoes made with butter and seasonings. For example, to credit potato salad as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the serving must contain $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of potatoes, excluding added ingredients such as mayonnaise and seasonings. SFSP sponsors must maintain crediting documentation for each product and recipe (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document).

Noncreditable vegetables

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables/fruits component include chili sauce, dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning, cream vegetable soups (e.g., cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom), home-canned vegetable products (for food safety reasons), ketchup, pickle relish, and snack-type foods made from vegetables such as potato chips and corn chips. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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Crediting Requirements for Fruits

Creditable fruits include fresh, frozen, dried, and canned (packed in water, full-strength juice, or light syrup), and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. Commercial fruit products and SFSP recipes must meet specific criteria to credit as the vegetables/fruits component in the SFSP meal patterns. The guidance below addresses the crediting requirements for fruits. Training on the crediting requirements for the vegetables/fruits component is available in the CSDE's Summer Meals annual training module, [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns: Part 5: Vegetables/Fruits Component](#).

Crediting canned fruits

A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed. For example, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of canned peaches in juice credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component.

Water and syrup in canned fruit do not credit. For example, to credit canned peaches in water as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the serving must contain $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of peaches, not including the water. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Juice in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

Crediting coconut

Fresh and frozen coconut credit, but dried coconut, coconut flour, and coconut oil do not. Coconut water labeled as 100 percent juice credits based on the volume served and must meet the same requirements as juice (refer to "[Crediting juice](#)" in this document). Coconut is high in calories and saturated fat and should be limited in SFSP menus. The requirements for crediting coconut are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 34-2019](#), [CACFP 15-2019](#), and [SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Crediting dried fruits

Dried fruits (such as raisins, apricots, cherries, cranberries, blueberries, mixed fruit, and coconut) credit based on the volume served. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. Serving a large amount of dried fruit may be unreasonable, especially for younger children. For example, to credit dried fruit as the vegetables/fruits component at snack, the required serving is $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. The CSDE recommends serving smaller portions of dried fruit and supplementing them with another fruit or vegetable to meet the full serving.

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Manufacturers sometimes process dried fruit with added sugar to keep the fruit pieces separated. The CSDE encourages menu planners to read labels and choose dried fruit without added sweeteners, including sugars and nonnutritive sweeteners such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia.

Crediting frozen fruits

Frozen fruits credit based on the volume served. For some frozen fruits (such as frozen sliced strawberries and frozen apricots), the serving includes the thawed liquid. For other frozen fruits (such as frozen berry blends, frozen sweet cherries, and frozen mangoes), the serving is for the thawed, drained fruit. Check the FBG for the specific serving and crediting requirements for different types of frozen fruits.

Crediting fruits in grain-based desserts

Fruits in grain-based desserts (such as fruit crisp and fruit turnovers) credit based on the cups of fruits per serving. For example, a fruit turnover that contains $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of apples credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. SFSP sponsors must maintain crediting documentation for each product and recipe (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document). At snack, the serving of a grain-based dessert required to provide $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fruit might be unreasonable (refer to [“Fruits with added ingredients”](#) in this document).

Crediting fruits in yogurt and soy yogurt

Fruits in commercial yogurt and soy yogurt products (either blended, mixed, or on top) do not credit as the vegetables/fruits component. Menu planners may credit fruits provided as a separate meal component, such as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of blueberries in a yogurt parfait.

Crediting fruits with added ingredients

If a product or recipe contains added ingredients (such as mayonnaise or a grain-based topping), only the fruit portion of the serving credits toward the vegetables/fruits component. Examples include Waldorf salad made with mayonnaise, walnuts, and seasonings; and fruit crisp or cobbler made with grain-based topping. For example, to credit fruit crisp as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the serving must contain $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit, excluding other ingredients such as the grain topping. SFSP sponsors must maintain crediting documentation for each product and recipe (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document).

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Crediting juice

Juice must be pasteurized full-strength fruit juice, vegetable juice, or a combination. Allowable types include fresh, frozen, and made from concentrate.

- Juice cannot credit for more than half of the vegetables/fruits component at lunch and supper. In addition to 100 percent juice, this limit includes frozen 100 percent juice pops and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, which credit as juice (refer to “[Crediting Smoothies](#)” in this document).
- Juice cannot be served at snack when milk is the only other snack component.

At lunch and supper, juice must be a different kind from the other offered vegetable or fruit. For example, a lunch menu that contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of apple juice must also contain at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables or a different type of fruit (i.e., not apples). At least one of the two required servings of the vegetables/fruits component at lunch and supper must always be a whole fruit or vegetable (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried). The two servings cannot consist only of juice.

For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Juice in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

The USDA recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice. Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables, which contain fiber, fewer calories, and more nutrients.

Crediting smoothies

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice and must meet the same requirements as juice (refer to “[Crediting juice](#)” in this document). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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Crediting fresh fruits

The crediting amount for one piece of fresh fruit depends on the type and size, and ranges from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup to $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups. For example, the FBG indicates that:

- one 60-count plum, one 88-count peach, and one clementine each credit as $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of fruit; and
- one 100-120-count banana, one 150-count pear, one 80-count peach, one 138-count orange, and one 45-count plum each credit as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit.

Menu planners must ensure that an individual piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut up) provides the correct serving for each SFSP meal and snack. The examples below illustrate this requirement.

- **Example 1:** The SFSP breakfast meal pattern requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both. One 120-count tangerine credits as $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of fruit, which does not provide the full serving. To credit as the full component, the breakfast menu must include an additional $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- **Example 2:** The SFSP snack meal pattern requires $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both. One 113-count orange credits as $\frac{5}{8}$ cup of fruit, which does not provide the full serving. To credit as the full vegetables/fruits component, the snack menu must include an additional $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component.

Table 2 lists the additional amounts of fresh fruit needed to provide $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, based on the crediting information in the FBG.



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Table 2. Additional amounts of fresh fruits to provide $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

Fruit (one piece, whole or cut-up) ¹	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ³	Additional amount for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup ⁴
Apple, 125-138 count ²	1 cup	0	0
Apricot, medium ($1\frac{3}{8}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Banana, 150 count, petite	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Banana, 100-120 count, regular	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Clementine, whole, peeled	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup
Grapefruit, 27-32 count ² , large	1 cup	0	0
Kiwi, 33-39 count ²	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Nectarine, size 88-96 ($2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Nectarine, size 56-64 ($2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0	0
Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count ²	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count 2	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count 2	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count ²	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Peach, size 88 and 84 ($2\frac{1}{8}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup
Peach, size 64 and 60 ($2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter)	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
Peach, size 80	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Peach, size 56	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0	0
Pear, 150 count ²	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup

Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program

Fruit (one piece, whole or cut-up) ¹	Meal pattern contribution from FBG	Additional amount for ½ cup ³	Additional amount for ¾ cup ⁴
Pear, 120 count ²	¾ cup	0	0
Pear, D’Anjou, Bosc or Bartlett, 100 count ²	1¼ cups	0	0
Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Plum, purple, red, or black, 2½-inch diameter	⅝ cup	0	⅛ cup
Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅜ cup
Tangerine, 120 count ²	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅜ cup

- ¹ Consider children’s ages and developmental readiness when deciding what fruits to offer. Prepare all fruits for young children to reduce the risk of choking (refer to “[Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children](#)” in this document).
- ² The count pack is the number of whole fruits that that fit into a case. The smaller the count, the larger the size of the fruit.
- ³ A ½-cup serving of the vegetables/fruits component is required at breakfast and may be one of the two required servings of the vegetables/fruits component at lunch and supper.
- ⁴ A ¾-cup serving of the vegetables/fruits component may be one of the two required snack components. The additional amount can be from the same fruit, a different fruit, or a vegetable.

Noncreditable fruits

Some examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables/fruits component include fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups, fruit leathers, fruit wrinkles, fruit twists, yogurt-covered fruit snacks); banana chips; home-canned fruit products (for food safety reasons); jams, jellies, and preserves; and juice drinks that are not 100 percent juice, such as grape juice drink, orange juice drink, pineapple-grapefruit drink, cranberry juice cocktail, and lemonade. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Examples of vegetables that may be choking hazards include cooked or raw whole-kernel corn, and small pieces of raw vegetables, e.g., raw green peas, whole beans, raw carrot rounds, baby carrots, string beans, celery, and other raw or partially cooked hard vegetables. Examples of fruits that may be choking hazards include whole grapes, berries, melon balls, apples and other hard pieces of raw fruit, and dried fruits. Preparation techniques to reduce the risk of choking include cooking until soft, and cutting, dicing, or shredding into small pieces.

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

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/accepting_processed_product_documentation_sfsp.pdf

Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs#Commercial>

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nsfp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_snp.pdf

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

Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-summer-food-service-program>

Crediting Juice in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/credit_juice_sfsp.pdf

Crediting Smoothies in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/credit_smoothies_sfsp.pdf

Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program

Crediting Summary Charts for the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsp/crediting_summary_charts_sfsp.pdf

FBG Module 3: Product Formulation Statements (Institute of Child Nutrition):

<https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/courses/139/fbg-module-3-product-formulation-statements-pfs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Meal Patterns for the SFSP (CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/summer-food-service-program/meal-patterns>

Noncreditable Foods in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsp/noncreditable_foods_sfsp.pdf

Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/records_retention_sfsp.pdf

Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes>

Summer Meals Annual Training Module: Crediting Documentation for Summer Meals ("Annual Training" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/summer-food-service-program/annual-training#CreditingDocumentation>

Summer Meals Annual Training Module: Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns: Part 5: Vegetables/Fruits Component ("Annual Training" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/summer-food-service-program/annual-training#CreditingFoods>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program

USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation>

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/cn_labels_sfsp.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/product_formulation_statements_sfsp.pdf

Vegetables and Fruits Component (CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-summer-food-service-program/vegetables-and-fruits>

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation Part B – Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program

For more information, visit the “[Meal Patterns](#)” section of the CSDE’s SFSP webpage and the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsp/component_vegetables_fruits_sfsp.pdf.

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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