

## The School Lunch Tray: April 7, 2021

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly e-mail notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

- List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages: Updated April 5, 2021
- Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) and Training Resources
- Additional SNAP Benefits Available in April through the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Program
- 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-building Challenge
- Farm to School Census and Comprehensive Review
- USDA Report: Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2019
- Resource Roundup: Overcoming Challenges and Feeding Kids during a Pandemic

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. Thank you.



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### List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages: Updated April 5, 2021

Updated lists of foods and beverages are now available on the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage. New products on the lists are indicated by pink highlighting on the manufacturer and product name. Items that have been **added or deleted** since the last update are listed on the CSDE's document, [Summary of Updates to Approved Food and Beverages](#).

These lists identify foods that comply with Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) and beverages that comply with the state beverage statute (Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes) and the USDA Smart Snacks beverage standards. Foods on this list also comply with Smart Snacks because the CNS requirements are stricter than the Smart Snacks food standards.

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### Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) and Training Resources

The [PSTTT](#) is a free and voluntary online tool designed for school nutrition professionals. The tool simplifies record keeping of annual training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards.

The USDA's [Professional Standards: Resources](#) webpage provides information on the annual training requirements and resources, such as the *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs*, the supplemental *Professional Standards Training Reward Badges* packet, the Professional Standards Training Database, the PSTTT, and recorded webinars. Additional information on how to use the PSTTT can be found in the Training Video section under the Help tab in the PSTTT.

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### Additional SNAP Benefits Available in April through the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Program

On April 2, 2021, the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), in collaboration with the CSDE, announced that \$88.6 million in special food assistance benefits will be going in April to households of nearly 220,000 schoolchildren enrolled in free or reduced-price meals across the state. Funded through the federal P-EBT program, the new benefits will help ensure that eligible children in pre-kindergarten through high school continue to receive nutritious meals while learning from home or in hybrid models during the public health emergency. For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/snap](http://www.ct.gov/snap) and <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/04-2021/Governor-Lamont-Coronavirus-Update-April-2>.

The CSDE and DSS recently developed a new P-EBT resource, [Pandemic EBT Quick Facts](#).

### **21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge**

Sign up for the Food Solutions New England's (FSNE) annual 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge starting on April 5. In its seventh year, the Challenge is a great way to learn about the history and impacts of racism on our current food system while inspiring participants with resources and tools to build racial equity in their work and lives. People from all over the country participate in the Challenge, coordinated by the FSNE network to raise awareness, shift attitudes, and change outcomes. A Discussion Guide and facilitator trainings are available to support groups doing the Challenge together. Visit the [FSNE Challenge website](#) for more information or to sign up.

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### **Farm to School Census and Comprehensive Review**

The [Farm to School Census and Comprehensive Review](#) includes the 2019 Farm to School Census; a descriptive review of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program; a review of published research on farm to school since 2010; and a set of interviews with school food distributors. These reports will be released over the course of 2021.

- **The Farm to School Literature Review** report summarizes findings from a review of published research on farm to school since 2010.
  - **The Farm to School Grantee Report** analyzes baseline, progress and final reports submitted to FNS by 365 grantees who received Farm to School Grant awards in fiscal years 2013–2017.
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### **USDA Report: Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2019**

The [Characteristics report](#) is published annually, dating back to 1976, and provides information about the demographic and economic circumstances of SNAP households. Using a sample of SNAP Quality Control data that is representative at both the state and national level, this report summarizes the characteristics of households and individuals who participated in SNAP in fiscal year 2019. Because SNAP is available to most low-income households, participants represent a broad cross section of the Nation's poor.

### **Resource Roundup: Overcoming Challenges and Feeding Kids during a Pandemic**

This week's Resource Roundup highlights the CSDE's presentation, *Overcoming Challenges and Feeding Kids during a Pandemic*, which was presented at the SNACT conference on January 14, 2021. This presentation provides a brief review of the USDA regulations for the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for school year 2020-21, and highlights ideas for increasing participation and revenue during COVID-19. A recording of the SNACT presentation is available at <https://youtu.be/AugRptVrRZo> and can also be accessed from the CSDE's [Training for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Join us for tomorrow's **Table Talk** (April 8, 2021, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.) as we review some ideas for increasing SSO and SFSP participation, and ways to increase revenue. Registration for the April Table Talk series is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7940814127249762576>. To submit questions in advance, visit [https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND](https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND).



For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT\\_04\\_07\\_2021.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_04_07_2021.pdf).

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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