

## The School Lunch Tray: June 23, 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.

- Updated National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 for School Year 2021-22
- Required Crediting Documentation for Commercial Processed Food Products
- Required Crediting Documentation for Foods Made on Site
- Institute of Child Nutrition S.T.A.R. Webinar on Thursday, June 24, 2021: Strategies for Utilizing Standardized Recipes
- Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition Webinar on Thursday, July 1, 2021: Menu Strategies for Special Diets and Allergens
- Help is Here: The American Rescue Plan Delivers Major Tax Relief for Families with Children
- Resource Roundup: Connecticut Farm to School Resources

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



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### Updated National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 for School Year 2021-22

The updated 2021-22 NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 are now available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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### Required Crediting Documentation for Commercial Processed Food Products

School food authorities (SFAs) must be able to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial processed foods (such as deli meats, pizza, chicken nuggets, and burritos) served in school meals. For example, to credit a commercial breaded chicken patty as 2 ounce equivalents of the meat/meat alternates component, the SFA must have documentation indicating that one serving contains 2 ounces of cooked chicken.

How do you know that a commercial food product meets the meal pattern crediting requirements? There are two types of acceptable documentation for commercial processed foods.

1. **Child Nutrition (CN) labels:** CN labels clearly identify a commercial product's contribution toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component, but usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products (such as grains, vegetables, and fruits). Acceptable documentation includes the original CN label from the product carton or a photocopy/photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#).
2. **Product formulation statement (PFS) forms:** A PFS is a document signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product. The USDA does not monitor PFS forms for compliance with the product's actual formulation or stated contribution to the meal pattern requirements. To document meal pattern crediting information, the PFS must include how the manufacturer obtained the crediting information by citing specific Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations such as the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) and USDA's policy on crediting foods. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Product Formulation Statements](#).

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS **cannot** credit in school meals. The CSDE will review product documentation during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

For more information, visit the [Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#) section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage, and review the CSDE's resource, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP](#).

### Required Crediting Documentation for Foods Made on Site

The USDA's regulations [7 CFR 210.10\(b\)\(5\)](#) require that SFAs develop and follow standardized recipes for foods prepared on site. SFAs must maintain standardized recipes on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods prepared on site. Examples include entrees (such as sandwiches, lasagna, and chicken stir-fry), grains (such as pancakes, muffins, and breads), and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients (such as vegetable soup and carrot-raisin salad). For example, to credit a serving of macaroni and cheese as 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component and 2 ounce equivalents of the grains component, the SFA's standardized recipe must indicate that each serving contains 2 ounces of cheese and 1 cup of whole grain-rich (WGR) pasta.

For more information, visit the [Crediting Foods Prepared on Site](#) section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage, and review "Standardized Recipes" in [section 2](#) of the CSDE's guide, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

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### Institute of Child Nutrition S.T.A.R. Webinar on Thursday, June 24, 2021: Strategies for Utilizing Standardized Recipes

The use of standardized recipes in school nutrition programs can be a key component of a successful operation. Standardized recipes are tested, adapted, and the result is known to be duplicated over and over. They also ensure quality and nutritional consistency and are useful in procurement and inventory. Join this webinar to gain insight on strategies for utilizing standardized recipes.

- *Date and time:* Thursday, June 24, 2021, 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET.
- *Registration:* [https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_fd7tTeYNTmO7hRm1I4YSWQ](https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fd7tTeYNTmO7hRm1I4YSWQ)
- *Professional Standards Learning Objectives:*  
SNA Key Area: 2-Operations  
USDA Professional Standards Code: 2110-Food Production
- *Learning objective:* Attendees will identify strategies for utilizing standardized recipes.
- *Speakers:* Jennifer McNeil, RDN, SNS, Founder, LunchAssist; Mickinzie Lopez, MS, RDN, SNS, Administrative Dietitian, LunchAssist

### **Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition Webinar on Thursday, July 1, 2021: Menu Strategies for Special Diets and Allergens**

Designing menus for students with allergies and special diets can be a challenge. This webinar will provide tips and strategies to help you move from menu challenges to customer service opportunities. Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE), USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Food Distribution, and the Laveen School District Menu Planner will provide information on how to enhance your menu offerings for students requiring menus to meet their unique needs.

- *Date and time:* Thursday, July 1, 2021, 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET.
- *Registration:*  
[https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_KmC6kBS4QeiLafY5AGwHQA](https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KmC6kBS4QeiLafY5AGwHQA)
- *Professional Standards Learning Objectives:*  
SNA Key Area: 1-Nutrition  
USDA Professional Standard Code(s): 1000 - Nutrition, 1100 - Menu Planning
- *Learning Objective:* Participants will identify strategies to increase and enhance Special Diet and Allergen Aware menu items in their foodservice program.
- *Speakers:* Kristi Grim, Director of National Programs, Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE); Janell Walker Conway, MPH, RD, Nutritionist, USDA, FNS; Angela Gomez, RDN, Nutritionist, Laveen School District, AZ

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### **Help is Here: The American Rescue Plan Delivers Major Tax Relief for Families with Children**

The American Rescue Plan delivered major tax relief for working families with children through a historic expansion of the Child Tax Credit. Beginning in July, Child Tax Credit payments will be provided monthly for the first time ever. To help with the costs of raising children, families will begin to receive monthly payments of up to \$250 for each child ages 6 to 17 and \$300 for each child under age 6.

The resources below provide information that may be shared with families.

- One-pager: [Help is Here: The American Rescue Plan Delivers Major Tax Relief for Families with Children](#)
- Flier (attached): Help Is Here: Monthly payments for families with kids

To learn more, visit [ChildTaxCredit.gov](https://ChildTaxCredit.gov).

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### **Resource Roundup: Connecticut Farm to School Resources**

This week's Resource Roundup highlights the CSDE's resource, [\*Connecticut Farm to School Resources\*](#). This document contains links to some key farm to school resources on gardens, marketing, purchasing, and schools/cafeterias. Summer is the perfect time to promote fresh fruits and vegetables and get children excited about healthy eating. Visit the CSDE's [Farm to School](#) webpage for [nutrition education](#) ideas and more information and resources.

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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\\_06\\_16\\_2021.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_06_16_2021.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;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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# Help Is Here

## Monthly payments for families with kids

Raising kids can be expensive, and the Child Tax Credit is here to help. President Biden's American Rescue Plan increased the amount of the 2021 Child Tax Credit to support families with children.

The full benefit of the Child Tax Credit is now \$300 per month per child under age 6 and \$250 for each child age 6 to 17.

**Did you file taxes in the last 2 years? Then you don't have to do anything to get the money you're already owed!**

If you filed your 2020 taxes this year or filed your 2019 taxes last year, or used the IRS "Non-Filer Portal" to get a stimulus check last year, you don't need to do anything. The IRS will automatically send you a monthly payment by direct deposit or check starting on July 15, 2021.

**The Child Tax Credit is \$3,000 to \$3,600 per child with advanced monthly payments.**

In order to get money to families quickly, the IRS will pay half of the credit as monthly payments now and the other half when you file your taxes next year. In total, you'll receive a total of \$3,600 for each child under 6 and \$3,000 for each child between 6 and 17.

**Didn't file taxes in the last 2 years? There's 1 easy step to start getting your Child Tax Credit payments.**

Just fill out a simple form to begin receiving your monthly Child Tax Credit payments. You can access it by going to [childtaxcredit.gov](https://childtaxcredit.gov)

**You'll need this information to apply:**

- Social Security Numbers for you and your children
- A reliable mailing address
- E-mail address
- Your bank account information (if you want to receive your payment by direct deposit)

**Eligibility:** Most families, even those with little to no income, can receive the full amount. If you are a single parent making less than \$112,500 or a married couple making less than \$150,000—and have children under age 18 who will live with you for more than half of 2021—you are likely eligible for the full benefit. These benefits do not affect your eligibility for other federal benefits like SNAP.

Learn more and check out resources to help you fill out your form at [\*\*ChildTaxCredit.gov\*\*](https://ChildTaxCredit.gov)