

**Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs**

**Module 3: Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12**

Connecticut State Department of Education  
 Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs  
 School Year 2023-24

December 2023

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**Preschool Meal Pattern Training Modules**

1. Introduction to Training
2. Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns
3. Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12
4. Milk Component
5. Meat/Meat Alternates Component
6. Fruits Component and Vegetables Component
7. Grains Component
8. Meal Service for Preschoolers

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/How-To>

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**Module Topics**

- Comparison of required components and servings
- Comparison of crediting requirements for food components
- Resources




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**Grade Group Comparisons**

Meal pattern servings	Crediting requirements
Breakfast and lunch: Preschool and grades K-5  ASP snack: Preschool and grades K-12	Preschool and grades K-12



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**Components and Servings for Breakfast Meal Patterns**

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**Breakfast Meal Pattern Components**

Preschool	Grades K-12	
Grains 	Grains 	 <b>MMA substitutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preschool: ≤ 3 times per week</li> <li>▪ Grades K-12: 1 oz eq MMA for 1 oz eq grains after offering ≥ 1 oz eq of grains</li> </ul>
Fruits 	Fruits 	
Vegetables 		
Milk 	Milk 	

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### Breakfast Meal Pattern Servings: Preschool and Grades K-5

Component	Minimum daily quantity			Minimum weekly quantity for grades K-5
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-5	
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	7 oz eq
Vegetables	¾ cup	¾ cup	None	None
Fruits			1 cup	5 cups
Milk	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	5 cups

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### Lunch Meal Pattern Components

- MMA
- Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Milk

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### Lunch Meal Pattern Servings

Component	Minimum daily quantity		
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-5
MMA	1 ounce	1½ ounces	1 oz eq
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq
Vegetables	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Fruits	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Milk	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup

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### Lunch Meal Pattern Servings

Component	Minimum daily quantity			MMA Differences
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-5	
MMA	1 ounce	1½ ounces	1 oz eq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ounces versus oz eq</li> <li>▪ MMA for ages 3-4 larger than MMA for grades K-5</li> </ul>
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	
Vegetables	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	
Fruits	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	
Milk	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	

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### Lunch Meal Pattern Servings

Component	Minimum daily quantity			Minimum 5-day weekly quantity for grades K-5
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-5	
MMA	1 ounce	1½ ounces	1 oz eq	8 oz eq
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	8 oz eq
Vegetables	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	3¾ cups
Fruits	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	2¾ cups
Milk	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	5 cups

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## Components and Servings for Snack Meal Patterns

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### Snack Meal Pattern Components

Preschool: Serve 2 of 5	Grades K-12: Serve 2 of 4
MMA	MMA
Grains	Grains/breads
Vegetables	Vegetables
Fruits	Fruits
Milk	Milk

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### Snack Meal Pattern Servings

Serve any 2 components	Minimum daily quantity		
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-12
MMA	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 serving
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup	
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup

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### Snack Meal Pattern Servings

Serve any 2 components	Minimum daily quantity			Grains Differences
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-12	
MMA	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preschool: grains (oz eq)</li> <li>Grades K-12: grains/breads (servings)</li> </ul>
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 serving	
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup		
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	

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### Snack Meal Pattern Servings

Serve any 2 components	Minimum daily quantity			Vegetables and Fruits Differences
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-4	Grades K-12	
MMA	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preschool: 2 separate components</li> <li>Grades K-12: 1 component</li> </ul>
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 serving	
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup		
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	

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### Serving 1 Fruit and 1 Vegetable at Snack

Snack	Number of components	Reimbursable?
Preschool	2	Yes
Grades K-12	1	No

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### Meal Pattern Components and Servings

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Snack



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### Milk Component Differences




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### Milk Component Differences

Requirement	Preschool	Grades K-12
Fat content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Age 1: Whole</li> <li>▪ Ages 2-4: Low-fat or fat-free</li> </ul>	Low-fat or fat-free
Flavored milk	Not allowed	Allowed
Milk variety (≥ 2 different choices)	Not required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Breakfast and lunch: required</li> <li>▪ Snack: not required</li> </ul>
Milk substitutes for children without disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lactose-free/reduced milk that meets required fat content</li> <li>▪ Nondairy milk substitutes that meet USDA's nutrition standards</li> </ul>	Same
State beverage requirements (C.G.S. 10-221q)	Specific nutrition standards for milk and nondairy milk substitutes	Same




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### CSDE Resource

#### Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs



[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison\\_Milk\\_Requirements\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison_Milk_Requirements_SNP.pdf)

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### Milk Component Differences



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 Module 4: Milk Component




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### MMA Component Differences




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### MMA Component Differences


Requirement	Preschool	Grades K-12
Servings	Ounces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast and lunch: oz eq</li> <li>Snack: ounces</li> </ul>
MMA substitutions at breakfast	Entire grains component up to 3 times per week	1 oz eq MMA for 1 oz eq grains after offering $\geq$ 1 oz eq of grains
Main dish at lunch	Required	Required
Sugar limit for yogurt	$\leq$ 23 grams per 6 ounces	None




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### ✓ MMA Component Differences



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 Module 5: Meat/Meat Alternates Component



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### Fruits Component and Vegetables Component Differences

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### Fruits and Vegetables Differences

Requirement	Preschool	Grades K-12
Breakfast meal pattern components	Vegetables and fruits = 1 component	Fruits component only but allows optional vegetable substitutions
Lunch: Vegetables substitution for fruits	Allowed	Not allowed
Lunch: 5 vegetable subgroups	Not required	Required



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### Juice Limit Differences

- Fruit juices
- Vegetable juices
- Combination juices




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### Juice Limit Differences

Preschool	Grades K-12
No more than once per day (all meals and snacks)	<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruit juice: <math>\leq</math> 50% of weekly fruits</li> <li>Vegetable juice: <math>\leq</math> 50% of weekly vegetables</li> </ul> <b>Breakfast:</b> $\leq$ 50% of weekly fruits and vegetables




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### Juice Limit Applies to

- Juice (fruit, vegetable, and combination)
- Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies
- Juice in canned fruit
- Frozen 100% juice pops



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### ☑ Fruits and Vegetables Differences





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 Module 6: Fruits Component and Vegetables Component

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### Grains Component Differences




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### Grains Component Differences

Requirement	Preschool	Grades K-12
Noncreditable grains limit	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast and lunch: required</li> <li>Snack: none</li> </ul>
Grain-based desserts	Not allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast: only certain types</li> <li>Lunch: ≤ 2 oz eq per week</li> <li>Snack: recommend ≤ 2 times per week</li> </ul>
Sugar limit for breakfast cereals	≤ 6 grams per ounce	None
WGR frequency	≥ 1 per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast: ≥ 80%</li> <li>Lunch: ≥ 80%</li> <li>Snack: none</li> </ul>



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### WGR Criteria Differences

- Commercial grain products
- Foods made from scratch



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### WGR Criteria Differences for Commercial Products



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### WGR Criteria Differences for Commercial Products

Exhibit A Group	Examples
A-G: Baked goods	Breads, muffins, pancakes, and crackers
H: Cereal grains	Rice, pasta, quinoa, and cooked breakfast cereals, e.g., oatmeal
I: Ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals	Puffed cereals, flaked cereals, round cereals, and granola

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>

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### WGR Criteria Differences

Commercial Baked Goods (A-G) and Cereal Grains (H)	
Preschool	Grades K-12 <b>Stricter</b>
<b>Rule of Three</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First ingredient is whole grain</li> <li>Next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable</li> </ul>	<b>Two WGR criteria</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% whole grain or blend of whole (≥ 50%) and enriched grains</li> <li>Noncreditable grains limit                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups A-G: ≤ 3.99 grams</li> <li>Groups H-I: ≤ 6.99 grams</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Foods that meet K-12 WGR criteria will meet preschool WGR criteria

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### WGR Criteria Differences for RTE Breakfast Cereals



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### WGR Criteria Differences

RTE Breakfast Cereals (Group I)	
Preschool	Grades K-12
<b>Two WGR criteria</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First ingredient is whole grain and cereal is fortified or cereal is 100% whole grain</li> <li>Sugar limit (≤ 6 grams per ounce)</li> </ol>	<b>Two WGR criteria</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First ingredient is whole grain and cereal is fortified or cereal is 100% whole grain</li> <li>≤ 6.99 grams of noncreditable grains</li> </ol>


Cereals that meet K-12 WGR criteria cannot be served to preschoolers unless they meet sugar limit

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### WGR Criteria Differences for Foods Made from Scratch



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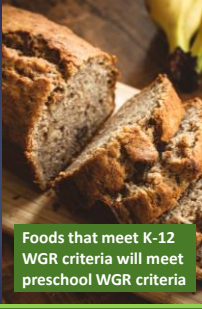
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### WGR Criteria Differences

Foods Made from Scratch	
Preschool	Grades K-12 <b>Stricter</b>
Weight of whole grains ≥ combined weight of other creditable grains	<b>Two WGR criteria</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weight of whole grains ≥ combined weight of other creditable grains</li> <li>Noncreditable grains limit                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups A-G: ≤ 3.99 grams</li> <li>Groups H: ≤ 6.99 grams</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Foods that meet K-12 WGR criteria will meet preschool WGR criteria


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**CSDE Resource**

### Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs



[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison\\_Grain\\_Crediting\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison_Grain_Crediting_SNP.pdf)

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**Grains Component Differences**




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### Meal Pattern Resources

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**CSDE Resource**

### Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)




[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Comparison\\_Preschool\\_Grades\\_K-12\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Comparison_Preschool_Grades_K-12_SNP.pdf)

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**CSDE Resource**

### Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program of the National School Lunch Program



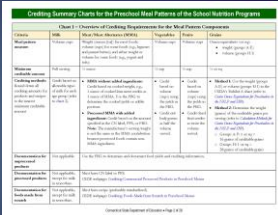
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Comparison\\_Preschool\\_Grades\\_K-12\\_ASP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Comparison_Preschool_Grades_K-12_ASP.pdf)

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**CSDE Resource**

### Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs



[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Crediting\\_Summary\\_Charts\\_SNP\\_Preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_SNP_Preschool.pdf)

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**CSDE Resource**

**Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program**

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_Preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf)  
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**USDA Resource**

**Serving School Meals to Preschoolers**

English and Spanish

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers>  
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**CSDE Webpage**

**Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs**

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>  
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**CSDE Webpage**

**Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs**

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>  
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**CSDE Resource**

**Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns**

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources\\_Preschool\\_Meal\\_Patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources_Preschool_Meal_Patterns.pdf)  
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**Questions?**

Contact the school nutrition programs staff

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CNstaff/countysign.pdf>  
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**Thank you for participating!**

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

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