


National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

Module 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern



Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

School Year 2024-25

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What's in a Meal Training Modules

- 1: Introduction to Training
- 2: Introduction to School Meal Patterns
- 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern
- 4: School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Pattern
- 5: Dietary Specifications
 - 6: Meal Pattern Documentation
 - Part A – School Menus
 - Part B – Crediting Commercial Processed Products
- 7: Milk Component
- 8: Meats/Meat Alternates Component
- 9: Fruits Component
- 10: Vegetables Component
- 11: Grains Component
- 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement
- 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents
- 14: Water Availability During Meal Service
- 15: Offer versus serve (OVS) in the NSLP
- 16: Offer versus serve (OVS) in the SBP

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

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Topics

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Topics

- Overview of lunch meal pattern requirements
- Daily meal pattern requirements
- Weekly meal pattern requirements
- Dietary specifications
- Resources



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Overview of Lunch Meal Pattern Requirements

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Food-based Meal Patterns

- Meal components
- Daily and weekly portions based on specific grade groups
- Weekly nutrition standards (dietary specifications)





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Daily Lunch Requirements

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Minimum Daily Portions

- Same for grades K-5 and 6-8
- Larger for grades 9-12, except milk



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Daily Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-5 and 6-8



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Daily Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-5 and 6-8

MMA	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Milk
1 oz eq 	1 oz eq 	¾ cup 	½ cup 	1 cup 

- ≥ 2 different choices of low-fat or fat-free milk
- ≥ 1 unflavored choice

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Daily Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades 9-12



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Daily Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades 9-12

MMA	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Milk
2 oz eq 	2 oz eq 	1 cup 	1 cup 	1 cup 

- ≥ 2 different choices of low-fat or fat-free milk
- ≥ 1 unflavored choice

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Weekly Lunch Requirements

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Weekly Lunch Requirements

- Based on 5-day week




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Shorter or Longer Week

- Increase or decrease weekly servings by 20% for each day




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More Information on Weekly Lunch Requirements

- Module 2: Introduction to School Meal Patterns



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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

Maximums are guide to meet dietary specifications

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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

Must offer more than minimum on some days for grades K-5 and 6-8

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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

1 oz eq daily = 5 oz eq weekly

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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

2 oz eq daily = 10 oz eq weekly


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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

- ≥ 80 percent of weekly grains must be WGR
- Based on total oz eq offered in weekly lunch menu




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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

Grain-based desserts cannot exceed 2 oz eq per week



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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

1 cup daily = 5 cups weekly

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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5


5 vegetable subgroups

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Weekly Vegetable Subgroups (Cups) for 5-day Week

Grade groups	Dark green	Red/orange	Beans, peas, and lentils	Starchy	Other	Weekly Total
K-5	¼	¼	½	½	¼	2½
6-8	¼	¼	½	½	¼	2½
9-12	¼	1¼	½	½	¼	3½




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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

Juice limit: No more than half of weekly servings




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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

Juice limit: No more than half of weekly servings



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Weekly Lunch Requirements for 5-day week


Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
MMA, oz eq	8-10	9-10	10-12
Grains, oz eq	8-9	8-10	10-12
Vegetables, cups	3½	3½	5
Fruits, cups	2½	2½	5
Milk, cups	5	5	5

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Optional Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-8

- Schools with different grade configurations
 - Grades K-8
 - Grades 5-8






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Optional Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-8

- Narrower weekly calorie range and stricter sodium limits
- Requires careful menu planning to meet dietary specifications




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Optional Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-8

5-day week

7-day week



Meal components	Daily	Weekly
MMA, oz eq	1	9-10
Grains, oz eq	1	8-9
Vegetables, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fruits, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
Milk, cups	1	5

Meal components	Daily	Weekly
MMA, oz eq	1	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -14
Grains, oz eq	1	11-12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Vegetables, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fruits, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Milk, cups	1	7

Same daily quantities as grades K-5 and 6-8


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Optional Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-8

5-day week

7-day week



Meal components	Daily	Weekly
MMA, oz eq	1	9-10
Grains, oz eq	1	8-9
Vegetables, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fruits, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
Milk, cups	1	5

Meal components	Daily	Weekly
MMA, oz eq	1	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -14
Grains, oz eq	1	11-12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Vegetables, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fruits, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Milk, cups	1	7

Same weekly quantities for vegetables, fruits, and milk as grades K-5 and 6-8


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Optional Lunch Meal Pattern for Grades K-8

5-day week

7-day week



Meal components	Daily	Weekly
MMA, oz eq	1	9-10
Grains, oz eq	1	8-9
Vegetables, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fruits, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
Milk, cups	1	5

Meal components	Daily	Weekly
MMA, oz eq	1	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -14
Grains, oz eq	1	11-12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Vegetables, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fruits, cups	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Milk, cups	1	7

Narrower weekly range for MMA and grains than grades K-5 and 6-8


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Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs


- 4-day week
- 5-day week
- 7-day week



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/documents#LunchMealPatterns>

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Dietary Specifications for Lunch

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Dietary Specifications

The USDA's nutrition standards for school meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

Terms to Know


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Dietary Specifications = Weekly Averages

- Individual meal could exceed standards if average over week complies

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Dietary Specifications for School Year 2024-25

- Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (April 25, 2024)
 - Eliminates trans fat standard as of July 1, 2024

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for>

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Final Rule Changes to Dietary Specifications for School Year 2027-28

- Beginning July 1, 2027
- New weekly limit for added sugars

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Final Rule Changes to Dietary Specifications for School Year 2027-28

- Beginning July 1, 2027
- New weekly limit for added sugars
 - < 10 percent of calories

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More Information on Dietary Specifications

- Module 5: Dietary specifications

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Module 5: Dietary Specifications

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Resources

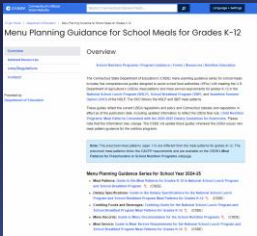
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Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12

- Meal Patterns
- Dietary Specifications
- Crediting Foods and Beverages
- Menu Documentation
- Meal Service



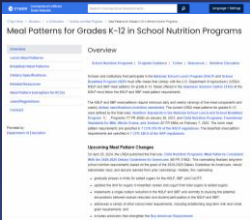
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guidance-for-school-meals>

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Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs>


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CSDE Resource

Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12

- Grades K-5
- Grades 6-8
- Grades 9-12
- Grades K-8 option



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/forms-for-school-nutrition-programs#MenuPlanningChecklistsLunchGradesK-12>


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Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs

- MMA
- Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Milk



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs>

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Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs

- Child Nutrition labels
- Product formulation statements
- Nutrition information
- Accepting product documentation
- Standardized recipes
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs



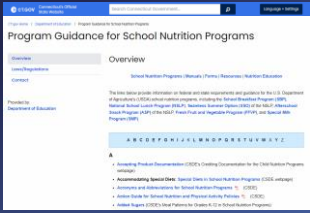
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

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Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs




<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-school-nutrition-programs>

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CSDE Resource

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/ resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.pdf

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Questions?

Contact CSDE's school nutrition programs staff

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cnstaff/countyassign.pdf>

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Thanks for participating!



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

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1666 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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