

# Nutrition Policies and Guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



## Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs

Child Care Centers • Family Day Care Homes  
Emergency Shelters • At-risk Afterschool Care Centers

October 1, 2019, Through September 30, 2021



**Revised November 2019**

Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education  
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**Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs  
October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2021**

Connecticut State Department of Education

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## About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, *Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs*, contains information and guidance on planning menus to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns for children. This guide applies to CACFP child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes. The CACFP meal patterns are defined by the USDA's final rules below.

- Final Rule (81 FR 24347): *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (April 25, 2016):  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/04/25/2016-09412/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>
- Final Rule Correction (81 FR 75671): *CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (November 1, 2016):  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/01/2016-26339/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>
- Final Rule (84 FR 50287): *Delayed Implementation of Grains Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* (September 25, 2019):  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/09/25/2019-20808/delayed-implementation-of-grains-ounce-equivalents-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

The USDA provides additional guidance on the meal pattern requirements through the CACFP policy memos on the USDA's [FNS Documents & Resources](#) webpage.

The contents of this guide are subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance for the CACFP. Please check the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage for the most current version. For more information, contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, at [susan.fiore@ct.gov](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov) or 860-807-2075.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

APPs	alternate protein products
AR	Administrative Review
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCCNS	Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CN	Child Nutrition
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG	<i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i> (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
HHFKA	Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)
ICN	Institute of Child Nutrition (formerly National Food Service Management Institute)
LEA	local educational agency
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
PFS	product formulation statement
POS	point of service
RCCI	residential child care institution
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFA	school food authority
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WGR	whole grain-rich
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children



# 1 — CACFP Meal Patterns

The CACFP meal patterns for children are defined by the USDA’s final rule, *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (81 FR 24348), released on April 25, 2016, and the final rule corrections (81 FR 75671), released on November 1, 2016. The updated meal pattern requirements took effect on October 1, 2017. The requirements for the grains component were changed by another USDA final rule issued on September 25, 2019, *Delayed Implementation of Grains Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* (84 FR 50287), which delays the requirement for ounce equivalents until October 1, 2021.

The CACFP meal patterns for children apply to:

- children ages 1-12;
- children ages 15 and younger of migrant workers;
- children of any age with disabilities; and
- children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool care centers and emergency shelters.

Meals for infants (birth through 11 months) must follow the CACFP infant meal patterns. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.



The USDA updated the CACFP meal patterns to better align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010. The updated CACFP meal patterns require more whole grains and a greater variety of vegetables and fruits; and reduce the amount of added sugars and solid fats in meals. They also better align with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and other Child Nutrition Programs.

The goal of the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs is to improve and maintain children’s health and nutrition while promoting the development of good eating habits. The CACFP meal patterns are designed to meet children’s needs for calories and key nutrients. To receive reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children, CACFP facilities (child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, and family day care homes) must provide the required food components in the appropriate serving size for each age group.

## Overview of Meal Pattern Changes

Effective October 1, 2017, the updated CACFP meal patterns include the changes below.

- Flavored milk cannot be served to children ages 1-5. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to children ages 6 and older, but the USDA recommends serving only unflavored milk.
- The grains/breads component changed to the grains component.
- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR).
- Grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component.
- Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce.
- The required amount for the grains component changes to ounce equivalents, effective October 1, 2021 (see [“Delayed Implementation of Grain Ounce Equivalents”](#) in this section).
- Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week (see [“Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast”](#) in section 3).
- Tofu and soy yogurt credit as the meat/meat alternates component (see [“Crediting Tofu”](#) and [“Crediting Yogurt and Soy Yogurt”](#) in section 3).
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce).
- Vegetables and fruits are two separate components.
- Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch (see [“Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper”](#) in section 3).
- Juice may fulfill the entire vegetables component or fruits component. However, juice cannot credit as the vegetables component or fruits component at more than one CACFP meal or snack per day (see [“Juice limit”](#) in section 3).
- Foods cannot be deep-fat fried on site, i.e., cooked by submerging food in hot oil or other fat.
- Offer versus serve can be implemented in at-risk afterschool child care centers.

Section 3 provides detailed menu planning guidance for each food component of the CACFP meal patterns.



## Transition Period

CACFP facilities were required to implement all provisions of the updated CACFP meal patterns by October 1, 2017. During fiscal year 2018 (October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018), the USDA allowed a transition period to help CACFP facilities adjust to the updated CACFP meal patterns. During this time, the USDA allowed state agencies to provide technical assistance in lieu of fiscal action when they observed violations related to the updated CACFP meal patterns. For more information, see [USDA Memo SP 30-2017 and CACFP 13-2017: Transition Period for the Updated Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns and the Updated National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Infant and CACFP meal patterns](#).

Effective October 1, 2018, the transition period ended. [USDA Memo SP 01-2019 and CACFP 01-2019: Guidance for FY19: Updated CACFP Meal Patterns and Updated NSLP and SBP Infant and CACFP meal patterns](#) summarizes the requirements that state agencies must follow for CACFP facilities that fail to meet the CACFP meal patterns. In most cases, state agencies are required to provide technical assistance and allow for corrective action before fiscal action is assessed. However, the USDA indicates that state agencies must continue to take immediate fiscal action if a CACFP meal or snack is completely missing one or more of the required food components.

## Delayed Implementation of Grain Ounce Equivalents

The USDA's final rule from April 25, 2016, [Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#) (81 FR 24348), required that the amounts for the grains component change from servings to ounce equivalents on October 1, 2019. However, on September 25, 2019, the USDA released the final rule, [Delayed Implementation of Grains Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) (84 FR 50287). This final rule delays implementation of the ounce equivalents requirement for crediting grains in the CACFP meal patterns until October 1, 2021.

## Age Groups

The CACFP meal patterns for children consist of minimum servings of food components for four age groups:

- ages 1-2;
- ages 3-5;
- ages 6-12; and
- ages 13-18 (only for at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters).

The minimum meal pattern servings might not be sufficient for older children. Menu planners may choose to provide additional foods or larger serving sizes. For example, a breakfast menu

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of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of oatmeal,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of blueberries, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of milk may be adequate for a 3-year-old, but a 5-year-old may need a larger serving size (such as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of oatmeal) or additional food items (such as another serving of fruit).

The meal patterns for ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool care programs and emergency shelters are the same as the meal patterns for ages 6-12. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet these older children's nutritional needs.

### Reimbursable Meals

The USDA reimburses CACFP facilities for meals and snacks served to children, not for individual foods. A meal or snack is reimbursable if it meets the CACFP meal patterns for children, i.e., contains the required food components in the minimum serving for each age group. Meals and snacks that contain foods in addition to the required food components are also reimbursable. However, menu planners must consider the appropriateness of extra foods for each age group. Young children have small appetites and might not consume the nutritious meal pattern components if extra foods are offered.




The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to choose nutrient-dense foods for additional servings. Examples include vegetables; fruits; whole grains; low-fat and nonfat milk products; legumes; and lean meats, fish, poultry. Some additional foods do not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns and cannot be served, or should only be served in moderation. For more information, see “[Noncreditable Foods](#)” in section 3.

### Food Components

A food component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates. Menu items contribute to the food components. A menu item is any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk; and may contribute to one or more food components. For example, a hamburger (meat/meat alternates component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one menu item that contributes to two food components. Table 1-1 indicates the required servings of each food component in the CACFP meal patterns.



**Table 1-1. Required servings of the food components in the CACFP meal patterns**

Breakfast	Lunch/Supper	Snack
<p><b>Three food servings</b><sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One serving of milk</li> <li>• One serving of vegetables, fruits, or both</li> <li>• One serving of grains<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> 	<p><b>Five food servings</b><sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One serving of milk</li> <li>• One serving of meat/meat alternates</li> <li>• One serving of vegetables<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• One serving of fruits</li> <li>• One serving of grains</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Choose two of five food servings</b><sup>1,4</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One serving of milk</li> <li>• One serving of meat/meat alternates</li> <li>• One serving of vegetables</li> <li>• One serving of fruits</li> <li>• One serving of grains</li> </ul> 

<sup>1</sup> A serving is the specified amount for each age group in the CACFP meal patterns.

<sup>2</sup> Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. For more information, see [“Meat/meat alternates at breakfast”](#) in section 3.

<sup>3</sup> Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch and supper. If the meal includes two servings of vegetables, they must be two different kinds. For more information, see [“Substituting vegetables for fruits at lunch”](#) in section 3.

<sup>4</sup> Snack must include two of the five components.

## CACFP Meal Patterns for Children

The following pages include the CACFP meal patterns for breakfast (table 1-2), lunch and supper (table 1-3), and snack (table 1-4), which are in effect through September 30, 2021. Effective October 1, 2021, the required amount for the grains component changes to ounce equivalents. For more information, see [“Part C: Grain Serving Size”](#) in section 3.

A handout of the CACFP meal patterns for children is available on the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

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**Table 1-2. CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children**

Food components <sup>1</sup>	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Milk, fluid</b> <sup>3</sup>	4 fluid ounces (fl oz) (½ cup)	6 fl oz (¾ cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
<b>Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both</b> <sup>4, 5, 6</sup>	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Grains</b> <sup>7, 8, 9, 10, 11</sup>				
Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched bread	½ slice <sup>11</sup>	½ slice <sup>11</sup>	1 slice <sup>11</sup>	1 slice <sup>11</sup>
WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ serving <sup>11</sup>	½ serving <sup>11</sup>	1 serving <sup>11</sup>	1 serving <sup>11</sup>
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal <sup>12</sup> , cereal grain <sup>13</sup> , or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold) <sup>12, 14</sup>	¼ cup or ⅓ ounce	⅓ cup or ½ ounce	¾ cup or 1 ounce	¾ cup or 1 ounce

◀ See below for important menu planning notes ▶

## Menu planning notes for breakfast

- <sup>1</sup> Breakfast must include the minimum serving of all three components. Use the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For processed foods, review the product’s Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP*; and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage. Foods made on site must have a recipe that documents crediting information. For more information, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.
- <sup>2</sup> This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.
- <sup>3</sup> Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk to ages 2 and older. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.

Table 1-2. CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for breakfast, *continued***

- 4 The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables. Dried vegetables require a PFS. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. Vegetables credit based on volume, except raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup credits as ½ cup of vegetables), and tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted (see the FBG). The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*.
- 5 Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP* and *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- 6 The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit. Serve canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- 7 To credit as the grains component, a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient (excluding water), or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, *How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP*.
- 8 At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grains or contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.
- 9 Except for sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers), grain-based desserts cannot credit. Examples include cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP*.
- 10 Meat/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for one serving of the grains component. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, *Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast*.

Table 1-2. CACFP breakfast meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for breakfast, *continued***

- <sup>11</sup> Through September 30, 2021, grains must meet the applicable weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in the USDA’s grain servings chart, or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Grain Servings for the CACFP* and *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP*. Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*.
- <sup>12</sup> Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.
- <sup>13</sup> Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.
- <sup>14</sup> Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for RTE breakfast cereals change to ounce equivalents. The required amount for ages 1-2 and 3-5 ( $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce equivalent) is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of flakes or rounds,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of puffed cereal, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of granola. The required amount for ages 6-12 and 13-18 (1 ounce equivalent) is 1 cup of flakes or rounds,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups of puffed cereal, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of granola.



Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children

Food Components <sup>1</sup>	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Milk, fluid</b> <sup>3</sup>	4 fl oz (½ cup)	6 fl oz (¾ cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
<b>Meat/meat alternates</b> <sup>4</sup>				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Surimi <sup>5</sup>	3 ounces	4.4 ounces	6 ounces	6 ounces
Tofu, soy products, tempeh, or alternate protein products (APPs) <sup>6</sup>	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Cheese	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces
Cottage cheese	¼ cup	⅜ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Egg, large	½	¾	1	1
Cooked dry beans or peas <sup>7</sup>	¼ cup	⅜ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds <sup>8</sup>	½ ounce = 50%	¾ ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened <sup>9</sup>	4 ounces or ½ cup	6 ounces or ¾ cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	8 ounces or 1 cup
<b>Vegetables</b> <sup>10,11</sup>	⅛ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Fruits</b> <sup>11, 12, 13</sup>	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
<b>Grains</b> <sup>14, 15, 16, 17</sup>				
WGR or enriched bread	½ slice <sup>17</sup>	½ slice <sup>17</sup>	1 slice <sup>17</sup>	1 slice <sup>17</sup>
WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ serving <sup>17</sup>	½ serving <sup>17</sup>	1 serving <sup>17</sup>	1 serving <sup>17</sup>
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal <sup>18</sup> , cereal grain <sup>19</sup> , or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold) <sup>18, 20</sup>	¼ cup or ⅓ ounce	⅓ cup or ½ ounce	¾ cup or 1 ounce	¾ cup or 1 ounce
<b>◀ See next page for important menu planning notes ▶</b>				

Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for lunch and supper**

- <sup>1</sup> Lunch and supper must include the minimum serving of all five components. Use the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For processed foods, review the product’s Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP*; and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage. Foods made on site must have a recipe that documents crediting information. For more information, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.
- <sup>2</sup> This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.
- <sup>3</sup> Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk to ages 2 and older. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.
- <sup>4</sup> A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP* and *Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP*.
- <sup>5</sup> Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A CN label or manufacturer’s PFS is required to credit surimi seafood differently than these amounts.
- <sup>6</sup> APPs must meet the requirements in [appendix A](#) of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP* and *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP*. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component if the product’s ingredients include only soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, a CN label or PFS is required to document crediting information.
- <sup>7</sup> Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Legumes in the CACFP*.

Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for lunch and supper, *continued***

- <sup>8</sup> Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. They must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the total requirement. **Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food, and are ground or finely chopped. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP](#)
- <sup>9</sup> Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#).
- <sup>10</sup> The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables. Dried vegetables require a PFS. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. Vegetables credit based on volume, except raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup credits as ½ cup of vegetables), and tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted (see the FBG). The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP](#).
- <sup>11</sup> Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP](#). The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- <sup>12</sup> Vegetables can substitute for the entire fruits component at lunch and supper. If lunch or supper includes two servings of vegetables, they must be different kinds.
- <sup>13</sup> The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit. Serve canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- <sup>14</sup> To credit as the grains component, a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient (excluding water), or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE's handout, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#).

Table 1-3. CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for lunch and supper, *continued***

- <sup>15</sup> At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grains or contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.
- <sup>16</sup> Except for sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers), grain-based desserts cannot credit. Examples include cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, see the USDA's handout, *Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP*.
- <sup>17</sup> Through September 30, 2021, grains must meet the applicable weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in the USDA's grain servings chart, or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, *Grain Servings for the CACFP* and *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP*. Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*.
- <sup>18</sup> Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.
- <sup>19</sup> Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.
- <sup>20</sup> Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for RTE breakfast cereals change to ounce equivalents. The required amount for ages 1-2 and 3-5 ( $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce equivalent) is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of flakes or rounds,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of puffed cereal, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of granola. The required amount for ages 6-12 and 13-18 (1 ounce equivalent) is 1 cup of flakes or rounds,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups of puffed cereal, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of granola.

Table 1-4. CACFP snack meal pattern for children				
Serve any two of the following five components (must be two different components) <sup>1</sup>	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Milk, fluid</b> <sup>3</sup>	4 fl oz ( $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	4 fl oz ( $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
<b>Meat/meat alternates</b> Lean meat, poultry, or fish <sup>4</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Surimi <sup>5</sup>	2 ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces	3 ounces
Tofu, soy products, tempeh, or alternate protein products (APPs) <sup>6</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Cottage cheese	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Egg, large	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
Cooked dry beans or peas <sup>7</sup>	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	2 tablespoons
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds <sup>8</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Yogurt or soy yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened <sup>9</sup>	2 ounces or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	2 ounces or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	4 ounces or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	4 ounces or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
<b>Vegetables</b> <sup>10, 11</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
<b>Fruits</b> <sup>11, 12</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
<b>Grains</b> <sup>13, 14, 15, 16</sup> WGR or enriched bread	$\frac{1}{2}$ slice <sup>16</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ slice <sup>16</sup>	1 slice <sup>16</sup>	1 slice <sup>16</sup>
WGR or enriched bread product, e.g., biscuit, roll, or muffin	$\frac{1}{2}$ serving <sup>16</sup>	$\frac{1}{2}$ serving <sup>16</sup>	1 serving <sup>16</sup>	1 serving <sup>16</sup>
WGR, enriched, or fortified cooked breakfast cereal <sup>17</sup> , cereal grain <sup>18</sup> , or pasta	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
WGR, enriched, or fortified ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal (dry, cold) <sup>17, 19</sup>	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup or $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup or $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup or 1 ounce	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup or 1 ounce
<b>◀ See next page for important menu planning notes ▶</b>				

Table 1-4. CACFP snack meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for snack**

- <sup>1</sup> Snack must include the minimum serving of two of the five components. Only one of the two components may be a creditable beverage. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving a vegetable or fruit for at least one snack component. Use the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For processed foods, review the product's Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS). For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP*; and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage. Foods made on site must have a recipe that documents crediting information. For more information, visit the "Crediting Foods Prepared on Site" section of the CSDE's *Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs* webpage.
- <sup>2</sup> This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.
- <sup>3</sup> Serve unflavored whole milk to age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk to ages 2 and older. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.
- <sup>4</sup> A serving is the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.
- <sup>5</sup> Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A CN label or manufacturer's PFS is required to credit surimi seafood differently than these amounts.
- <sup>6</sup> APPs must meet the requirements in [appendix A](#) of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). Tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP* and *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP*. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component if the product's ingredients include only soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, a CN label or PFS is required to document crediting information.
- <sup>7</sup> Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same snack. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Legumes in the CACFP*.



Table 1-4. CACFP snack meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for snack, *continued***

- <sup>8</sup> Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. **Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to young children are in a prepared food, and are ground or finely chopped. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP](#)
- <sup>9</sup> Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#).
- <sup>10</sup> The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables. Dried vegetables require a PFS. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. Vegetables credit based on volume, except raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup credits as ½ cup of vegetables), and tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted (see the FBG). The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP](#).
- <sup>11</sup> Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. Juice includes all fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP](#). The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- <sup>12</sup> The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit. Serve canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.
- <sup>13</sup> To credit as the grains component, a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient (excluding water), or the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE's handout, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#).
- <sup>14</sup> At least one serving per day must be WGR. The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain 100 percent whole grains or contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP](#).

Table 1-4. CACFP snack meal pattern for children, *continued***Menu planning notes for snack, *continued***

- <sup>15</sup> Except for sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers), grain-based desserts cannot credit. Examples include cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, see the USDA's handout, *Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP*.
- <sup>16</sup> Through September 30, 2021, grains must meet the applicable weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in the USDA's grain servings chart, or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, *Grain Servings for the CACFP* and *Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP*. Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*.
- <sup>17</sup> Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.
- <sup>18</sup> Examples of cereal grains include amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.
- <sup>19</sup> Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for RTE breakfast cereals change to ounce equivalents. The required amount for ages 1-2 and 3-5 ( $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce equivalent) is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of flakes or rounds,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of puffed cereal, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of granola. The required amount for ages 6-12 and 13-18 (1 ounce equivalent) is 1 cup of flakes or rounds,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups of puffed cereal, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of granola.

## Overview of CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements

The information below summarizes the requirements for the CACFP meal patterns. For information on the required menu records for documenting meal pattern compliance, see section 2. For detailed guidance on each food component, see section 3.

### Breakfast

- Breakfasts must include one serving of the milk component; one serving of vegetables, fruits, or both; and one serving of the grains component. The serving offered for each component must be at least the minimum amount for each age group in the CACFP breakfast meal pattern (see [table 1-2](#) in this section).
- The meat/meat alternates component may be substituted for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for one serving of the grains component. For more information, see [“Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast”](#) in section 3.
- If the menu indicates “juice” or “fruit,” the CACFP facility must indicate the specific varieties of juice and fruit served. This information can be listed on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation, such as a list of all types of juice and fruit served in CACFP meals and snacks.
- If juice is served at breakfast, it cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack. For more information, see [“Juice limit”](#) in section 3.
- If the menu indicates “cereal,” the CACFP facility must indicate the specific varieties (type and brand) of cooked and RTE breakfast cereals, and whether they are WGR, enriched, or fortified. Menu planners may write “WGR” next to the product name to indicate that a product is WGR. For example, “General Mills Cheerios (WGR)” or “Quaker Oatmeal (WGR).” Alternatively, CACFP facilities may list this information on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all cereals served in CACFP meals and snacks. For more information, see [“Required Documentation for Grains”](#) in “Part B: WGR Requirement” of section 3.
- If CACFP facilities serve RTE breakfast cereal with milk, the menu must list the specific type of cereal as one component (e.g., “whole-grain granola”) and the specific type of fluid milk as another (e.g., “unflavored low-fat milk”). “Cereal with milk” does not indicate that the CACFP facility is serving each age group an appropriate amount of RTE breakfast cereal or an appropriate amount or type of milk.



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- CACFP facilities must make water available during the breakfast meal service, but cannot offer water in place of the required food components. For more information, see “[Water Availability](#)” in section 4.

### Lunch and supper

- Lunches and suppers must include one serving of the milk component, one serving of the meat/meat alternates component, one serving of the vegetables component, one serving of the fruits component (or vegetable substitutions), and one serving of the grains component. The serving for each component must be at least the minimum amount in the CACFP lunch meal pattern (see [table 1-3](#) in this section).
- Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch or supper. Lunch and supper menus must include one serving of the vegetables component and one serving of the fruits component, or two different servings of the vegetables component. For more information, see “[Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper](#)” in section 3.
- If the lunch or supper menu lists “salad,” CACFP facilities must provide a specific description of the type of salad on the CACFP menu, daily production record, or other menu documentation such as a list of all types of salads served in CACFP meals and snacks. Examples include carrot-raisin salad; garden salad with lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes; and fresh fruit salad with apples, oranges, bananas, and strawberries. **Note:** Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For more information, see “[Crediting Raw Leafy Greens](#)” in section 3.
- CACFP facilities must make water available during the lunch and supper meal service, but cannot offer water in place of the required food components. For more information, see “[Water Availability](#)” in section 4.



## Snack

- Snacks must include two of the five components. The serving for each component must be at least the minimum amount in the CACFP meal pattern (see [table 1-4](#) in this section).
- A CACFP snack that contains two servings from the same component is not reimbursable. For example, a snack menu of orange juice (fruits component) and applesauce (fruits component) is not reimbursable because it contains only one food component. However, a snack of orange juice (fruits component) and carrot sticks (vegetables component) is reimbursable because it contains two different components.
- If the snack menu includes a creditable beverage (milk or juice), the other snack component cannot be a beverage. CACFP facilities cannot serve juice when milk is the only other snack component.
- If the snack menu includes milk, the other snack component should not be yogurt. The CSDE recommends this practice to increase nutrient variety.
- If the snack menu includes more than two different food items, at least two food items must meet the required food components and servings. An example is a snack menu of yogurt (meat/meat alternates component), strawberries (fruits component) and granola (grains component). The snack menu must clearly indicate which items contribute to the CACFP meal pattern, and the serving size provided.
- A snack menu that includes a noncreditable food must also include the minimum required serving of at least two components. For example, a snack of strawberry gelatin (noncreditable food), whole-grain crackers (grains component), and unflavored low-fat milk (milk component) contains three food items but only two components. To be reimbursable, this snack menu must provide the minimum serving of both milk and crackers.
- The snack menu should include a vegetable or fruit as often as possible. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends making at least one of the two required snack components a vegetable or a fruit.
- The CACFP facility must make water available during the snack service, but cannot offer water in place of the required food components. The CACFP facility should offer water at snack when no other beverage is served. For more information, see "[Water Availability](#)" in section 4.



## Meal pattern documentation

- CACFP facilities must have a written CACFP menu to document that all meals and snacks provide the required components and minimum servings for each age group. For more information, see “[Menus](#)” in section 2.
- CACFP facilities must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer’s production formulation statement (PFS) on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial foods served in CACFP menus, such as entrees, grains, and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients, e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad. **Note:** CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component. However, they usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products, such as grains, vegetables, and fruits. For more information, see “[Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels](#)” and “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2.
- CACFP facilities must have documentation on file to indicate that WGR foods were identified using one of the USDA’s six allowable methods for determining compliance with the WGR criteria. For more information, see “[WGR requirement](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.
- CACFP facilities must have documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the CACFP sugar limit (no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce) and that compliance was determined using one of the USDA’s three allowable methods. For more information, see “[Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.
- CACFP facilities must have documentation on file to indicate that all yogurt and soy yogurt products meet the CACFP sugar limit (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce). For more information, see “[Crediting Yogurt and Soy Yogurt](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP*.
- CACFP facilities must have documentation on file to indicate that APPs meet the requirements in [appendix A](#) of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). For more information, see “[Crediting Alternate Protein Products](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP*.
- CACFP facilities must have documentation on file to indicate that tofu and tofu products contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). For more information, see “[Crediting Commercial Tofu and Tofu Products](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP*.

- CACFP facilities must have recipes on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all foods made on site. Examples of foods made on site include entrees, grains (such as pancakes, muffins, and breads), and vegetables and fruits with added ingredients, e.g., coleslaw, potato salad, and carrot-raisin salad. For more information, see “[Standardized Recipes](#)” in section 2.
- If a CACFP child care center operates under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the center must have a daily production record on file for all CACFP meals. The production record must include all meal components and menu items including all meal choices, food components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods. For more information, see “[Production Records](#)” in section 2.

## Meal Pattern Resources

The resources and websites below provide information and guidance on planning meals to meet the CACFP meal patterns for children. For detailed information on crediting foods in the CACFP meal patterns, see the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

- CACFP Best Practices (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_bestpractices.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_bestpractices.pdf)
- CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinar-series>
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Slides (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/meal-pattern-training-slides-cacfp>
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Tools (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-training-tools>
- CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-meal-pattern-training-worksheets>
- CACFP Nutrition and Nutrition Education (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-and-nutrition-education>
- CACFP Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern Revision: Best Practices (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_factBP.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf)



## 1 | CACFP Meal Patterns

- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>
- Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>
- Menu Planning Tools for Child Care Providers (USDA):  
<https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/menu-planning/menu-planning-tools/menu-planning-tools-child-care-providers>
- Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-wellness-tips-young-children>
- Team Nutrition Resource Library (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library>

For information on recipes, see “Standardized Recipes” and “Recipe Resources” in section 2. For additional resources, see section 5.



## 2 — Menu Records

CACFP facilities must be able to document that CACFP meals and snacks provide the required food components and minimum servings. Without appropriate documentation, foods and beverages cannot credit as part of reimbursable meals and snacks. The CSDE will disallow reimbursement for noncompliant meals and snacks in the CACFP.

Family day care home sponsors must provide training, early monitoring, and technical assistance to ensure that new providers are able to serve reimbursable meals and snacks. CACFP regulations do not allow grace periods for new day care homes that are not meeting the CACFP meal patterns in the early months of participation. While serving meals with missing components or insufficient portion sizes may not rise to the level of serious deficiency for new homes, family day care sponsors must always disallow ineligible meals.

CACFP facilities should ensure that all appropriate food service staff are aware of the documents needed to demonstrate the menu's compliance with the CACFP meal patterns. Staff must also understand how to complete and maintain appropriate documentation. Table 2-1 summarizes the required documentation for meal pattern compliance. CACFP facilities must maintain these records on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.

<b>Table 2-1. Documentation for meal pattern compliance</b>	
<b>Commercial foods</b>	<b>Foods made on site by the CACFP facility</b>
Menus Production records <sup>1</sup> Child Nutrition (CN) labels Product formulation statement (PFS) forms	Menus Production records <sup>1</sup> Recipes <sup>2</sup>
<p><sup>1</sup> Production records are not required in the CACFP unless a CACFP child care center follows the NSLP meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use production records because they provide appropriate documentation of compliance with the CACFP meal patterns.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The CSDE strongly encourages the use of standardized recipes to ensure that menus provide the correct CACFP food components and portions.</p>	

### CACFP Menus

CACFP facilities must develop menus that represent the actual food components served for each meal and snack claimed for CACFP reimbursement. The menu must identify the date of the meal service and all food items served, including the type of milk and which grain products are WGR. Cycle menus or menus developed in advance of the meal service must specify the month and day, and indicate any menu substitutions that occur. For more information, see “[Using cycle menus](#)” in this section.

Each CACFP facility must have a written “menu of record” on file to document the specific meal pattern components served to all enrolled children each day. The CACFP facility must maintain all menus on file with other required CACFP records in accordance with the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.10(d)).



### Menu forms

The menu form is an important tool to help CACFP facilities comply with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Using an appropriate menu form makes it easier to ensure that all meals and snacks include the required food components in the required portions. When reviewing CACFP menus for meal pattern compliance, CSDE staff cannot determine if meal components are offered unless they are indicated on the menu.

The CSDE strongly discourages CACFP facilities from using a blank calendar as a menu form because the menu planner might omit food components or provide insufficient servings. This could result in menus that do not comply with the CACFP requirements. Meals with missing food components or insufficient servings are not reimbursable in the CACFP.

The CSDE’s sample CACFP weekly menu forms help menu planners include the required food components and servings. These forms include:

- CACFP Menu Form: AM and PM Snack for Ages 1-2;
- CACFP Menu Form: AM and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- CACFP Menu Form: AM or PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- CACFP Menu Form: AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters;
- CACFP Menu Form: AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- CACFP Menu Form: At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18;
- CACFP Menu Form: At-risk Snack for Ages 6-18;
- CACFP Menu Form: At-risk Supper for Ages 6-18;

- CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 3-5;
- CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 6-12;

The CSDE’s CACFP menu forms are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage. CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to fit individual program needs. If a CACFP facility chooses to use a different menu format, it should contain appropriate guidance regarding the required food components and servings for each meal and snack served to each age group.

### Using cycle menus

The CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to use cycle menus for CACFP meals and snacks. A cycle menu is series of menus planned for a specific period (such as four weeks) with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help CACFP facilities comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time.

The CSDE recommends a period of at least four weeks for cycle menus. This time period increases the variety of meals and snacks offered, and ensures that children are not served the same combination of foods too often. The resources below provide additional information on cycle menus for young children.

- CACFP: New Meal Pattern Guidelines and Resources (The Nemours Foundation):  
<https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/cacfp/>
- CARE Connection – Planning Cycle Menus in Child Care (Online Learning Course) (ICN):  
<https://theicn.docebos.com/learn/public/course/view/elearning/51/care-connection-planning-cycle-menus-in-child-care>
- Menus for Child Care (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menus-for-child-care/>

**Note:** Some resources may have been developed prior to the updated CACFP meal patterns. CACFP facilities should check resources for current meal pattern compliance and adapt recipes, as needed. For more resources, see the CSDE’s handout, [Menu Planning and Food Production Resource List](#).

### Sample CACFP menus

The CSDE's sample CACFP menus provide ideas for meals and snacks for children in child care programs. These menus include:

- Sample Cold Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes;
- Sample Hot Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes;
- Sample Cold Lunch/Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes;
- Sample Hot Lunch/Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes; and
- Sample Snack Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes.

The CSDE's sample CACFP menus are available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage. The servings in these menus are for ages 3-5, and can be adjusted for other ages. Each menu contains at least the minimum required food components and servings. Some menus include additional components or exceed the minimum serving requirements.

The type of foods purchased by the CACFP facility, and the recipes and preparation techniques used by the CACFP facility, will determine whether local menus meet the CACFP meal patterns for children. CACFP facilities should use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the required serving for each meal pattern component.

A CN label or manufacturer's PFS must be on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial foods served in CACFP menus. A recipe must be on file to document the meal pattern compliance of foods made on site in the CACFP facility. For more information on crediting documentation, see section 2.

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to evaluate their menus for compliance with the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CCCNS). For more information, see section 4 and the CSDE's [Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies](#).

For resources on menu planning, see "[Menu Planning Resources](#)" in this section and the CSDE's handout, [Menu Planning and Food Production Resource List](#).



## Production Records

The USDA regulations require that CACFP facilities must document compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children and maintain records of food purchases. Production records are not required, except for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages all CACFP facilities to use production records because they provide appropriate documentation that meals and snacks meet the CACFP meal patterns.

A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. Table 2-2 indicates what elements production records should include and when food service personnel should complete the information.

Table 2-2. Required elements for production records	
Complete before meal service	Complete after meal service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of site</li> <li>Meal date</li> <li>Meal type (breakfast or lunch)</li> <li>All planned menu items including all meal choices, food components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods</li> <li>Recipe name and number or product name and code</li> <li>Planned serving size and number of servings for reimbursable meals for each age/age group, and if applicable, nonreimbursable meals (e.g., second meals and adult meals), and a la carte sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temperatures (complete throughout meal service) <sup>1</sup></li> <li>Total amount/quantity of food prepared for each food item or menu item, e.g., number of servings, pounds, cans, and pieces</li> <li>Amount of leftover food for each food item or menu item</li> <li>Total amount of food served</li> <li>Number of reimbursable meals served for each age group</li> <li>Number of nonreimbursable meals served, e.g., second meals and adult meals</li> </ul>
<p><sup>1</sup> Food service staff should record temperatures throughout the meal service to ensure that hot foods are held at 140 °F or above and cold foods at held at 41 °F or below. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE's <a href="#">Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs</a> webpage.</p>	

## 2 | Menu Records

The CSDE’s sample CACFP production records help menu planners document compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children. These forms include:

- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM and PM Snack;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Emergency Shelters;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Any Meal;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for At-Risk Snack and Supper;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast and PM Snack;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack;
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Emergency Shelters; and
- CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack.

The CSDE’s sample CACFP production records are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage. CACFP facilities may adapt these forms to fit individual program needs. If a CACFP facility does not use production records, the CSDE recommends developing an alternate system to document the actual serving sizes provided for each meal and snack, such as maintaining a list of serving sizes.

### Volume versus weight

Menu documentation records must reflect the measurements required by the CACFP meal patterns. For example, the CACFP meal patterns require a specific volume (cups) for the fruits component and vegetables component, and specific a volume (tablespoons) for peanut butter. Therefore, menu documentation records for CACFP menus must list the servings of fruits and vegetables in cups, not weight (ounces), and the servings of peanut butter in tablespoons, not weight (ounces).

Volume is the amount of space an ingredient occupies in a measuring container, and is not the same as weight. Volume measures include teaspoon, tablespoon, fluid ounce, cup, pint, quart and gallon. A specific measure of volume (fluid ounces) does not equal the same measure of weight (ounces). For example, a ½-cup serving of a food (4 fluid ounces) does not weigh 4 ounces. The weight of a volume measure of food varies depending on the density of the food. For example, ½ cup of lettuce weighs less than ½ cup of canned peaches.



## Standardized Recipes

When food is prepared on site, the CACFP facility must be able to document that a serving of the menu item provides the amount of each meal component credited toward the meal patterns. For example, if the menu planner credits macaroni and cheese as the meat/meat alternates component and grains component for ages 3-5 at lunch, the CACFP facility must have a recipe on file to indicate that each serving contains 1½ ounces of cheese and ¼ cup of whole-grain or enriched pasta.

The CSDE strongly encourages the use of standardized recipes to ensure that menus provide the correct CACFP food components and portions. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation 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. Standardized recipes have many benefits. They help to ensure:

- consistent food quality;
- predictable yield;
- consistent nutrient content;
- customer satisfaction;
- food cost control;
- efficient purchasing procedures;
- inventory control;
- labor cost control;
- increased employee confidence;
- reduced record keeping; and
- successful completion of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.



Foods made on site include:

- foods that are prepared from scratch using a recipe, such as cornbread, coleslaw, potato salad, soup, lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and casseroles; and
- foods that require some additional processing by adding other ingredients after purchasing. For example, making rice or pasta with butter, sautéing vegetables in oil, adding dressing to salad, assembling a sandwich, adding eggs and oil to a muffin mix, and reconstituting canned soup with milk.

Recipes are not required for foods that do not contain any added ingredients, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, purchased breads and rolls, and commercially prepared entrees and side dishes.

### Requirements for standardized recipes

CACFP facilities can standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA's recipes. Standardized recipes must include the following:

- recipe name that describes the recipe;
- recipe number that is unique to each recipe;
- recipe category classification, e.g., main dish, grains, and vegetables;
- recipe yield (weight and/or volume and number of servings), i.e., the amount produced when production is complete;
- ingredients used;
- ingredient amounts per yield, i.e., the quantity (weight or volume) of all ingredients for each yield, such as 50 servings or 100 servings;
- preparation equipment and utensil, such as pans, steamers and mixers;
- food safety Critical Control Points (CCPs), i.e., time and temperature critical limits for each step of preparing, holding, serving, and storing;
- cooking time and temperature, as required;
- serving size (the weight and/or volume of the single portion size);
- serving utensils such as scoops, ladles, and spoodles; and
- meal pattern component contributions per serving, e.g., fruits component, vegetables component (including subgroups), grains component, and meats/meat alternates component.

The CSDE's *Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP* provides a template that CACFP facilities can use when developing standardized recipes. For more information on using standardized recipes, "[Determining In-house Product Yields](#)" in this section, and the resources below.

### Recipe resources

The resources below assist menu planners with developing and using standardized recipes.

- Basic Culinary Math for School Nutrition Professionals (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/school-nutrition-programs/>
- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/recipes/>
- Food Buying for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

- Manager’s Corner: Standardized Recipes (ICN):  
[https://theicn.org/resources/1147/managers-corner-curriculum/112323/mc\\_standardized-recipes-oct-2018.pdf](https://theicn.org/resources/1147/managers-corner-curriculum/112323/mc_standardized-recipes-oct-2018.pdf)
- Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes (ICN, formerly NSFMI)  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Measuring\\_Success\\_Standardized\\_Recipes\\_NFSMI.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Measuring_Success_Standardized_Recipes_NFSMI.pdf)
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>
- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Portion Control (ICN):  
<https://theicn.docebosaaS.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/16/portion-control>
- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Recipe Adjustments (ICN):  
<https://theicn.docebosaaS.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/17/recipe-adjustments>
- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Weights and Measures (ICN):  
<https://theicn.docebosaaS.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/19/weights-and-measures>
- No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: Combine Multiple Servings by Weight (ICN): <https://theicn.org/resources/354/no-time-to-trainshort-lessons-for-school-nutrition-assistants/105412/lesson-13-combine-multiple-servings-by-weight.pdf>
- No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: How Foods Are Portioned (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/resources/354/no-time-to-trainshort-lessons-for-school-nutrition-assistants/105409/lesson-10-how-foods-are-portioned.pdf>
- No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: Identifying the Parts of a USDA Quantity Recipe (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/resources/354/no-time-to-trainshort-lessons-for-school-nutrition-assistants/105430/lesson-32-identifying-the-parts-of-a-usda-quantity-recipe.pdf>
- No Time to Train: Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants: Portioning Matters (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/resources/354/no-time-to-trainshort-lessons-for-school-nutrition-assistants/105427/lesson-29-portioning-matters.pdf>

## 2 | Menu Records

- Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Schools (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-schools>
- Recipes for Healthy Kids (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/recipes-for-healthy-kids/>
- Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/StdRecipeCACFP.doc>
- Why Use Standardized Recipes? Fact Sheet (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/resources/527/food-service-management-skills/107291/why-use-standardized-recipes.pdf>

For more information, see the CSDE's [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Note:** CACFP facilities must ensure that local menus comply with the CACFP meal patterns. Menu planners should check resources for current meal pattern compliance and adapt recipes, as needed.



## Documentation for Commercial Products

Commercially prepared foods served in CACFP meals and snacks must provide the amount of the food components being credited toward the CACFP meal patterns. For example, to credit commercially prepared chicken nuggets as the meat/meat alternates component and grains component for ages 3-5 at lunch, the manufacturer's documentation must indicate that one serving of the product contains 1½ ounces of cooked chicken and ½ serving of WGR or enriched breadings.

To credit commercial products toward the CACFP meal patterns, CACFP facilities must obtain either:

- the original CN label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.



These are the only acceptable records that CACFP facilities can use to document a commercial product's meal pattern contribution. Nutrition Facts labels, ingredients statements, and product packaging do not provide sufficient information to document a product's meal pattern contribution.

Table 2-3 compares the criteria for CN labels and PFS forms. Only CN labels provide a guarantee of the product's contribution to the USDA's meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. CACFP facilities must check the crediting information on PFS forms for accuracy.

Table 2-3. Comparison of CN labels and PFS forms		
Criteria	CN Label	PFS
Standard information required	✓	
Reviewed and monitored by the USDA	✓	
Includes USDA guarantee of meal component contribution for Child Nutrition Programs	✓	
Distinct six-digit product identification number	✓	
CACFP facilities must check crediting information for accuracy		✓

**Commercial products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit toward the CACFP meal patterns.** For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, see the CSDE’s handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, and *CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 7A-16, 9C-16 and 9H-16: Requirements for Documenting CACFP Meal Pattern Contribution of Processed Foods*.

### Child Nutrition (CN) labels

The USDA’s CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for Child Nutrition Programs. It provides food manufacturers the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels, which the USDA approves prior to use. Manufacturers participating in the CN Labeling Program must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet USDA’s requirements.

The USDA does not require that manufacturers make CN-labeled products or that CACFP facilities purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the local CACFP facility. If a CN-labeled product is required, the CACFP facility must clearly state this information in their purchasing specifications.

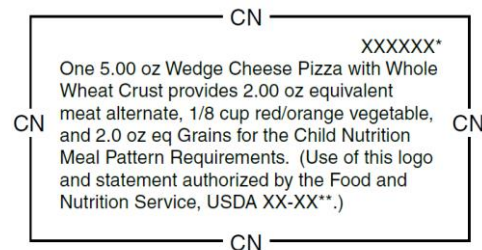
CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the USDA’s meal patterns. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions.

CN labels will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains, and vegetables components; and CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates and grains components.

A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Manufacturers state this contribution on their labels. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements as printed on the label.

The CN label is found on the actual product packaging and will always contain the following:

- the CN logo, which is a distinct border;
- the meal pattern contribution statement;
- a six-digit product identification number;
- the USDA’s authorization; and
- the month and year of approval.



The USDA does not allow manufacturers to place the CN label on a fact sheet or any other product information. Acceptable and valid documentation for the CN label includes the original CN label from the product carton, or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton. CN labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible.

The resources below provide additional information on CN labels.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>
- CN Labeling Program (USDA website):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>
- USDA Memo SP 11-2015 (v2), CACFP 10-2015 and SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation>
- USDA Memo SP 27-2015, CACFP 09-2015 and SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and>
- Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNlabelCACFP.pdf>

The USDA's [Authorized Labels and Manufacturers](#) webpage lists approved CN-labeled products and manufacturers.





### Product formulation statements

A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. It generally includes a detailed explanation of what the product contains and indicates the amount of each ingredient in the product by weight. The information on a PFS can vary among manufacturers because the USDA does not monitor PFS forms.

To document a product's crediting information, the PFS must:

- indicate how the product credits toward the USDA's meal pattern requirements;
- document how the manufacturer obtained the crediting information by citing specific Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations such as the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) and USDA's policy on crediting foods (such as the USDA's *policy memos for the CACFP* and *Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) instructions for Child Nutrition Programs*); and
- be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. The signature can be handwritten, stamped, or electronic.

All creditable ingredients in the PFS must match a description in the FBG. The USDA's [CN Labeling](#) website provides sample PFS templates for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. If the PFS does not meet these requirements, the CACFP facility cannot accept it, and the product cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims for reimbursable meals. The USDA does not monitor PFS forms for compliance with the product's actual formulation or stated contribution to the meal pattern requirements. Therefore, CACFP facilities must check the manufacturer's crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals. CACFP facilities should request supporting documentation from manufacturers, verify its accuracy, and maintain this documentation on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP.

The resources below provide additional information on PFS forms.

- Food Manufacturers/Industry (USDA Webpage):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/food-manufacturersindustry> .
- Product Formulation Statement for Grains: Servings (through September 30, 2021) (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_Servings.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf)
  - Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Grains: Servings (through September 30, 2021) (USDA):

[http://https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Samples\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_Servings.pdf](http://https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Samples_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf)

- Product Formulation Statement for Grains: Ounce Equivalents (through September 30, 2021) (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Grains\\_oz\\_eq.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Grains_oz_eq.pdf)
  - Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Grains: Ounce Equivalents (through September 30, 2021) (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Sample\\_oz\\_eq.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Sample_oz_eq.pdf)
- Product Formulation Statement for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Meat\\_Meat\\_Alternate\\_Nov\\_2019.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Meat_Meat_Alternate_Nov_2019.pdf)
- Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables and Fruits (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Vegetables\\_Subgroups\\_Fruits.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Vegetables_Subgroups_Fruits.pdf)
  - Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Fruits (USDA):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplefruits.pdf>
  - Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables (USDA):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplevegetables.pdf>
- Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/APPindustryfaqs.pdf>
- Reviewer’s Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products:  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer\\_checklist.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf)

For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*, and the USDA’s handout, *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement*.

### Determining Food Yields

The USDA's FBG provides yield information for common types and customary sizes of meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains, including commercially available foods and USDA Foods. The FBG helps menu planners determine:

- how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide;
- what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe; and
- how much food to buy.

The FBG helps menu planners determine how much food to purchase to meet the minimum CACFP servings, and calculate how recipes contribute to the CACFP meal patterns. For example, menu planners can use the FBG to determine how much raw broccoli provides 50 servings of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooked vegetable or how much uncooked brown rice provides 100 servings of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cooked rice. This information is essential for documenting compliance with the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

The FBG is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>.

### Determining in-house product yields

The yield information provided in the FBG represents average yields based on research conducted by the USDA. Many factors affect yield, including:

- the quality and condition of the food purchased;
- storage conditions and handling;
- the equipment used in preparation;
- cooking method and time;
- the form in which the food is served, e.g., whether potatoes are mashed, fried, or baked; and
- the serving utensils and portion control methods used.



If a food service operation consistently obtains a higher or lower yield for a product than the yield listed in the FBG, the CACFP facility should conduct an in-house yield study to determine the actual number of portions of a specified size that the product provides. In-house yields are also required for products not listed in the FBG. The CSDE allows CACFP facilities to use in-house yields if they are properly documented and follow the CSDE's yield study procedures.

## Yield study procedures

CACFP facilities can use the procedures below to determine and document in-house yields for food products.

1. Select a day when the product is served on the menu. Use at least four separate samples of the product to determine yields. A “sample” is the product pack unit, such as number 10 cans or 5-pound bags. If the food service operation uses more samples, the yield data will be more accurate.
2. For the best yield estimate, at least two people should independently portion and count the samples. Each person completes half of the samples. For example, with a sample of four cans, each person works alone to measure and count the servings from two cans.
3. Select the appropriate measuring utensil for the portion size being served, such as a number 16 scoop/disher or ½-cup measuring spoon. For information on measuring utensils, see the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster*.
4. Fill the measuring utensil level to the top of the measure.
5. Carefully count and document the number of portions in each sample.
6. Add the total number of servings from each of the samples.
7. Divide the total number of servings by the number of samples to get the average number of servings per sample.
8. Complete the CSDE’s *Yield Study Data Form* and maintain on file for review by the CSDE staff during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

For additional assistance with yield studies, contact the CSDE’s [school nutrition programs staff](#).



## 3 — Meal Components

Each food component of the USDA’s CACFP meal patterns has specific criteria for determining how foods credit toward reimbursable meals. The menu planning guidance in this section assists CACFP facilities with meeting the requirements for the five food components of the CACFP meal patterns. The components include milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains. For additional guidance on crediting foods, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

### Creditable Foods

Creditable foods are foods and beverages that count toward the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and snacks in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA considers the following factors when determining whether a food credits:

- nutrient content;
- function in a meal;
- regulations concerning the USDA Child Nutrition Programs (quantity requirements and definition);
- the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) standards of identity;
- the USDA’s standards for meat and meat products; and
- administrative policy decisions on the crediting of particular foods.

The websites and resources below address the requirements for crediting foods in the USDA’s CACFP meal patterns.

- CSDE Operational Memos for the CACFP:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-the-CACFP>
- Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>
- Crediting Updates for Child Nutrition Programs: Be in the Know! Webinar Series (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-updates-child-nutrition-programs-be-know-webinar-series>
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

## 3 | Meal Components

- Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>
- USDA CACFP Policy Memos:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources>
- USDA CACFP Regulations:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/regulations>
- USDA FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

### Minimum creditable amounts

Each component has a minimum amount that credits toward the CACFP meal patterns. Foods served in amounts less than the minimum do not credit.

CACFP facilities must provide the milk component as one full serving of fluid milk. When meals include breakfast cereals, CACFP facilities may serve fluid milk as a beverage, on cereal, or both. For fruit and vegetable smoothies only, the minimum creditable amount of milk is  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup. If the amount of milk in a smoothie is less than the full-required serving of the milk component, the meal or snack must include an additional serving of milk to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group.

The minimum creditable amounts for the other food components are  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup for the vegetables component,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup for the fruits component,  $\frac{1}{4}$  serving for the grains component; and  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce for the meat/meat alternates component. If a food item provides less than the full-required serving of a component, the menu must include additional foods to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group.





## Noncreditable Foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that cannot credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. Examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, and condiments such as syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter.

CACFP facilities may serve noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Some examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens, and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees.

To ensure that CACFP meals and snacks meet children’s nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods.

Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.

The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends that CACFP menus avoid noncreditable foods that are sources of added sugars. Examples include sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, and syrup), mix-in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, and cookie pieces), and sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks and sodas).

**Note:** CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase noncreditable foods, except for condiments served with creditable foods, and herbs and spices used to prepare and enhance the flavor of meals. For example, CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase grain-based desserts, gelatin, pudding, or canned cream soups.

For more information and examples of noncreditable foods in the CACFP, see the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

## Water

The [HHFKA](#) requires that CACFP facilities must make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service, including snacks. However, water does not credit in the CACFP meal patterns. CACFP menus cannot offer a choice between water and milk or juice. For more information, see “[Water Availability](#)” in section 4.

## Milk Component

Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements, and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the FDA. The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of fluid milk at breakfast, lunch, and supper. Milk may be served as one of the two required snack components. However, only one snack component can be a creditable beverage. Milk cannot be served when juice is the only other snack component.

### Allowable Types of Milk

The CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat milk or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 2-5. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk. Table 3-1 summarizes the allowable types of milk for each age group in the CACFP meal patterns for children.

CACFP facilities cannot serve milk that does not comply with the specific fat content of the CACFP meal patterns. For example, low-fat milk, fat-free milk, and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to 1-year-olds; and whole milk and reduced-fat milk cannot be served to ages 2-4. However, if a child has a disability that requires milk with a fat content that is different from the CACFP meal pattern requirements, the CACFP facility can make the substitution prescribed in the medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*, and the CSDE's guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.



**Table 3-1. Allowable types of milk in the CACFP meal patterns for children**

Type of milk	Age 1	Age 2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>1</sup>
Whole, unflavored	✓	<sup>2</sup>			
Whole, flavored					
Reduced-fat (2%), unflavored		<sup>2</sup>			
Reduced-fat (2%), flavored					
Low-fat (1%), unflavored		✓	✓	✓	✓
Low-fat (1%), flavored					
Fat-free (skim), unflavored		✓	✓	✓	✓
Fat-free (skim), flavored				✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.

<sup>2</sup> Unflavored whole milk and unflavored reduced-fat milk can only be served during a one-month transition period when switching a 24-month-old child from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk. For example, a CACFP facility can help ease the transition by adding a small amount of reduced-fat milk to whole-milk, then gradually changing to low-fat or fat-free milk mixed with whole milk, and increasing the amount over time.

<sup>3</sup> Flavored milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.

## State Milk Requirements for CACFP Child Care Centers in Public Schools

In addition to meeting the USDA's requirements for the milk component, all milk sold in Connecticut public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). The state beverage requirements apply to milk sold as part of reimbursable meals and milk sold separately from reimbursable meals, i.e., milk a la carte sales. The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Products that meet the federal and state requirements for milk are on [list 16](#) of the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage, which includes brand-specific lists of foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that meet the requirements of the state beverage statute. For more information on the state beverage statute, see the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

## Menu Documentation for Milk

CACFP menus must document the type of milk served to each age group. For example, the menu must state “unflavored low-fat milk” instead of “low-fat milk,” and “unflavored fat-free milk” instead of “fat-free milk.”

## Transitioning from Infant Formula to Whole Milk

Iron-fortified infant formula does not meet the fluid milk requirement of the CACFP meal patterns for children. However, meals that contain an allowable iron-fortified infant formula are reimbursable for a one-month transition period when children are 12 to 13 months of age and are weaning (transitioning) from infant formula to whole cow’s milk. When a child is weaned from formula (or breast milk) to cow’s milk, it is common practice to provide the infant with both foods at the same meal. A small amount of whole milk is added to the iron-fortified infant formula, and gradually increased over time. This eases the transition by helping the infant to accept some of the new food.

## Transitioning from Whole Milk to Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk

The CACFP meal patterns for children do not allow whole milk for ages 2-4. However, the USDA allows CACFP facilities to serve unflavored reduced-fat milk and unflavored whole milk during a one-month transition period when a 24-month-old child is switching from whole milk to low-fat or fat-free milk. For example, the procedures below can help ease a child’s transition to low-fat or fat-free milk.

1. Add a small amount of reduced-fat milk to whole-milk.
2. Gradually change to low-fat or fat-free milk mixed with whole milk.
3. Decrease the amount of whole milk over time so the entire serving is low-fat or fat-free milk by the end of the one-month transition period.



## Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities

CACFP facilities may choose, but are not required, to offer one or more allowable milk substitutes for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The two types of allowable substitutes for children without disabilities include:

- nondairy milk substitutes that meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (see table 3-1); and
- lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk with the appropriate fat content, i.e., low-fat milk (unflavored or flavored) and fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored).

Parents or guardians must submit a written request for a nondairy milk substitute for their child. A medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority is not required. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*, and the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

A written request is not required for lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk. CACFP facilities may offer lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk as a substitute for regular milk at any time. For more information, see “[Lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk](#)” in this section.

**Note:** CACFP facilities cannot offer any other beverages as a choice instead of milk, including juice and water. Juice and water are not allowable milk substitutes for children without disabilities.

### USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes

CACFP facilities that choose to offer a milk substitute as part of reimbursable meals for children without disabilities must use products that meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Table 3-2 summarizes these requirements. CACFP facilities cannot offer any nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA’s nutrition standards.



CACFP facilities cannot determine if a product meets the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes by reading the product’s packaging. The Nutrition Facts label lists only a few of the nine nutrients required by the USDA for allowable fluid milk substitutes. To determine if a product meets the USDA’s nutrition standards, CACFP facilities must obtain documentation from the manufacturer that includes the nutrition information for all nine nutrients.

Table 3-2. USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes	
Minimum nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces)	
<b>Calcium</b>	276 milligrams (mg) or 30% Daily Value (DV) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Protein</b>	8 grams (g)
<b>Vitamin A</b>	500 international units (IU) or 10% DV
<b>Vitamin D</b>	100 IU or 25% DV
<b>Magnesium</b>	24 mg or 6% DV
<b>Phosphorus</b>	222 mg or 20% DV <sup>1</sup>
<b>Potassium</b>	349 mg or 10% DV <sup>1</sup>
<b>Riboflavin</b>	0.44 mg or 25% DV <sup>1</sup>
<b>Vitamin B12</b>	1.1 micrograms (mcg) or 20% DV <sup>1</sup>
<sup>1</sup> The FDA labeling laws require manufacturers to round nutrition values to the nearest 5 percent. The unrounded minimum DV is 27.6% for calcium, 22.2% for phosphorus, 9.97% for potassium, 25.88% for riboflavin, and 18.33% for vitamin B12. Source: <i>How to Determine if a Soy-Based Beverage Meets the Nutrient Requirements to Qualify as an Authorized Milk Substitute in WIC</i> , USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Office of Research, Nutrition, and Analysis (ORNA), 2006.	

### State requirements for nondairy milk substitutes for CACFP child care centers in public schools

In addition to meeting the USDA's nutrition standards, all nondairy milk substitutes sold as part of reimbursable meals and a la carte in public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S Section 10-221q. The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Under C.G.S Section 10-221q, nondairy milk substitutes may be unflavored or flavored. They cannot contain artificial sweeteners, and cannot exceed:

- 4 grams of sugar per ounce;
- 35 percent of calories from fat; and
- 10 percent of calories from saturated fats.

List 17 of the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage includes milk substitute products that meet the federal and state requirements. For more information on milk substitutes for children without disabilities, see the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs*, and the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs*.

### Lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk

Children who cannot digest the lactose found in regular milk may be able to drink lactose-free (e.g., Lactaid) or lactose-reduced milk. These types of milk are regular fluid milk that is modified by the addition of lactase enzymes to reduce or eliminate the lactose (milk sugar). Lactose-reduced milk has part of the lactose removed, while lactose-free milk has all of the lactose removed.

Lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk come in a variety of flavors and fat contents. They credit the same as regular milk. CACFP facilities may substitute low-fat or fat-free lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk for regular milk. A written request is not required for lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk. The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to make lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk available to children as needed.

In addition to meeting the meal patterns, any lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk in public schools must comply with the sugar limit of the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. [Section 10-221q](#). CACFP facilities cannot sell lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that does not meet the state requirements, either as part of reimbursable meals or a la carte. For more information, see “[State Requirements for Milk in Public Schools](#)” in this section.

List 17 of the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage includes lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk that meets the federal and state requirements.

### Milk in Prepared Foods

Only fluid milk meets the USDA’s definition for milk and the FDA’s standard of identity for milk. The CACFP meal patterns require fluid milk as a beverage. When CACFP meals and snacks include breakfast cereals, CACFP facilities may serve fluid milk as a beverage, on cereal, or both.

Milk does not credit when cooked in cereals, puddings, cream sauces, or other foods. For example, milk does not credit when used to make quiche or macaroni and cheese.





Foods made from milk (such as cheese, yogurt, and ice cream) cannot credit as the milk component. For information on crediting cheese and yogurt as meat/meat alternates, see the “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component](#)” section.

## Noncreditable Foods in the Milk Component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the milk component include, but are not limited to:

- for age 1, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%) milk; plain or flavored low-fat (1%) milk, and plain or flavored fat-free milk;
- for ages 2-4, plain or flavored whole milk, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%) milk, and flavored low-fat (1%) milk;
- nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, e.g., rice milk, almond milk, and cashew milk; and
- milk that is cooked or baked in prepared foods, such as cereals, puddings, and cream sauces.

For more information, see “[Noncreditable Foods](#)” at the beginning of section 3, and the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP*.

## Resources for Crediting Milk

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the milk component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/SpecDiet/CACFPmilksub.pdf>
- Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMilk18.pdf>
- USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010 and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-milk-substitution-children-medical-or-special-dietary-needs-non-disability>
- 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>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

## Meat/Meat Alternates Component

The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of the meat/meat alternates component at lunch and supper. The meat/meat alternates component is not required at breakfast, but may be substituted for the entire grains component up to three times per week. The meat/meat alternates component may be served as one of the two required snack components. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese:

### Serving Size for Meat/Meat Alternates

Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the crediting information for foods in the meat/meat alternates component. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- 1 ounce of natural cheese, e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss or process cheese, e.g., American (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- ¼ cup of cottage cheese (reduced-fat or low-fat recommended for ages 2 and older);
- 2 ounces of cheese food/spread or cheese substitute;
- ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt (plain or flavored) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces (3.83 grams per ounce);
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients (see “[Crediting Tempeh](#)” in this section);



- 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) of tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the USDA’s APP requirements.

Amounts in the meat/meat alternates component refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. A serving must contain the appropriate edible portion of meat/meat alternates before any other ingredients are added. For example, tuna salad for ages 3-5 at lunch must contain 1½ ounces of tuna fish before added ingredients such as mayonnaise, celery, and seasonings.

Commercially prepared foods (such as pizza and chicken nuggets) must provide the amount of the meal components credited in CACFP menus. For example, to credit a commercially prepared cheese pizza as 1½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component, the product’s CN label or PFS must indicate that the product contains 1½ ounces of cheese per serving. For more information, see “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*.

### Main Dish Requirement for Lunch and Supper

CACFP facilities must serve the daily meat/meat alternates component at lunch and supper in a main dish, or in a main dish and only one other food item. The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. For example, a lunch menu for ages 3-5 could provide the required 1½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component from:

- a sandwich containing 1½ ounces of tuna; or
- a half sandwich containing ¾ ounce of tuna served with ¾ cup of yogurt (¾ ounce of meat/meat alternates).

CACFP facilities cannot serve the daily meat/meat alternates component for lunch and supper in more than two food items.

Foods that are not a main dish do not credit toward the meat/meat alternates component. Examples include soup made with blended soft tofu and muffins made with peanut butter or yogurt. The USDA’s intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP facilities offer the meat/meat alternates component in a form that is recognizable to children. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs, which includes the goal of helping children easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

**Note:** The USDA allows an exception to the main dish requirement for yogurt or soy yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies. Yogurt or soy yogurt credits as the meat/meat alternates component when served in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility. Other meat/meat alternates, such as peanut butter, cannot credit when served in smoothies. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*.

## Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast

The meat/meat alternates component is not required at breakfast. CACFP facilities may choose to substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component up to three times per week. This provision applies regardless of the number of days in the week. For example, CACFP facilities could choose to substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component three times during a three-day week or three times during a five-day week.

A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component substitutes for one serving of the grains component. For example, for ages 6-12 at breakfast, a CACFP facility could substitute 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 ounce of cheese, ½ of a large egg, or ½ cup of yogurt for one serving of the grains component. The USDA resources below provide additional guidance on serving the meat/meat alternates component in CACFP breakfast menus.

- Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (English):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMeatAlt.pdf>
- Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (Spanish):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP-MeatAlternates-sp.pdf>
- Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast Webinar (English):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-halftime-serving-meat-and-meat-alternatives-breakfast>
- Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast Webinar (Spanish):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/los-seminarios-web-medio-tiempo-del-cacfp-servir-carne-y-sustitutos-de-carne-en-el-desayuno>



## Crediting Deli Meats, Hot Dogs, and Sausage

CACFP facilities must ensure that a serving of commercial meat products provides the required amount of the meat/meat alternates component. The amount that provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component depends on the product's ingredients.

- Products that are **100 percent meat** without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, 1 ounce of 100 percent meat credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.
- Products with **added liquids, binders, and extenders** credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.



CACFP facilities must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all meats with added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation includes a CN label or a manufacturer's PFS stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component contained in one serving of the product. The USDA's [Authorized Labels and Manufacturers](#) webpage lists approved CN-labeled products and manufacturers. For more information, see "[Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels](#)" and "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" in section 2.

### Liquids, binders, and extenders

Table 3-3 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders. The ingredients statements below show examples of turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders (indicated in italics).

Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water, modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.

Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.

Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component without a CN label or PFS that indicates the amount of the meat/meat alternates

component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders.

Agar-agar	Dry or dried whey	Reduced minerals
Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)	Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate	Sodium caseinate Soy flour (APP) <sup>2</sup> Soy protein concentrate (APP) <sup>2</sup>
Bread	Gums, vegetable	Starchy vegetable flour
Calcium-reduced dried skim milk	Isolated soy protein (APP) <sup>2</sup>	Tapioca dextrin Vegetable starch
Carrageenan	Locust bean gum	Wheat gluten
Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)	Methyl cellulose	Whey
Cereal	Modified food starch	Whey protein concentrate (APP) <sup>2</sup>
Dried milk	Reduced lactose whey	Xanthan gum

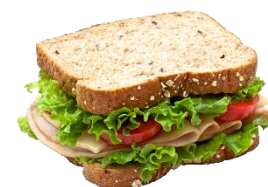
<sup>1</sup> Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA’s regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7).

<sup>2</sup> Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s APP requirements. For more information, see “[Crediting Alternate Protein Products](#)” in this section.

For more information, see “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP*, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP*, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, and *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP*.

**Developing recipes for deli meats**

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, CACFP facilities should develop recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees. The CACFP facility’s recipes should indicate the deli meat’s contribution to the meat/meat alternates component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. For ease of portioning, the weight of the deli meat in the recipe should be rounded up to the nearest measure. For example, the recipe should list 1.2 ounces as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces as 1.75 ounces.



If a CACFP facility makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the recipe should include the specific weight of each brand. For example, if a child care center makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, the recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand and the required weight of XYZ brand. Alternatively, the child care center could develop a separate turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat.

For information on standardized recipes, see the CSDE’s form, [Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP](#), and “Standardized Recipes” in section 2.

### Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)

APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods, such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs may be used alone or in combination with meat or other meat alternates. Examples of foods with added APPs include beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos, and tuna salad. APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods, such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein.

APPs must meet the USDA’s requirements specified in [appendix A](#) of the CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226). The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that APPs comply with these requirements. For more information on crediting APPs, see the CSDE’s handout, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP](#), and the USDA’s handout, [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

### Crediting Commercial Tofu and Tofu Products

Commercial tofu and tofu products must meet the two criteria below to credit as the meat/meat alternates component.

1. The product must be easily recognizable as a meat substitute. Examples include tofu burgers and tofu sausage.
2. The tofu ingredient must contain at least 5 grams of protein in a 2.2-ounce serving by weight (1/4 cup volume equivalent).



The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that tofu products comply with these requirements. For more information on crediting tofu and how to calculate the grams of protein per serving, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP](#).



## Crediting Cheese

For ages 2 and older, menu planners should use low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese whenever possible to help reduce saturated fats in CACFP meals and snacks. Natural cheese is cheese that is produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, Muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheese does not include pasteurized process cheese such as American cheese, pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, and pasteurized process cheese products.

The serving size for cheese depends on the type. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component equals:

- 1 ounce of natural cheese (e.g., Colby, Monterey Jack, and Swiss) or process cheese (e.g., American); and
- 2 ounces ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food or cheese spread, and cheese substitutes. For these cheeses,  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup credits as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces of the meat/meat alternates component and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

Cheese substitute, cheese food substitute, and cheese spread substitute must meet the FDA's standard of identity for substitute foods and must be labeled as "cheese substitute," "cheese food substitute," or "cheese spread substitute." The standard of identity requires that a cheese substitute is not nutritionally inferior to the standardized cheese for which it is substituting. A 2-ounce serving of cheese food, cheese spread, or cheese substitute credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. Imitation cheese and cheese products do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component in the CACFP meal patterns.



## Crediting Legumes as Meat/Meat Alternates

Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas) credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. Menu planners must decide in advance how legumes will credit in CACFP menus.

Legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component based on volume. A ¼-cup serving (4 tablespoons) of legumes credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The minimum creditable amount of legumes is 1 tablespoon (¼ ounce). If a menu item contains less than the full CACFP serving, the meal must include an additional menu item from the meat/meat alternates component to provide the full-required serving.

The serving size refers to the amount of cooked legumes without any added liquid, such as the sauce in baked beans. For example, if the menu planner credits ¼ cup of baked beans as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, the serving must contain ¼ cup of beans, not including the sauce.

Roasted or dried legumes (such as roasted edamame and roasted chickpeas) credit as the meat/meat alternates component the same as nuts and seeds, which credit based on weight (ounces). A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried legumes provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

For more information on crediting legumes and guidance on how to calculate the contribution of legumes in a recipe, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Legumes in the CACFP*.

## Crediting Legume Flour Pasta Products as Meat/Meat Alternates

Pasta products made of 100 percent legume flours (such as chick pea flour or lentil flour) credit as the meat/meat alternates component. However, CACFP facilities must offer the pasta with additional meat/meat alternates, such as tofu, cheese, or meat. The USDA’s intent for this requirement is to ensure that CACFP facilities offer meat/meat alternates in a form that is recognizable to children. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of the CACFP, which includes the goal of helping children easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

A ¼-cup serving of cooked legume flour pasta credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. Alternatively, CACFP facilities may credit legume flour pasta using the bean flour yield information on page C-1 of [Appendix C](#) of the FBG, or with appropriate documentation on the manufacturer’s PFS. For more information, see “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2 and the USDA’s resources, *Sample PFS for Meat/Meat Alternate Products* and *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s PFS*.

**Note:** Pasta made of 100 percent legumes may also credit as the vegetables component, but cannot credit as the vegetables component and the meat/meat alternates component in the same meal. For more information, see “[100 percent vegetable flours crediting as a vegetable](#)” in the Vegetables section.

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 Dried Meat

Shelf-stable, dried and semi-dried meat, poultry, and seafood (such as jerky or summer sausage) credit as the meat/meat alternates component. The USDA indicates that these products are most useful in meals served off-site, such as during field trips or picnics. However, CACFP facilities may also credit these products in meals served on site.

Crediting of dried meat, poultry, and seafood products must follow the same crediting principles used for all other products made from meat, poultry, or seafood. CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer’s PFS to document the product’s meal pattern contribution. The FBG does not include crediting information for dried meat, poultry, or seafood products because industry production standards for these products vary widely.

Menu planners must evaluate the dried meat product’s PFS to ensure that it complies with the USDA’s crediting principles below.

1. The creditable meat ingredient listed on the product’s PFS must match or have a similar description as the ingredient listed in the product’s ingredients statement. For example, the dried beef stick below lists “Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)” as the first ingredient. This product’s PFS must also list the crediting information for “Ground beef (not more than 30% fat).”

Ingredients: *Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)*, water, salt, less than 2% brown sugar, spices, monosodium glutamate, sugar, flavorings, sodium nitrate.



2. The creditable meat ingredient listed on the product’s PFS must have a similar description to a food item in the FBG. For the example above, “Ground beef (not more than 30% fat)” matches the description for “Beef, Ground, fresh or frozen, Market Style, no more than 30% fat (Like IMPS #136), cooked lean meat” on page 1-17 of the FBG.

3. The creditable amount cannot exceed the finished weight of the product, i.e., the cooked weight ready for serving. For example, a 1-ounce serving of beef jerky cannot credit for more than 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

Ground pork and beef ingredients must include the percent fat because the fat content has a direct correlation to the cooking yield. To credit in Child Nutrition Programs, the fat content of ground beef or ground pork in dried meat products cannot exceed 30 percent. Products that do not indicate the fat percentage do not credit. For example, the dried pork stick below cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component because the creditable ingredients (pork) does not list the fat percentage, and does not match a description in the FBG.

Ingredients: *Pork*, cane sugar, garlic (garlic, citric acid, ascorbic acid), contains 2% or less of: Spanish smoked paprika (paprika, rosemary extract), sea salt, natural flavors, sherry wine vinegar, red pepper chili flakes, celery powder, in collagen casing.

For information on CN labels and PFS forms, see “Child Nutrition (CN)” labels and “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2. The requirements for crediting dried meat are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). For additional guidance on crediting dried meat products, review the USDA’s webinar, [Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products](#).

## Crediting Nuts and Seeds

Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. At lunch and supper, nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. They must be combined with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group. For example, a lunch for ages 3-5 can meet the required 1½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component by offering ¾ ounce of nuts or seeds and ¾ ounce of cheese. For more information on crediting nuts and seeds, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP](#).

**Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that CACFP facilities consider children’s age and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer nuts and seeds. This consideration is especially important when serving young children or children with disabilities. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to these groups are in a prepared food, and are ground or finely chopped.

## Crediting Nut and Seed Butters

Creditable nut and seed butters include almond butter, cashew nut butter, peanut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, and sunflower seed butter. Reduced-fat peanut butter credits if it meets the FDA's standards of identity for peanut butter (21 CFR 164.150), which requires that products contain at least 90 percent peanuts.

The serving size for nut and seed butters is based on **volume** (tablespoons), not weight (ounces). Table 3-4 shows the crediting information for nut and seed butters.

Amount (tablespoons)	Meat/meat alternates contribution
4	2 ounces
3	1½ ounces
2	1 ounce
1½	¾ ounce
1	½ ounce
½	¼ ounce

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of a nut or seed butter in one menu item, such as a peanut butter sandwich. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller portion of peanut butter and supplementing with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to provide the full serving.



For example, the CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires 1½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component (3 tablespoons of peanut butter). The lunch/supper menu could provide the required amount from a sandwich containing 1½ tablespoons of peanut butter (¾ ounce of meat/meat alternates) served with ¾ ounce of low-fat cheese (¾ ounce of meat/meat alternates). For more information on crediting nut and seed butters, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP*.

## Crediting Surimi

Surimi seafood is a pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). Surimi seafood is available in many forms and shapes, including chunks, shredded, and flaked. It does not require additional preparation. Surimi seafood can be incorporated into a variety of menu items, such as seafood salads, sushi-style rolls, sandwiches, tacos, and ramen.

The amount of fish in surimi varies depending on the manufacturer and product. Surimi seafood may contain as little as one-third seafood ingredient, and may include other creditable food ingredients. A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. Table 3-5 shows the crediting information for surimi seafood.

<b>Surimi seafood (ounces)</b>	<b>Meat/meat alternates contribution</b>
6.0	2 ounces
4.4	1½ ounces
3.0	1 ounce
2.0	½ ounce
1.0	¼ ounce

<sup>1</sup> The crediting ratio for surimi seafood differs based on portion size due to USDA rounding rules that require rounding down to the nearest 0.25 ounce.

To credit surimi seafood differently from the amounts above, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS that documents how the crediting is determined. For example, a manufacturer's PFS might document that 1 ounce of a surimi seafood product credits as ½ ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

The requirements for crediting surimi are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019 and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). For additional guidance on crediting surimi, review the USDA's webinar, [Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi](#).

## Crediting Tempeh

Tempeh is a highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. Tempeh may be used as a meat alternate in a variety of recipes, including stir-fries, sandwiches, and salads.

A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or PFS to document crediting.

Varieties of tempeh that include other creditable foods as ingredients (such as brown rice, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, flax seed, and vegetables) may also credit as the meat/meat alternates component, grains component, and vegetables component. To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, a product must provide the minimum creditable quantities, i.e.,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce of meat/meat alternates, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  serving of grains. CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS to document how much tempeh and other creditable foods these products contain. For more information, see "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 2.

The requirements for crediting tempeh are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs](#). For additional guidance on crediting tempeh, review the USDA's webinar, [Additional Meat/Meat Alternate Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi](#).





## Crediting Yogurt and Soy Yogurt

Yogurt includes plain yogurt, flavored yogurt, and yogurt with added fruit (either blended or on the bottom). Yogurt must meet the FDA’s standards of identity for yogurt (21 CFR 131.200), low-fat yogurt (21 CFR 131.203), or nonfat yogurt (21 CFR 131.206). Frozen yogurt, drinkable yogurt, and squeezable yogurt do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

The required serving size for yogurt is based on volume (cups) or weight (ounces) and is the same for all types, flavors, and fat contents. A ½-cup serving (volume) or 4 ounces (weight) credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

### Sugar limit for yogurt

Yogurt and soy yogurt must meet the CACFP sugar limit of no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce). Yogurt and soy yogurt used in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility must also meet this requirement. The CACFP facility must have documentation on file to indicate that yogurt and soy yogurt served in CACFP meals and snacks comply with the sugar limit.

### Yogurt in smoothies

Yogurt and soy yogurt used in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility credit as the meat/meat alternates component if the product contains no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). Yogurt in commercial smoothies does not credit. For more information on crediting smoothies, see “[Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies](#)” in the “Fruits Component” section.

### Noncreditable Yogurt

Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and frozen yogurt do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns. The FDA’s definition and standard of identity requires that yogurt must be “coagulated,” not liquid. The FDA does not have a standard of identity for frozen yogurt. Yogurt tubes must be fully defrosted before they can be served.



### Resources for crediting yogurt

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting yogurt as the meat/meat alternates component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPCalcYogurt.pdf>
- Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars (English):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-chooseyogurts.pdf>
- Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars (Spanish):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNSCACFPSP.pdf>
- Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars (USDA):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-chooseyogurts.pdf>
- Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (English):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-choose-yogurts-are-lower-added-sugars>
- Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (Spanish):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/seminario-web-medio-tiempo-del-cacfp-treinta-los-jueves-yogures>
- Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSmoothieCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditYogurtCACFP.pdf>
- 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>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

## Crediting Meat/Meat Alternates in Commercial Products

CACFP facilities must ensure that commercial products (such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and cheese ravioli) provide the required amount of the meat/meat alternates component for each age group. For example, to credit commercial chicken nuggets as 1½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component, the CACFP facility must obtain a CN label or manufacturer’s PFS documenting that one serving of the product contains 1½ ounces of cooked chicken. Commercial products cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component without this documentation.

Menu planners cannot determine the amount of the meat/meat alternates component in a commercial product by reading the Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement. Protein content is not an indicator that a commercial product credits as the meat/meat alternates component because the grams of protein listed on the product’s Nutrition Facts label do not correspond to the ounces of the meat/meat alternates component contained in the product.

In addition to protein, meat and meat alternates contain other components such as water, fat, vitamins, and minerals. Protein is also found in varying amounts in other ingredients (such as cereals, grains, and many vegetables) that may be part of a commercial meat or meat alternate product.

The terms “protein” and “meat/meat alternate” are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. The USDA’s meal patterns require a specific amount of the meat/meat alternates component, not a specific amount of protein. The only exceptions are commercial tofu and tofu products, which must contain at least 5 grams of protein in a 2.2-ounce serving by weight. For more information, see “[Crediting Commercial Tofu and Tofu Products](#)” in this section.

CACFP facilities must maintain a CN label or manufacturer’s PFS on file to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial products used in CACFP menus. For more information, see “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 2. The CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP*, summarizes the requirements for crediting commercial meat/meat alternates in the CACFP.

## Crediting Combination Entrees

Combination entrees are foods that contain more than one food component, such as tacos, lasagna, and chicken stir-fry. For example, beef lasagna contains the grains component (pasta), the meat/meat alternates component (ground beef and cheese), and the vegetables component (tomato sauce). Combination entrees generally cannot be separated (such as pizza or a burrito) or are not intended to be separated (such as hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

For combination foods made on site, menu planners must determine the meat/meat alternates contribution from the recipe, using the ingredient yields listed in the FBG. For commercial combination entrees that are processed or contain added ingredients, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label or manufacturer's PFS stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving.

For additional guidance on accepting product documentation for the meat/meat alternates component, see "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 2, the CSDE's handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and [CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 10-15: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#).



### Noncreditable Foods in the Meat/Meat Alternates Component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component include, but are not limited to:

- bacon;
- commercial canned soups, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice;
- cream cheese;
- drinkable yogurt;
- egg whites;
- frozen yogurt;
- imitation cheese;
- products made with tofu that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes;
- sour cream;
- tofu that contains less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2-ounce serving by weight;
- yogurt or soy yogurt that contains more than 3.83 grams of sugars per ounce; and
- yogurt or soy yogurt in commercial smoothies.

Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, see “[Noncreditable foods](#)” at the beginning of section 3, and the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP*.

## Resources for Crediting Meat/Meat Alternates

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the meat/meat alternates component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditMMACACFP.pdf?la=en>
- Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditDeliCACFP.pdf?la=en>
- Crediting Legumes in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditLegumesCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditNutsCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditTofuCACFP.pdf>
- Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (USDA):  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/APPindustryfaqs.pdf>
- Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/APPReqCACFP.pdf>
- USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-shelf-stable-dried-and-semi-dried-meat-poultry-and-seafood-products-child-nutrition>
- USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019 and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs>

- USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-tempeh-child-nutrition-programs>
- 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 53-2016 and CACFP 21-2016: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs and the CACFP:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.



## Vegetables Component

The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of the vegetables component at lunch and supper. At breakfast, vegetables and fruits are one component and can include vegetables, fruits, or both. The vegetables component may be served as one of the two required snack components.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables; and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the crediting information for specific vegetables.

The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP*.

The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* also recommends incorporating seasonal and locally produced foods into meals. For more information, visit the USDA's [Farm to Preschool](#) webpage, the CSDE's [Farm to School](#) webpage, and the University of Connecticut's [Put Local on Your Tray](#) webpage.

### Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Lunch and Supper

Vegetables can replace the fruits component at any lunch or supper. Lunches and suppers can contain one serving of vegetables and one serving of fruits, or two different servings of vegetables. For example, menu planners may choose to substitute vegetables for the fruits component on Monday and Friday, or every day of the week. Lunches and suppers cannot contain only two servings of fruits.



## Serving Size for Vegetables

All vegetables credit based on volume (cups) with two exceptions. Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served. Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted, as indicated in the FBG:

- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component; and
- 2 tablespoons of tomato puree credit as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component.

## Crediting Canned Vegetables

A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the water in which it is packed, and a serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed.

## Crediting Raw Leafy Greens

Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of raw leafy greens credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component. Examples of raw leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce such as iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix.



Cooked leafy greens (such as spinach and kale) and roasted or dried leafy greens (such as roasted kale) credit based on the volume served. For example,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooked spinach or roasted kale credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component.

## Crediting Vegetable Juice

Vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice or a combination of vegetable and fruit juices. It can be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. The name of the full-strength juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.”

Pasteurized full-strength juice can meet the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. For more information, see “[Juice limit](#)” in the “Fruits Component” section, and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP*.

## Crediting Legumes as Vegetables

Legumes credit as the vegetables component or the meat/meat alternates component, but not both in the same meal. The menu planner must determine in advance how to credit legumes in a meal. For information on crediting legumes as the meat/meat alternates component, see “[Crediting Legumes as Meat/Meat Alternates](#)” in the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” section.

Legumes credit as the vegetables component based on the volume (cups) served. For example,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of kidney beans credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component. A menu item must provide at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of legumes to credit toward part of the vegetables component. If the amount is less than the full CACFP serving, the meal must include additional vegetables to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group. For more information, see “[Serving Size for Vegetables](#)” in this section.

A serving of legumes must contain the minimum required amount of beans, excluding other ingredients such as sauce and pork fat. For example, a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of baked beans that contains  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of sauce and pork fat credits as only  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup of the vegetables component. For more information, see “[Vegetables with Added Ingredients](#)” in this section.

**Note:** Peanuts are legumes that credit only as the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, see “[Nuts and Seeds](#)” in the “Meat/Meat Alternates” section.

### Crediting roasted or dried legumes as vegetables

Roasted or dried legumes, such as chick peas and soy beans, credit as the vegetables component based on the volume (cups) served. For example,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of roasted or dried legumes credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component. For information on crediting roasted or dried legumes as the meat/meat alternates component, see “[Crediting Roasted or Dried Legumes as Meat/Meat Alternates](#)” in the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” section.



**Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that CACFP facilities consider children’s age and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer roasted or dried legumes. This consideration is especially important when serving young children or children with disabilities.

### Crediting legumes in recipes as vegetables

A recipe must provide at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of legumes per serving to credit toward the vegetables component. The menu planner must determine a recipe's crediting information for the vegetables component by dividing the total volume (cups) of beans in the recipe by the number of servings, then rounding down to the nearest  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup. For guidance on how to calculate the contribution of legumes in a recipe, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Legumes in the CACFP*.

### Crediting Vegetables in Combination Foods

Menu planners must ensure that combination foods made with vegetables provide the amount of vegetables being credited toward the CACFP meal patterns. Vegetables in combination foods credit based on the volume (cups) of vegetables per serving, excluding added ingredients such as other creditable food components (e.g., grains and meat/meat alternates) and noncreditable ingredients such as mayonnaise and salad dressing. Examples of combination foods with vegetables include pizza, lasagna, vegetable egg rolls, hummus, and bean burritos.

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on the amount of vegetables in one serving of a combination food. For commercially prepared foods, CACFP facilities must obtain a CN label (if the vegetables are part of a main dish entree that contributes to the meat/meat alternates component), or a PFS stating the specific contribution of all vegetables. CACFP facilities must check the manufacturer's crediting information on the PFS for accuracy prior to including the item in CACFP meals and snacks.

Vegetables alone are ineligible for CN labels, which are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component. However, CN-labeled products usually include crediting information for other components (such as grains, vegetables, and fruits) that are part of the product. For example, a CN label for cheese pizza may indicate the contribution of the tomato sauce (vegetables component) and crust (grains component), in addition to the cheese (meat/meat alternates component). For more information, see "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 2.

CACFP facilities must have recipes on file for vegetables prepared on site with added ingredients. Recipes are not required for vegetables without added ingredients, e.g., whole or cut-up fresh vegetables, canned vegetables, and frozen vegetables. CACFP facilities must determine the meal pattern contribution of vegetables using the FBG. For more information, see "[Standardized Recipes](#)" in section 2.

## Crediting Vegetables with Added Ingredients

Vegetables with added ingredients (such as mayonnaise, yogurt, sugar, molasses, salad dressing, and marshmallows) credit based on the volume of vegetables per serving, excluding the weight or volume of added nonvegetable ingredients. Examples include coleslaw, tossed salad with dressing and croutons, Waldorf salad, potato salad, sweet potato casserole with marshmallows, mashed potatoes made with butter and milk, baked beans with sauce, and carrot-raisin salad.

For example,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of coleslaw made with shredded cabbage, carrots, mayonnaise, sugar, and spices does not credit as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component because it contains other ingredients in addition to the vegetables. To credit as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component, one serving of coleslaw must provide  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of vegetables **before** any added ingredients.

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on the amount of vegetables in one serving. Commercially prepared foods require a PFS stating the specific contribution of all vegetables. Foods made on site require a recipe on file. For more information, see “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” and “[Standardized Recipes](#)” in section 2.

## Crediting Vegetable and Fruit Mixtures

Mixtures of vegetables and fruits may credit toward both the vegetables component and fruits component if the serving contains at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of easily identifiable vegetables and at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of easily identifiable fruits. For example, a carrot-raisin salad that contains  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of carrots and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of raisins credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the fruits component. (Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served. For more information, see “[Crediting Dried Fruit](#)” under “Fruits Component” in this section.)

## Crediting Mixed Vegetables at Lunch and Supper

Vegetable mixtures may credit toward both the vegetables component and the fruits component if they contain at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of two different kinds of vegetables. For example, a lunch menu for ages 3-5 includes  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of broccoli and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cauliflower mixed together. The CACFP meal pattern for lunch and supper allows vegetables to substitute for the fruits component. Therefore, the menu planner may choose to credit the broccoli as the full vegetables component ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) and use the cauliflower to replace the full fruits component ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup), because the cauliflower provides the minimum required serving ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) for the fruits component.



If the quantities of the different vegetables are not known, such as frozen mixed carrots and peas, the vegetable mixture credits as one serving of vegetables and cannot credit as the fruit component. In this case, the CACFP menu would require either a serving of the fruits component or another serving of vegetables substituted for the fruits component.

## Crediting Soups

Only certain types of commercial vegetable soups credit toward the vegetables component. Allowable commercial soups include tomato, vegetable, clam chowder with potatoes, corn chowder, minestrone, and lentil, pea, or bean (legumes). Commercial beef barley, chicken/turkey noodle, and chicken/turkey rice soup are noncreditable foods, and cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

Soups made on site credit based on the amount of vegetables contained per serving, which must be documented by the CACFP facility's recipe. However, commercial soups credit differently, based on the information in the FBG. A 1-cup serving of commercial lentil, pea, or bean soup credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component. A 1-cup serving of all other allowable commercial vegetable soups credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component. Menu planners must ensure that a serving of soup is sufficient to provide the required amount of the vegetables component. A 1-cup container (8 fluid ounces) does not provide 1 cup of soup unless it is completely filled to the top, which is impractical. To avoid spilling and ensure that the served portion complies with the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving size of soup. For example, CACFP facilities 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. **Note:** The 1-cup serving required for a commercial soup to credit as the vegetables component may not be practical for younger children.

The CSDE's handout, *Crediting Soup in the CACFP*, summarizes the requirements for soup.

## Crediting Pureed Vegetables

Pureed vegetables must be recognizable to credit in the CACFP meal patterns. Pureed foods made from one vegetable (such as tomato sauce, split pea soup, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, and pureed butternut squash) are recognizable creditable vegetables. Combination foods with pureed (unrecognizable) vegetables may contribute to the vegetables component if the dish that contains them also provides an adequate amount of recognizable creditable vegetables. For example, a serving of macaroni and cheese that contains  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of diced butternut squash (recognizable) and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of pureed carrots (unrecognizable) credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component. Pureed vegetables credit based on the volume served, not the volume before pureeing.

## Crediting Dried Vegetables

Dried vegetables credit when rehydrated if the product's PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving. Menu planners should check the accuracy of the PFS prior to including foods with dehydrated vegetables in reimbursable meals. Dehydrated vegetables used for seasonings, such as dried onion and dried parsley, do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

A serving must contain at least  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of rehydrated vegetables (the minimum creditable amount) to credit toward part of the vegetables component. If the amount is less than the full serving, the meal must include additional vegetables to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group.



The FBG lists yields for some dehydrated vegetables, including pinto beans, refried beans, onions, bell peppers, potatoes, seaweed, and sweet potatoes. For products not listed menu planners must determine crediting information based on the rehydrated volume, not the fresh volume that may be stated on the container. Rehydration data on the container often varies from brand to brand.

CACFP facilities must use the following procedure for each brand of dehydrated product.

1. Rehydrate (add water or liquid to) a purchase unit of the dehydrated vegetable according to the manufacturer's directions. If the container does not include directions, request rehydration directions from the manufacturer.
2. Measure the rehydrated volume.
3. Measure the number of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup servings of rehydrated product that one purchase unit provides.
4. Keep records on file as verification. Records should include information on the size of the purchase unit, the number of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup servings of rehydrated product per purchase unit, the name of the manufacturer, and the manufacturer's directions for rehydrating the product.

For more information, see "[Determining in-house product yields](#)" in section 2.



## Crediting Hominy as Vegetables

Hominy is a traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin.

Hominy is available dried and in a fully cooked canned form. Dried hominy is cooked the same as dried beans (legumes). In its whole form, hominy credits toward the vegetables component as a starchy vegetable. For example,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of canned drained hominy credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the starchy vegetables subgroup.

For information on crediting hominy as the grains component, see “[Crediting Hominy as Grains](#)” in “Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements” of “Grains Component” in this section.

## Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour

Pasta products made of vegetable flours credit as the vegetables component if they meet the requirements below. 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](#).



### Vegetable flours crediting as a vegetable

Pasta made of one or more 100 percent vegetable flours credits toward the vegetables component, even if the pasta is not served with another recognizable vegetable. These products credit the same as vegetables, i.e.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of pasta made of 100 percent vegetable flour credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component. The ingredients statements below show examples of pasta products that contain 100 percent vegetable flours.

- Ingredients: Red lentil flour.
- Ingredients: Green lentils, cauliflower, parsnips.

### Vegetable flours from one vegetable subgroup

Pasta products made of one or more vegetable flours from one vegetable subgroup may credit toward the appropriate vegetable subgroup. For example, pasta made of 100 percent red lentil flour credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the legumes subgroup. As a reminder, the CACFP meal patterns do not require vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA’s [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends providing at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup per week.

**Note:** Pasta made of 100 percent legumes may also credit as the meat/meat alternates component, but cannot credit as the legumes subgroups and the meat/meat alternates component in the same meal. For more information, see “[Crediting Legume Flour Pasta Products as Meat/Meat Alternates](#)” in the Meat/Meat Alternates section.

### Vegetable flours and other nonvegetable ingredients

Pasta products made of vegetable flour and other nonvegetable ingredients may credit toward the vegetables component (or, in the case of 100 percent legume pasta, the meat/meat alternate component) with a PFS that details the actual volume of vegetable flour per serving. This crediting does not apply to grain-based pasta products that contain small amounts of vegetable powder for color, such as spinach pasta or sun-dried tomato pasta. For example, the product below shows cannot credit as the vegetables component.

Ingredients: Semolina (wheat), durum flour (wheat), *dried spinach*, niacin, ferrous sulfate (iron), thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid.

The example below shows an ingredients statement for a vegetable pasta product that contains dried vegetables (carrot, tomato, and spinach) and other nonvegetable ingredients. The CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine this product’s crediting information.

Ingredients: Semolina (wheat), durum flour (wheat), *dried carrots, dried tomato, dried spinach*, niacin, ferrous sulfate (iron), thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid.

### Required signage and training

Nutrition education, including signs in cafeterias and other meal service areas, help children understand what foods are in their meals and snacks. CACFP facilities must use signs or other nutrition education to indicate that pasta made of vegetable flour is a “vegetable” and not a grain component of the meal. For example, pasta made of chickpea flour could be labeled as “chickpea pasta” with a symbol showing it to be part of the vegetables component of the meal. **Note:** Signage should be appropriate to the age group being served, such as using pictures and symbols for young children and signs or menu information for older children.

The USDA encourages CACFP facilities to offer vegetables in a variety of ways on the menu and to educate children about vegetables from farm to plate. Additionally, it is critical that food service staff are trained to recognize a reimbursable meal. Menu planners should inform serving staff when meals include pasta made with vegetable flours.

## Noncreditable Foods in the Vegetables Component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the vegetables component include, but are not limited to:

- chili sauce;
- dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning;
- cream vegetable soups (e.g., cream of broccoli and cream of mushroom);
- home-canned products (for food safety reasons);
- ketchup;
- pickle relish; and
- snack-type foods made from vegetables such as potato chips.

Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the vegetables component. For more information, see “[Noncreditable Foods](#)” at the beginning of section 3, and the CSDE’s handout, [Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP](#).

## Resources for Crediting Vegetables

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the vegetables component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Juice in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Legumes in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditLegumesCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Smoothies for the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSmoothieCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Soup in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSoupCACFP.pdf>

- Start with Half a Cup: Fresh Vegetable Portioning Guide for Schools:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWHAC/PortionGuideVeg85x14.pdf>
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas>
- 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>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.



## Fruits Component

The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of the fruits component at lunch and supper. However, vegetables may substitute for the full fruits component at any lunch or supper. At breakfast, vegetables and fruits are one component and can include vegetables, fruits, or both. The fruits component may be served as one of the two required snack components. However, only one snack component can be a creditable beverage such as milk, juice, or a fruit smoothie. Juice cannot be served when milk is the only other snack component.

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits; and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. Menu planners should consult the USDA's FBG to determine the crediting information for specific fruits.

The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* encourages CACFP facilities to serve a variety of fruits and choose whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice; make at least one of the two required snack components a vegetable or a fruit, and incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods into meals. For information on farm to school, visit the USDA's [Farm to Preschool](#) webpage, the CSDE's [Farm to School](#) webpage, and the University of Connecticut's [Put Local on Your Tray](#) webpage.



### Serving Size for Fruits

All fruits credit based on volume (cups) except for dried fruit, which credits as twice the volume served. The menu planner may choose to serve one fruit or a combination of several fruits to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group at each meal and snack. For example, a lunch menu for ages 3-5 can meet the required  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving of the fruits component with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of peaches or  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of peaches and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of applesauce.

## Crediting Fresh Fruit

The crediting information for one piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut-up) varies depending on the type and size (count pack) of the fruit. The count pack is the number of fruits that fit into a case. The smaller the count, the larger the size of one piece of fruit. 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;
- 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;
- one 113-count and 125-count orange each credit as  $\frac{5}{8}$  cup of fruit;
- one size 56-64 nectarine, one size 56 peach, and one 120-count pear each credit as  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of fruit; and
- one 125-138-count apple credits as 1 cup of fruit.

Menu planners must ensure that an individual piece of fresh fruit (whole or cut-up) provides the correct serving for each meal and age group. If the amount is less than the full serving, the meal must include the additional amount from the fruits component to meet the full-required meal pattern serving for each age group. The scenarios below show some examples.

- The breakfast meal pattern for ages 3-5, 6-12, and 13-18 requires  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the fruits component. One 120-count tangerine credits as  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup of fruit, which does not provide the full-required serving. To credit as the full fruits component, the breakfast menu must include an additional  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of the fruits component.
- The snack meal pattern for ages 6-12, and 13-18 requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the fruits component. One 100-120-count banana credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit, which does not provide the full-required serving. To credit as the full fruits component, the snack menu must include an additional  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the fruits component.

Table 3-6 lists the FBG's meal pattern contribution of some fresh fruits, with the additional amount needed to provide a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup or  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving.



Table 3-6. Meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits

Fruit (one piece)	CACFP meal pattern contribution (from FBG)	Additional amount for ½ cup <sup>1,2</sup>	Additional amount for ¾ cup <sup>2,3</sup>
Apple, 125-138 count	1 cup	0	0
Apricot, medium (1 ⅜-inch diameter)	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Banana, 150 count (7 to 7 ⅞ inch)	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Banana, 100-120 count, regular	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Clementine, whole, peeled	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grapefruit, 27-32 count, large	1 cup	0	0
Kiwi, 33-39 count	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Nectarine, size 88-96 (2 ¼-inch diameter)	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Nectarine, size 56-64 (2 ¾-inch diameter)	¾ cup	0	0
Orange, Arizona or California, 113 count	⅝ cup	0	⅛ cup
Orange, Florida or Texas, 125 count	⅝ cup	0	⅛ cup
Orange, Arizona or California, 138 count	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Peach, size 88 and 84 (2 ⅛-inch diameter)	⅜ cup	⅛ cup	⅜ cup
Peach, size 64 and 60 (2 ½-inch diameter)	⅔ cup	0	⅛ cup
Peach, size 80	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Peach, size 56	¾ cup	0	0
Peach, size 56	¾ cup	0	0
Pear, 150 count	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Pear, 120 count	¾ cup	0	0
Pear, D'Anjou, Bosc or Bartlett, 100 count	1 ¼ cups	0	0



Table 3-6. Meal pattern contribution of whole fresh fruits, *continued*

Fruit (one piece)	CACFP meal pattern contribution (from FBG)	Additional amount for ½ cup <sup>1,2</sup>	Additional amount for ¾ cup <sup>2,3</sup>
Plum, purple, red, or black, size 45 and 50 (2-inch diameter)	½ cup	0	¼ cup
Plum, purple, red, or black, 2 ½-inch diameter	⅝ cup	0	⅛ cup
Plum, Japanese or hybrid, size 60 and 65	⅔ cup	⅛ cup	⅔ cup
Tangerine, 120 count	⅔ cup	⅛ cup	⅔ cup

<sup>1</sup> A ½-cup serving of the fruits component is required for ages 3-18 at breakfast and for ages 1-5 at snack (if the snack menu includes fruit as one of the two required snack components).

<sup>2</sup> The additional required amount can be from the same fruit or a different fruit.

<sup>3</sup> A ¾-cup serving of the fruits component is required for ages 6-18 at snack (if the snack menu includes fruit as one of the two required snack components).

### Crediting Canned Fruit

Canned fruit may be in juice, water, light syrup, or heavy syrup. **Note:** Canned fruit in heavy syrup has a higher added sugar content than other types of canned fruit. The USDA recommends choosing fruit canned in juice, water, or light syrup.

A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. For example, ½ cup of canned peaches in juice credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. However, ½ cup of canned peaches in syrup does not credit. The menu planner can only credit the amount of peaches without the syrup.

The juice from canned fruit counts toward the juice limit if the CACFP facility credits the juice toward the fruits component. In the example above, the menu planner credits both the juice and canned peaches as the fruits component. Therefore, fruit juice cannot credit as the fruits component at any other meal or snack that same day.

Juice from canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit if the menu planner plans the juice as an extra food that does not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. For example, the juice from canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit if food service personnel portion

½ cup of canned fruit in a 5½-ounce container and add the juice after measuring the full ½-cup serving of fruit.

### Crediting Dried Fruit

Dried fruit (such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, mixed dried fruit, and dried coconut) credits as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.



**Note:** The crediting requirement for dried fruit (twice the volume served) does not apply to amounts less than ⅛ cup (the minimum creditable amount). For example, 1/16 cup (1 tablespoon) of raisins does not credit as ⅛ cup fruit.

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, e.g., aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia.

### Crediting Fruit juice

Juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice or a combination of fruit and vegetable juices. The name of the full-strength juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” Juice can be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. Juice may be served liquid or frozen, e.g., full-strength frozen juice pops. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP](#).

#### Juice concentrates

Juice concentrates credit only when they are reconstituted with water to 100 percent full-strength juice and are served in the form of juice. Foods made with juice concentrate, such as gelatin or sherbet, do not credit as juice because they are no longer in the form of juice.

Juice made from concentrate is reconstituted with a volume of water that is several times the amount of the juice concentrate. A typical reconstitution ratio might be three parts water to one part concentrate, but this ratio may vary for different juice products. Commercial juice products made from concentrate will list “water” as the first ingredient, followed by the type of juice concentrate, for example, “water, orange juice concentrate” and “filtered water, grape juice concentrate.” Juice made from concentrate that is labeled “100 percent juice” credits when the CACFP facility follows the manufacturer’s specific instructions for reconstituting.

### Juice blends

Juice blends must be a combination of full-strength (100 percent) fruit juices, full-strength vegetable juices, or full-strength fruit and vegetable juices. At lunch, fruit and vegetable juice blends credit based on the first juice ingredient. If the first juice ingredient is fruit juice, the product credits as the fruits component. If the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice, the product credits as the vegetables component.

The ingredients statement below shows an example of a vegetable and fruit juice blend. Since the first ingredient is a reconstituted vegetable juice blend, this product credits as the vegetables component.

*Ingredients: Reconstituted vegetable juice blend (water and concentrated juices of sweet potatoes, purple carrots, carrots), reconstituted fruit juices (water and concentrated juices of apples, white grapes, cranberries, blackberries), contains less than 2% of: natural flavoring, citric acid, lemon juice.*

### Frozen juice products

The meal pattern contribution of frozen fruit juice (such as full-strength frozen juice pops) is based on the fluid volume prior to freezing. CACFP facilities must request a PFS from the manufacturer to document this information. For more information, see “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2.

### Juice limit

Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. The daily juice limit includes all sources of 100 percent juice, such as fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. Drained canned fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the juice limit. For more information, see “[Crediting Canned Fruit](#)” in this section.

If a meal or snack includes any type of juice as the fruits component or vegetables component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other meal or snack that day. The examples below illustrate this requirement.



- If the breakfast menu includes juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as either the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch, supper, or snack that same day.

- If the lunch menu includes canned fruit in juice as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, supper, or snack that same day.
- If the snack menu includes a smoothie made with pureed fruit as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, lunch, or supper that same day. **Note:** Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility credit only as juice toward the CACFP meal patterns. For more information, see [“Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies”](#) in this section.

If the CACFP menus comply with the juice limit, CACFP facilities could choose to offer juice as an extra noncreditable food that does not count toward the CACFP meal patterns. However, the USDA encourages CACFP facilities to limit juice in CACFP menus to ensure that meals and snacks meet children’s nutrition needs. Children might not consume the actual meal components if the menu includes extra juice. In addition, CACFP facilities must consider the cost issues of providing extra foods. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice.

### Juice ingredients

All pasteurized 100 percent juices meet the USDA’s requirements for the fruits component, but their ingredients may vary among manufacturers. The FDA’s labeling regulations allow 100 percent juice to contain added ingredients and still be labeled “100% juice.” Therefore, some 100 percent juices contain added ingredients such as artificial flavors, artificial colors (e.g., red 40, blue 1, yellow 5 and 6, and titanium dioxide), preservatives (e.g., sodium benzoate and potassium sorbate), flavor enhancers (e.g., ethyl maltol), and emulsifiers or thickeners (e.g., glycerol esters of wood rosin and xanthan gum). The CSDE encourages menu planners to read product ingredients statements and choose 100 percent juice without these added ingredients.

### Apple cider

Apple cider credits as the fruits component if it is pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Pasteurized juice has been heat-treated to kill harmful bacteria. CACFP facilities cannot serve unpasteurized apple cider or any other unpasteurized juices.

## Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies

Smoothies credit differently depending on whether the CACFP facility prepares them on site or purchases commercially prepared products. The USDA recommends not offering smoothies at more than one meal or snack per day.



### Smoothies made on site

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility credit only as juice toward the CACFP meal patterns. Crediting is based on the actual volume of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving, which must be documented by the CACFP facility's recipe. Smoothies that contain a mix of pureed fruits and vegetables, or that contain 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends, credit as the fruits component if fruit juice or fruit puree is the predominant ingredient. If vegetable juice or vegetable puree is the predominant ingredient, the smoothie credits as the vegetables component.

Menu planners must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the juice limit. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. For example, if the menu planner credits a smoothie as the fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack. For more information, see “[Juice limit](#)” in this section and the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*.

### Commercial smoothies

Commercial smoothies do not meet the USDA's requirements for fluid milk or yogurt because they do not comply with the FDA's standard of identity for milk or yogurt. Smoothies with dietary supplements (such as whey protein powder) or herbal supplements (such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, and echinacea) cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

Commercial smoothies made with pureed fruits/vegetables credit only as juice toward the fruits component. The product label should include a statement regarding the “percent juice content,” which is required by the FDA for beverages made with fruit/vegetable juice or fruit/vegetable puree. For example, an 8-fluid ounce smoothie made from fruit puree with the juice content labeled as “contains 50% juice” credits as 4 fluid ounces or ½ cup of juice. CACFP facilities may need to obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to document the amount of pureed fruit in the product.

## Crediting Coconut

Fresh and frozen coconut credit as the fruits component based on the volume served. For example,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of fresh or frozen coconut credits as  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of the fruits component. The smallest creditable amount is  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup.

Dried coconut credits the same as other dried fruit, i.e., as twice the volume served. For example,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of dried coconut credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the fruits component. For more information, see “[Crediting Dried Fruit](#)” in this section.

Menu planners should consider coconut’s high caloric and saturated fat content, which may limit its frequency in CACFP menus. Coconut flour, coconut oil, and coconut milk do not credit.

Juices labeled as 100 percent juice, including coconut water, credit toward the fruits component based on the volume served. Menu planners must count coconut water with all other juices toward the juice limit. For more information, see “[Juice limit](#)” in this section.

Crediting information for coconut is summarized in [USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs](#):

## Crediting Pureed Fruit

Pureed fruit must be recognizable to credit in the CACFP meal patterns. Pureed foods made from one fruit (such as applesauce) are recognizable creditable fruits. Combination foods with pureed (unrecognizable) fruits may contribute to the fruits component if the dish that contains them also provides an adequate amount of recognizable creditable fruit. Pureed fruit credits based on the volume served, not the volume before pureeing.

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies made on site by the CACFP facility credit only as juice. Crediting is based on the actual volume of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving, which must be documented by the CACFP facility’s recipe. For more information, see “[Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies](#)” in this section.



## Crediting Fruit in Commercial Products

Menu planners must ensure that commercial products made with fruit provide the amount of fruit being credited toward the meal patterns. To document the product's meal pattern contribution, CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating the amount of fruit per serving. Menu planners must check this crediting information for accuracy prior to including the item in reimbursable meals. CACFP facilities must keep this information on file to document meal pattern compliance for auditing purposes. For more information, see [“Documentation for Commercial Products”](#) in section 2.

## Crediting Fruit in Desserts

The fruit portion of grain-based desserts (such as pies, cobblers, or crisps) credits toward the fruits component based on the amount of fruit per serving. This information must be documented by the CACFP facility's recipe (for foods made on site) or the manufacturer's PFS (for commercial foods). The USDA indicates that sweetened fruit should be served in moderation to help reduce children's consumption of added sugars and help children develop a taste preference for unsweetened fruit.



**Note:** The grain portion of grain-based desserts does not credit toward the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns. For more information, see [“Grain-based desserts”](#) in the “Grains Component” section.

## Noncreditable Foods in the Fruits Component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the fruits component include, but are not limited to:

- fruit snacks (e.g., fruit roll-ups, fruit leathers, fruit wrinkles, fruit twists, and yogurt-covered fruit snacks);
- banana chips;
- home-canned 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.

Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the fruits component. For more information, see [“Noncreditable foods”](#) at the beginning of section 3, and the CSDE's handout, [Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP](#).



## Resources for Crediting Fruits

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the fruits component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Juice in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSmoothieCACFP.pdf>
- Start with Half a Cup: Fresh Fruit Portioning Guide for Schools:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWHAC/PortionGuideFruit85x14.pdf>
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2017: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas>
- 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>
- USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

## Grains Component

The CACFP meal patterns require a serving of the grains component at breakfast, lunch, and supper. The grains component may be served as one of the two required snack components. CACFP menus must include at least one serving of whole grain-rich (WGR) grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children.

The grains component for the CACFP meal patterns includes a variety of products, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including sweet crackers, such as animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard bread sticks, tortilla chips; and popcorn;
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- RTE breakfast cereals, such as puffed cereals, whole grain rounds or flakes, and granola;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat;
- bread products used as an ingredient in another menu item, such as combination foods, e.g., breading on fish or poultry and pizza crust in pizza; and
- pasta products, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.



To credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns, grain menu items must contain whole grains, enriched grains bran or germ as the greatest ingredient by weight. Products that are 100 percent whole grain, such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice, provide the best nutrition and should be served most often.

This section includes three parts to assist menu planners with determining if foods credit as the grains component:

- Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements (beginning on page 98);
- Part B: WGR Criteria (beginning on page 109);
- Part C: Grain Serving Size (beginning on page 118).

## Grain-based Desserts

Grain-based desserts cannot credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns. Examples of grain-based desserts include brownies, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, pie crusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding.

Grain-based desserts do not include sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers), muffins, quick breads, e.g., banana bread and zucchini bread (except for cinnamon streusel), cornbread, pancakes, waffles, French toast, savory scones (such as cheese and herb), and pie crusts in entrees such as quiche, meat pies, and chicken pot pie.



As a best practice, the USDA encourages CACFP menus to limit sweet crackers (such as graham crackers and animal crackers) because of their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends not serving sweet crackers more than twice per week between all CACFP meals and snacks served to children.

CACFP facilities may choose to serve grain-based desserts as an additional food item that does not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. Examples include serving cake or cookies at special celebrations. However, to ensure children’s nutritional needs are met, the USDA and CSDE encourage CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods and beverage. For more information, see “[Noncreditable foods](#)” at the beginning of section 3.

The resources below provide guidance on the requirements for grain-based desserts.

- Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPGrainBasedDesserts.pdf>
- USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP09\\_2018os.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP09_2018os.pdf)

## Resources for Crediting Grains

The resources below assist menu planners with crediting foods as the grain component in the CACFP meal patterns.

- Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (USDA):  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNS\\_USDA\\_CACFP\\_11\\_AddingWholeGrains\\_04-508c.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNS_USDA_CACFP_11_AddingWholeGrains_04-508c.pdf)
- Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_CalcCereal.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_CalcCereal.pdf)
- Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainCalcCACFP.pdf>
- Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grain in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit1.xlsx>
- Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit2.xlsx>
- Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit3.xlsx>
- Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit4.xlsx>
- Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit5.xls>
- Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCerealsCACFP.pdf>
- Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedCACFP.pdf>

- Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrainsCACFP.pdf>
- Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP (effective October 1, 2021) (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/OzEqCACFP.pdf>
- Grain Servings for the CACFP (through September 30, 2021) (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainsCACFP.pdf>
- Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPGrainBasedDesserts.pdf>
- How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/IdentifyCreditableGrainsCACFP.pdf>
- Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (English) (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_IDingWholeGrains%20E.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_IDingWholeGrains%20E.pdf)
- Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (Spanish) (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_IDingWholeGrains\\_SP.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_IDingWholeGrains_SP.pdf)
- USDA Final Rule 84 FR 50287: Delayed Implementation of Grains Ounce Equivalents in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/09/25/2019-20808/delayed-implementation-of-grains-ounce-equivalents-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program>
- USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Q&As:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers>
- USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>
- USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>

- USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>
- Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains in the CACFP (USDA):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/CACFPworksheetGrainsOzEq%20.pdf>
- Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGRCriteriaCACFP.pdf>

For additional crediting resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.



## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

This section addresses the crediting requirements for the grains component of the CACFP meal patterns. All grain items served in CACFP menus must comply with these requirements, including commercial grain products and grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility.

### Creditable Grains

Creditable grains are the grain ingredients in a food that credit toward the grains component of the CACFP meal patterns, including whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. To credit as the grains component, a grain product or recipe must contain a creditable grain as the **primary** (greatest) ingredient by weight. For information on identifying whole and enriched grains, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP](#) and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP](#). For guidance on the steps for identifying creditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#).

The CACFP meal patterns have different crediting requirements for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility. These crediting requirements are summarized in this section.

**Note:** Groups A-E and H-I refer to the grain groups in the USDA’s grain servings chart. For more information, see “[Part C: Grain Serving Size](#)” in this section.





## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

### Crediting Criteria for Commercial Grain Products

Commercial grain products in groups A-E (baked goods, such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, and waffles) and group H (pasta and cereal grains, such as quinoa, rice, and millet) credit as the grains component if:

- a creditable grain is the first ingredient; or
- water is the first ingredient and a creditable grain is the second ingredient.

The ingredients statements below show examples of creditable commercial grain products.

Ingredients: *Enriched wheat flour (flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid)*, canola and/or sunflower oil, salt, contains 2% or less of: yeast, nonfat milk, sugar, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, paprika, spices, celery, onion powder.

Ingredients: Water, *whole-wheat flour*, yeast, wheat gluten, contains less than 2% of each of the following: soybean oil, sugar, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), fumaric acid, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate.

Ingredients: Water, *enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, vitamin B1 [thiamin mononitrate], vitamin B2 [riboflavin], folic acid)*, *whole-wheat flour*, vegetable oil (soybean, palm, and/or canola oil), egg whites, *wheat bran*, sugar, contains 2% or less of leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate, monocalcium phosphate), salt, malt flavoring, whey, soy lecithin.

For examples of how to determine if commercial grain products are creditable, see the CSDE's handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP](#). Menu planners may use the CSDE's Excel worksheet, [Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP](#), to determine if commercial grain products comply with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see "[Grain Crediting Worksheets](#)" in this section.

### Multiple creditable grains in commercial grain products

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the commercial grain product contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine crediting information. To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, the product's PFS must document that the **combined weight** of all creditable grains in the product is the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on PFS forms, see "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" in section 2.

## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

## Crediting Criteria for Breakfast Cereals

RTE breakfast cereals in group I (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereal, and granola) and cooked breakfast cereals in group H (including instant and regular, such as oatmeal, farina, and cream of wheat) credit as the grains component if:

- the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and
- the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce.



Fortified breakfast cereals have nutrients added by the manufacturer that were not originally present, or that are at higher levels than originally present. Fortified breakfast cereals typically contain the five enrichment nutrients plus other vitamins and minerals. Different cereal brands may list different fortification nutrients. Manufacturers may choose which additional nutrients to use for fortification. The USDA does not specify a minimum number of nutrients or a minimum percentage for the level of fortification for breakfast cereals in Child Nutrition Programs. If a breakfast cereal is fortified, it does not need to be enriched.

The ingredients statement below shows an example of a creditable cooked breakfast cereal. The first ingredient (wheat farina) is not creditable grain, but the cereal is fortified.

Ingredients: *Wheat farina*, calcium carbonate, ferric orthophosphate (source of iron), niacinamide (vitamin B3), pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), folic acid, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1) riboflavin (vitamin B2).

The ingredients statement below shows an example of a creditable RTE breakfast cereal. The first ingredient (whole-grain oat flour) is a creditable grain and the cereal is fortified.

Ingredients: *Whole-grain oat flour*, sugar, corn flour, whole-wheat flour, rice flour, salt, calcium carbonate, disodium phosphate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, BHT (a preservative), yellow 5, yellow 6, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid.

For examples of how to determine if breakfast cereals are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#). Menu planners may use the CSDE’s Excel worksheets, [Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat \(RTE\) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#) and [Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#), to determine if breakfast cereals comply with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see “[Grain Crediting Worksheets](#)” in this section.

## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

### Sugar limit for breakfast cereals

The CACFP meal patterns require that breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). The sugar limit applies only to breakfast cereals as purchased. CACFP facilities may choose to add toppings to breakfast cereals to increase their appeal. However, the USDA strongly encourages CACFP facilities to offer healthy toppings for breakfast cereals, such as fruit instead of sugar. Minimizing sweet toppings will help reduce consumption of added sugars, which contribute calories without essential nutrients.



The USDA allows three different methods to determine if a breakfast cereal complies with the sugar limit. The CSDE's handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*, summarizes these methods. The USDA resources below provide additional guidance on evaluating the sugar content of breakfast cereals.

- Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars (English) (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-cereal.pdf>
- Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars (Spanish) (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-cereal-sp.pdf>
- Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (English) (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-%E2%80%9Cchoose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-added-sugars%E2%80%9D>
- Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (Spanish) (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-choose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-added-sugars-spanish>

**Note:** The CSDE recommends that menu planners review the breakfast cereal's sugar content **before** reviewing its ingredients statement. If a breakfast cereal exceeds the sugar limit, it cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns, even if it contains creditable grains or is WGR.

## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

**Crediting Criteria for Commercial Combination Foods**

Commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-E (such as pizza crust in pizza and baked fish coated with bread crumbs) or groups H-I (such as noodles in lasagna and baked chicken coated with crushed cereal flakes) credit as the grains component if the first **grain** ingredient is a creditable grain. The ingredients statement below shows an example for breaded chicken nuggets. This product credits in the CACFP meal patterns because the first grain ingredient (whole-wheat flour) is a creditable grain.

Ingredients: Boneless, skinless chicken breast with rib meat, water, *whole-wheat flour*, contains 2% or less of the following: dried garlic, dried onion, salt, sea salt, soybean oil, spice, sugar, torula yeast, turmeric, yeast, yeast extract. Breading set in vegetable oil.

**Separate grain portion in commercial combination foods**

A commercial combination food that lists the ingredients for the grain portion separately credits as the grains component if:

- a creditable grain is the first ingredient in the grain portion; or
- water is the first ingredient in the grain portion and a whole grain is the second ingredient in the grain portion.

The ingredients statement below shows an example for cheese ravioli. This product credits in the CACFP meal patterns because the first ingredient (whole-wheat flour) in the pasta (grain portion highlighted in yellow) is a creditable grain.



Ingredients: **Filling:** Fat-free ricotta cheese (whey, skim milk [made from nonfat dry milk powder], vinegar, xanthan gum, carrageenan), water, egg, low moisture part skim mozzarella cheese (cultured part skim milk, salt, enzymes), whey protein isolate, sodium caseinate, romano cheese made from cow's milk (cultured milk, salt, enzymes), bleached wheat flour, garlic salt (salt, dehydrated garlic), salt, corn starch, sugar, dehydrated garlic.

**Pasta:** *Whole-wheat flour*, enriched durum wheat flour (wheat flour, niacin, ferrous sulfate, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), water, egg.

**Multiple creditable grains in commercial combination foods**

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain portion of the combination food contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine crediting information. To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, the product's PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains in the grain

## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

portion of the product is the greatest ingredient by weight in the grain portion. For information on PFS forms, see “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2. For examples of how to determine if commercial combination foods are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

### Crediting Criteria for Foods Made on Site

Grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility (such as breads, rolls, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns if:

- a creditable grain is the greatest ingredient by weight in the recipe; or
- the **combined weight** of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight in the recipe.

Combination foods made on site by the CACFP facility (such as pizza, lasagna, and breaded chicken) credit as the grains component if:

- a creditable grain is the greatest **grain** ingredient by weight in the recipe; or
- the **combined weight** of all creditable grains is the greatest **grain** ingredient by weight in the recipe.

For examples of how to determine if grain foods made on site are creditable, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

Menu planners may use the CSDE’s Excel worksheets, *Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP* or *Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP*, to determine if grain foods made on site comply with the CACFP crediting criteria. For more information, see “[Grain Crediting Worksheets](#)” in this section.



## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

**Crediting Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal**

Corn ingredients credit as the grains component if they are whole grain, enriched, or treated with lime (nixtamalized). Nixtamalization is a process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients and provides a nutritional profile similar to whole-grain corn.

Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Masa harina is used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales.

Ingredients labeled as hominy, corn masa, or masa harina are nixtamalized, and therefore credit as whole grains. The ingredients statements below show some examples of corn chip products that credit as 100 percent whole grains.

Ingredients: *Corn masa flour*, water, contains 2% or less of: cellulose gum, guar gum, amylase, propionic acid, benzoic acid, and phosphoric acid (to maintain freshness).

Ingredients: *Whole-white corn*, vegetable oil (contains soybean, corn, cottonseed, and/or sunflower oil), salt, *lime/calcium hydroxide* (processing aid). **Note:** The lime/calcium hydroxide is the processing aid for the nixtamalization of corn.

The ingredients statements below show some examples of taco shell products that credit as 100 percent whole grains.

Ingredients: *Limed whole-grain white corn*, palm oil, salt, TBHQ (preservative).

Ingredients: *Whole-grain yellow corn*, high oleic canola oil, water, *corn flour*, salt, *hydrated lime*. **Note:** The corn flour is nixtamalized with hydrated lime and is therefore a whole grain.





## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

Corn, cornmeal, and corn flour do not credit unless they are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. For example, the corn chip product below cannot credit as the grains component because the corn is not whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized.

Ingredients: *Corn*, corn oil, salt.

If the product's ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information, CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to document that any corn ingredients (such as cornmeal and yellow corn flour) are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. Products made with corn ingredients that are not whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.



### Methods for identifying nixtamalized corn

Menu planners may use the two methods below to identify products made with nixtamalized corn.

1. If a product made with corn includes one of two FDA-approved whole grain health claims on its packaging, the corn in the product is nixtamalized and the product provides at least 50 percent whole grain.
  - **Low-fat claim:** “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.”
  - **Moderate-fat claim:** “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.”
2. If the ingredients statement indicates that the corn is treated with lime, the corn ingredient is nixtamalized. Examples include “ground corn with trace of lime” and “ground corn treated with lime.” Nixtamalized corn ingredients credit as whole grains.

Corn masa, corn flour, and cornmeal credit the same as all other creditable grain ingredients and foods. Crediting is determined by the weight of the product (as listed in the USDA's grain servings chart) or by the grams of creditable grain per portion. For more information, see [“Section C: Grain Serving Size.”](#)



## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

Crediting information for corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal is summarized in [USDA Memo SP 34-2019](#), [CACFP 15-2019](#) and [SFSP 15-2019](#): *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

### Crediting Hominy as Grains

Hominy is a traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin.

Hominy is available dried and in a fully cooked canned form. Dried hominy is cooked the same as dried beans (legumes). Hominy offered in a dried, milled form (such as grits) is a considered a whole grain. A ½-cup serving of cooked hominy grits or 1 ounce (28 grams) of dry hominy grits credits as one serving of the grains component. For information on crediting hominy as the vegetables component, see “[Crediting Hominy as Vegetables](#)” in the “Vegetables” section.

### Crediting Popcorn

Popcorn is a whole-grain food and a good source of fiber. A 3-cup (1 ounce) serving of plain popped popcorn credits as 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component. The minimum creditable amount is ¾ cup (¼ ounce equivalent). Table 3-7 summarizes the ounce equivalents contribution of popped popcorn.



**Table 3-7. Ounce equivalents of popped popcorn**

Cups <sup>1</sup>	Weight <sup>1</sup>	Servings of WGR grains
¾	0.25 ounces or 7 grams	¼ (minimum creditable amount)
1½	0.5 ounces or 14 grams	½
3	1.0 ounce or 28 grams	1

<sup>1</sup> The volume and weights refer to the amount of popcorn after popping.

### Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each age group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of the grains component from popcorn, due to the large volume required for crediting. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller serving of popcorn and supplementing with another food from the grains component. For example, a snack menu for ages 6-12 could provide one serving of the grains component from  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of popcorn ( $\frac{1}{4}$  serving) in a snack mix with  $\frac{3}{4}$  serving of pretzels and cereal.

Foods that contain popcorn as an ingredient (such as a popcorn snack mix or popcorn balls) require documentation to determine the crediting information. CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS for commercial foods and a standardized recipe for foods prepared on site.

Popcorn sometimes includes ingredients and toppings such as salt, caramel, cheese, and butter. The USDA strongly encourages healthier alternatives, such as seasoning the popcorn with herb blends or serving fresh, plain popcorn.

Popcorn that is an ingredient in products that are grain-based desserts does not credit in the CACFP. For more information, see “[Grain-based Desserts](#)” in this section. Crediting information for popcorn is summarized in [USDA Memo SP 23-2019](#), [CACFP 10-2019](#) and [SFSP 09-2019](#): *Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

**Note:** Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. The USDA recommends that CACFP facilities consider children’s age and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer popcorn. This consideration is especially important when serving young children or children with disabilities.

## Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements

### Grain Crediting Worksheets

The CSDE’s CACFP crediting worksheets evaluate grain-based foods for compliance with the CACFP crediting, WGR, and serving requirements. The grain crediting worksheets include:

- Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP;
- Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP;
- Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP;
- Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP; and
- Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP.

These worksheets are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

### Noncreditable Foods in the Grains Component

Examples of foods that do not credit as the grains component include, but are not limited to:

- commercial products that do not contain a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ as the first ingredient (excluding water);
- recipes that do not contain a whole grain, enriched grain, bran, or germ as the greatest grain ingredient by weight;
- noncreditable ingredients such as oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours);
- breakfast cereals that contain more than 6 grams of sugars per ounce; and
- grain-based desserts such as brownies, cookies, cake, coffee cake, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), sweet pie crusts, rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding. For more information, see “[Grain-based Desserts](#)” in this section.

Menu planners should use the FBG to identify foods that credit as the grains component. For more information, see “[Noncreditable Foods](#)” at the beginning of section 3, and the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in the CACFP*.

**Part B: WGR Requirement**

## Part B: WGR Requirement

CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day. All WGR foods credit in the CACFP meal patterns, but not all creditable grains are WGR. The WGR criteria are different for commercial products and foods made on site by the CACFP facility. This section summarizes these requirements.

### WGR Requirement

CACFP menus must include at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to children. Menu planners may choose to serve a WGR food at any meal or snack. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day.

When planning CACFP menus to meet the WGR requirement, CACFP facilities must meet the requirements below.

- If the CACFP facility serves only one CACFP meal per day (breakfast, lunch, or supper), the grain served at that meal must be WGR.
- If the CACFP facility serves only breakfast and chooses to substitute meat/meat alternates for the grains component at breakfast (allowed up to three times per week), a WGR food is not required.
- The grains component is not required at snack, but may be served as one of the two required snack components. If the CACFP facility only serves snack and offers a grain as one of the two snack components, the grain must be WGR.

The WGR requirement applies to the CACFP, not to each child. If the CACFP facility serves more than one meal, and two different groups of children are at each meal (such as one group of children at breakfast and another group of children at lunch), only one meal must contain a WGR food. However, the USDA strongly encourages CACFP facilities to vary the meal that includes a WGR item. For example, the CACFP menu could include whole-grain toast at breakfast on Monday and brown rice at lunch on Tuesday. This helps to ensure that all children are served a variety of whole grains, and benefit from the important nutrients these foods provide.

## Part B: WGR Requirement

## WGR Criteria

WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains (every grain ingredient is whole grain) and foods that contain a blend of whole (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. Menu planners must determine if foods are WGR by using one of the six methods allowed by the USDA. These methods are summarized in the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

The USDA’s “rule of three” is one of the methods that menu planners can use to determine if commercial foods meet the WGR criteria for the CACFP meal patterns. The “rule of three” requires that the first ingredient (excluding water) is a whole grain, and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable grains. When reviewing a commercial product’s ingredients statement for compliance with the CACFP “rule of three” WGR criteria:



- a whole grain must be the first ingredient and may be the second or third grain ingredients;
- an enriched grain may be the second or third grain ingredients; and
- bran and germ may be the second or third grain ingredients.

If a food meets the “rule of three,” the menu planner does not need to check any other grain ingredients further down on the ingredients statement to verify if they are creditable.

Noncreditable grains cannot be any of the first three grain ingredients. Examples of noncreditable grains for the CACFP meal patterns include legume flours, corn flour, corn grits, farina, malted barley flour, milled corn, nut or seed flours, oat fiber, potato flour, potato starch, rice, soy fiber, soy flakes, wheat flour, and yellow corn flour. For additional examples and more information on noncreditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

## Part B: WGR Requirement

The “rule of three” WGR criteria are different for commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, cooked breakfast cereals, RTE breakfast cereals, and foods made on site by the CACFP facility. These requirements are summarized below. For detailed guidance and examples of how to determine if grain products are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP](#).

### WGR Criteria for Commercial Grain Products

Under the “rule of three” WGR criteria, commercial grain products in groups A-E (baked goods, such as breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, waffles, and pancakes) and group H (pasta and cereal grains, such as quinoa, rice, and millet) are WGR if they meet the following two criteria:

- a whole grain is the first ingredient (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient); and
- the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

The ingredients statements below show some examples of commercial grain products that meet the “rule of three” WGR criteria.

Ingredients: *Whole-wheat flour*, sugar, wheat gluten. Contains 2% or less of each of the following: honey, salt, yeast, molasses, diacetyl tartaric acid esters of mono-diglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, mono-and diglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.

Ingredients: Water, *whole-wheat flour*, yeast, wheat gluten, contains less than 2% of each of the following: soybean oil, sugar, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), fumaric acid, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, calcium sulfate, ammonium sulfate.

Ingredients: *Whole-wheat flour*, *enriched flour (wheat flour, niacinamide, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate [vitamin B1], riboflavin [vitamin B2], folic acid)*, soybean oil with TBHQ for freshness, salt, contains two percent or less of corn syrup, baking soda, yeast, soy lecithin.



## Part B: WGR Requirement

### Multiple whole grains in commercial grain products

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain product contains more than one whole grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that states the combined weight of all whole grains. The ingredients statement below shows an example.

Ingredients: Unbleached enriched wheat flour [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid], water, *whole-wheat flour*, *whole oats*, sugar, yeast, soybean oil, salt.

To meet the WGR criteria, the product’s PFS must document that the **combined** weight of the two whole grains (whole-wheat flour and whole oats) is more than the weight of the first ingredient (unbleached enriched wheat flour). For information on PFS forms, see “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2.

### WGR Criteria for Cooked Breakfast Cereals

Under the “rule of three” WGR criteria, cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular, such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina) are WGR if they meet the following three criteria:

- the first ingredient is a whole grain;
- the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ; and
- the sugars per serving do not exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.  
For more information, see “[Sugar limit for breakfast cereals](#)” in this section.



The ingredients statement below shows an example of a cooked 100 percent whole-grain cereal. To credit as the grains component, the menu planner must check that this cereal also complies with the CACFP sugar limit. For more information, see “[Sugar limit for breakfast cereals](#)” in “Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements.”

Ingredients: *Whole-grain rolled oats*, sugar, natural flavors, salt.

For examples of how to determine if cooked breakfast cereals are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*. Menu planners may use the CSDE’s Excel worksheet, *Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*, to determine if cooked breakfast cereals comply with the WGR criteria. For more information, see “[Grain Crediting Worksheets](#)” in this section.



## Part B: WGR Requirement

**WGR Criteria for RTE Breakfast Cereals**

RTE breakfast cereals are WGR if they meet the following three criteria:

- the first ingredient is a whole grain;
  - the cereal is fortified; and
  - the sugars per serving do not exceed 6 grams per dry ounce.
- For more information, see “[Sugar limit for breakfast cereals](#)” in “Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements.”



The ingredients statement below shows an example of a whole-grain fortified RTE breakfast cereal. To credit as the grains component, the menu planner must check that this cereal also complies with the CACFP sugar limit.

Ingredients: *Whole-grain oat flour*, sugar, corn flour, whole-wheat flour, rice flour, salt, *calcium carbonate*, disodium phosphate, *reduced iron*, *niacinamide*, *zinc oxide*, BHT (a preservative), yellow 5, yellow 6, *thiamin mononitrate*, *pyridoxine hydrochloride*, *riboflavin*, *folic acid*.

For examples of how to determine if RTE breakfast cereals are WGR, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#). Menu planners may use the CSDE’s Excel worksheet, [Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat \(RTE\) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#), to determine if RTE breakfast cereals comply with the WGR criteria. For more information, see “[Grain Crediting Worksheets](#)” in this section.



## Part B: WGR Requirement

**WGR Criteria for Commercial Combination Foods**

Under the “rule of three” WGR criteria, commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion from groups A-E (such as pizza crust in pizza and baked fish coated with bread crumbs) or groups H-I (such as noodles in lasagna and baked chicken coated with crushed cereal flakes) are WGR if:

- a whole grain is the first grain ingredient; and
- the next two grain ingredients (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

The ingredients statement below shows an example of breaded chicken nuggets. This product meets the “rule of three” WGR criteria because whole-wheat flour is the first and only grain ingredient.

Ingredients: Boneless, skinless chicken breast with rib meat, water, *whole wheat flour*, contains 2% or less of the following: dried garlic, dried onion, salt, sea salt, soybean oil, spice, sugar, torula yeast, turmeric, yeast, yeast extract. Breeding set in vegetable oil.

**Separate grain portion in commercial combination foods**

A commercial combination food that lists the ingredients for the grain portion separately is WGR if a:

- whole grain is the first ingredient in the grain portion (or water is the first ingredient and a whole grain is the second ingredient); and
- the next two grain ingredients in the grain portion (if any) are whole, enriched, bran, or germ.

The ingredients statement below shows an example of a breaded chicken patty that lists the grain portion separately. This product meets the “rule of three” WGR criteria because the first grain ingredient in the breading (grain portion highlighted in yellow) is a whole grain, and the second and only other grain ingredient is an enriched grain.

Ingredients: Chicken, water, salt and natural flavor. **Breaded with:** *white whole-wheat flour*, water, salt, *enriched yellow corn flour*, dried onion, dried garlic, dried yeast, brown sugar, extractives of paprika, and spices. Breeding set in vegetable oil.

## Part B: WGR Requirement

### Multiple whole grains in commercial combination foods

If a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the grain portion of the combination food contains more than one whole grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to determine crediting information. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a breaded chicken patty that lists multiple whole grains.

Ingredients: Chicken, water, salt and natural flavor. **Breaded with:** *unbleached enriched wheat flour [flour, malted barley flour, reduced iron, niacin, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), folic acid], water, whole-wheat flour, whole oats, dried onion, dried garlic, dried yeast, brown sugar, extractives of paprika, and spices. Breading set in vegetable oil.*

To meet the WGR criteria, the product's PFS must document that the **combined weight** of the two whole grains (whole-wheat flour and whole oats) in the breading (grain portion highlighted in yellow) is the greatest ingredient by weight. For information on PFS forms, see "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" in section 2.

### WGR Criteria for Grain Foods Made on Site

Grain foods made on site by the CACFP facility (such as breads, rolls, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) are WGR if:

- a whole grain is equal to or greater than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the recipe; or
- the combined weight of all whole grains is equal to or greater than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the recipe.

The examples below show recipes that meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

- A muffin recipe contains 2 pounds of whole-wheat flour and 2 pounds of enriched flour. This recipe is WGR because the weight of the whole grain and enriched flour are the same.
- A bread recipe contains  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound of whole-grain flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of rolled oats, and 1 pound of enriched flour. This recipe is WGR because the combined weight ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  pounds) of the two whole grains (whole-grain flour and rolled oats) exceeds the weight of the enriched flour.

For examples of how to determine if grain foods made on site are WGR, see the CSDE's handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP](#).

## Part B: WGR Requirement

**WGR Criteria for Combination Foods Made on Site**

For combination foods made on site by the CACFP facility that contain a grain portion from groups A-E (such as pizza crust in pizza and baked fish coated with bread crumbs) or groups H-I (such as noodles in lasagna and baked chicken coated with crushed cereal flakes), the “rule of three” WGR criteria apply only to the **grain portion**. The grain portion is WGR if:

- the weight of the whole grain is equal to or greater than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the recipe; or
- the combined weight of all whole grains) is equal to or greater than the combined weight of all other creditable grains in the recipe.



Menu planners must review all recipes to determine if they credit as WGR or enriched grains. The CSDE recommends indicating this information on the recipe.

**Required Documentation for Grains**

CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to indicate that grain products and recipes comply with the CACFP crediting and WGR requirements. Acceptable documentation for commercial products includes CN labels (if the grain portion is part of a meat/meat alternate) and PFS forms. Recipes are required for foods made on site by the CACFP facility. The CSDE will review this documentation as part of the Administrative Review of the CACFP. For more information, see “[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)” in section 2.

The CSDE recommends that CACFP facilities include information on the CACFP menu about the type of grain item. This helps to document meal pattern compliance and provide information for families about the types of grains served in CACFP meals and snacks. For example, the menu planner could list:

- “whole-wheat bread,” “whole grain-rich bread,” or “enriched white bread” instead of “bread;”
- “brown rice” or “enriched rice” instead of “rice;”
- “enriched spaghetti” instead of “spaghetti;”
- “whole-corn tortilla” instead of “tortilla;” and
- “fortified whole-grain cereal” instead of “breakfast cereal.”

**Part B: WGR Requirement**

Other acceptable methods for documenting WGR grains on CACFP menus include using:

- abbreviations, such as “WW bread” for whole-wheat bread or “WGR blueberry muffin” for whole grain-rich blueberry muffin;
- symbols to indicate WGR foods; or
- a check box to signify that a food is WGR.

When using abbreviations or symbols, CACFP facilities should include a key on the menu to help families and staff understand what the symbols mean.

CACFP facilities should indicate the crediting and WGR information for the grains component on the daily production record (if used), or provide other menu documentation, such as:

- a binder of nutrition information for commercial products that includes Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients statements;
- a list of all grain products served and whether they are WGR (including 100 percent whole grain products), enriched, or fortified (breakfast cereals only);
- recipes for foods made on site; and
- CN labels and PFS forms for commercial foods.

CACFP facilities must also maintain documentation on file to indicate that all breakfast cereals meet the CACFP sugar limit. Documentation should include the products’ Nutrition Facts label and the CACFP facility’s calculation showing that the cereal contains no more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. For more information, see [“Sugar limit for breakfast cereals”](#) in “Part A: Grain Crediting Requirements.”



## Part C: Grain Serving Size

## Part C: Grain Serving Size

Grains served in CACFP meals and snacks must provide the required amount specified in the CACFP meal patterns. The amount of a grain food that provides one serving varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains.

Through September 30, 2021, the amounts for the grains component are in servings. The required amounts of the grains component are  $\frac{1}{2}$  serving for ages 1-2 and 3-5; and one serving for ages 6-12 and 13-18. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Grain Servings for the CACFP](#).

**Note:** Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP](#).

The USDA allows two methods for determining the CACFP serving for the grains component. These methods are summarized below. For detailed guidance on both methods, see the CSDE's handout, [Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP](#).

### Method 1: Weight or volume (USDA's grain servings chart)

Method 1 determines the CACFP serving for commercial grain products using the appropriate weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's grain servings chart. This chart groups foods based on the average grain content of similar products. The minimum creditable amount is  $\frac{1}{4}$  serving. **Note:** Groups F and G do not have crediting amounts because the grain-based desserts in these groups do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns. For more information, see "[Grain-based Desserts](#)" in this section.

- **Groups A-E (baked goods, excluding grain-based desserts):** Baked goods (such as crackers, animal crackers, graham crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, and pancakes) require 14.75 grams of creditable grains to credit as one serving. The amount that provides one serving varies from 20 grams (0.7 ounces) for foods in group A to 63 grams (2.2 ounces) for foods in group E.
- **Group H (cereal grains):** Pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, and cereal grains (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa,

## Part C: Grain Serving Size

wheat berries, and rolled wheat) require  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked or 25 grams (0.9 ounce) dry to credit as one serving. Cereal grains typically credit based on the cooked serving, but menu planners may choose to use the dry uncooked weight. **Note:** Dry cereal grains used as an ingredient in a recipe (such as rolled oats in bread) credit the same as groups A-E; they require 14.75 grams of creditable grains to credit as one serving. For guidance on the crediting and serving size requirements for cooked breakfast cereals, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.

- **Group I (RTE breakfast cereals):** RTE breakfast cereals require  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup or  $\frac{1}{3}$  ounce (10 grams) for ages 1-2;  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup or  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce (14 grams) for ages 3-5; and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup or 1 ounce (28 grams) for ages 6-12 and 13-18. If the appropriate volume of cereal weighs less than the required amount, it still credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  serving. For example,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of flaked cereal that weighs 13 grams credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  serving for ages 3-5. For guidance on crediting RTE breakfast cereals, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*.

The USDA's grain servings chart applies to all creditable commercial grain products. Menu planners may also use this chart for creditable grain foods made on site, if the recipe indicates the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. If the recipe does not provide this information, the CACFP facility must calculate the average weight per serving by weighing at least four samples of the cooked product. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Yield Study Data Form*.

### Method 2: Creditable grains

Method 2 determines the CACFP serving for grain products and recipes by calculating the total weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. A food in groups A-E of the USDA's grain servings chart must contain 14.75 grams of creditable grains to credit as one serving. A food in groups H-I of the USDA's grain servings chart must contain 25 grams of creditable grains to credit as one serving.

- **Commercial products:** CACFP facilities must obtain a manufacturer's PFS that indicates the weight of all creditable grains per serving of the product. This information cannot be determined from the product's Nutrition Facts label or packaging. For more information, see "[Documentation for Commercial Products](#)" in section 2.
- **Foods made on site:** CACFP facilities must determine the amount of creditable grains per serving from the weights listed for each grain ingredient in the recipe. If the



### Part C: Grain Serving Size

recipe lists grain ingredients by volume (e.g., cups and quarts), the CACFP facility must calculate the equivalent weight (grams) for each grain ingredient. For more information, see “[Standardized Recipes](#)” in section 2.

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use method 2 for foods made on site because it provides more accurate crediting information.

#### When method 2 is required for commercial products

There are five situations when menu planners must use method 2 (instead of the USDA’s grain servings chart) to determine the CACFP serving for commercial grain products.

1. **Multiple creditable grains:** A creditable grain is not the first ingredient (excluding water), but the product contains more than one creditable grain. CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to document that the **combined weight** of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient. For more information, see “[Multiple creditable grains in commercial grain products](#),” “[Multiple creditable grains in commercial combination foods](#),” “[Multiple whole grains in commercial grain products](#),” and “[Multiple whole grains in commercial combination foods](#)” in this section.
2. **Combination foods:** A commercial combination food contains a grain portion from groups A-E or H-I of the USDA’s grain servings chart. Examples include pizza crust in pizza, noodles in lasagna, and baked chicken coated with bread crumbs or crushed cereal flakes. CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that documents the amount of creditable grains in the **grain portion** of the product.
3. **Manufacturer’s crediting claim:** The manufacturer claims that a commercial product can provide the minimum creditable grains using a serving that is **less** than the minimum weight or volume specified for that product’s group in the USDA’s grain servings chart.
4. **Product not listed:** A commercial product does not belong to one of the nine groups listed in the USDA’s grain servings chart.
5. **CACFP facility credits a product differently:** The CACFP facility wants to credit a commercial product differently from the servings listed in the USDA’s grain servings chart.

### Part C: Grain Serving Size

For each situation described above, CACFP facilities must obtain a manufacturer's PFS that states the amount of creditable grains per serving. The PFS must also demonstrate how the product provides this amount according to the USDA's regulations, guidance, or policy. Menu planners must verify the accuracy of the product's PFS prior to including the product in reimbursable meals.

CACFP facilities must maintain all crediting documentation on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

**Note:** If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS, or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, CACFP facilities cannot use the product to credit as the grains component in CACFP meals and snacks.



Part C: Grain Serving Size

## 4 — Meal Service

This section addresses the meal service requirements for the CACFP, including family-style meal service, children's intent to participate in the meal service, water availability, meals consumed off site, and offer versus serve.

### Family-style Meal Service

The goal of the CACFP is to provide nutritious meals to young children and help them establish good eating habits at a young age. Family-style meal service enhances this goal by establishing a pleasant eating environment that supports and promotes mealtime as a learning experience. It encourages supervising adults to set a personal example and provide educational activities that are centered on foods. The USDA and the CSDE strongly encourage family-style meal service in all CACFP child care facilities.

Family style is an optional type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from communal platters or bowls of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. This approach allows children to identify and be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good eating habits. It also helps young children develop motor skills and the dexterity and hand strength needed to serve foods.

Unlike other types of meal service (such as cafeteria lines, vended meals, pre-plated service, and offer versus serve), family-style meals allow some latitude in initial serving sizes of food because additional servings of each food are readily available at each table and more can be served at any time. When a complete family-style service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer some meal components in a family-style manner, particularly when smaller children are being served or when a new food item is being introduced.

To ensure CACFP compliance when implementing family-style meal service, CACFP facilities must follow the practices below.

- A sufficient amount of prepared food and milk must be placed on each table to provide the full-required portions of each food component for all children at the table, and to accommodate the supervising adults, if they eat with the children.
- Children must be allowed to serve the food components themselves, with the exception of beverages such as milk and juice. During the course of the meal,

## 4 | Meal Service

supervising adults are responsible for actively encouraging each child to serve themselves the full-required meal pattern component. If a child initially refuses a food component or does not accept the full-required portion, the supervising adults should offer the food component to the child again.

- Supervising adults who choose to serve beverages (including milk and juice) directly to the children must serve the required minimum quantity to each child. For example, children ages 3-5 must be served  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of milk at breakfast, lunch, and supper.
- Centers and day care homes that use family style meal service cannot claim second meals for reimbursement.

Meals that follow these guidelines are reimbursable, even if supervising adults do not eat with the children. However, the CSDE strongly encourages CACFP facilities to assist in the development of healthy eating practices by ensuring that supervising adults eat with the children and model healthy eating behaviors.

The resources below provide more information on family-style meal service in the CACFP.

- Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Supplement E: Support for Family Style Meals (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-wellness-tips-young-children>
- USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/offer-versus-serve-and-family-style-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program>



## Intent to Participate in the Meal Service

For a CACFP facility to claim a meal or snack for CACFP reimbursement, children must participate in the meal service or have the intent to participate in the meal service. A child who makes no attempt (i.e., has no intent) to join other children at the meal or snack cannot be included in the reimbursable meal count, even if he or she was asked by the supervising adult to participate.

CACFP regulations allow for reimbursement of meals that are served and eaten by enrolled participants. They do not allow for reimbursement of ordered or plated meals. If a CACFP facility uses pre-plated meals or supervising adults serve the children, it may be difficult to judge the child's intent to participate in the meal service. If a child refuses a meal that is pre-plated or served by a supervising adult, the CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. The child must show intent, for example:

- coming willingly to the table;
- helping himself or herself to food or asking to be served; and
- attempting to eat the meal.

The child does not have to **eat** the meal for the CACFP facility to claim the meal for reimbursement, but the child must demonstrate the intent to eat.

When a child who clearly has no intent to participate is forced to come to the table or forced to put food on his or her plate, the CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. A child may not have the intent to participate in a meal for many reasons, such as behavior issues or being sick, tired, angry, or upset. The scenarios in table 4-1 help to illustrate the principle of a child's intent to eat and when CACFP facilities can claim CACFP meals and snacks.



**Table 4-1. Examples of child’s intent to eat**

Scenario	Can the CACFP facility claim the meal?
<p>A child typically chooses not to participate in the meal service. A teacher forces the child to come and sit at the table, and serves the child some food. The child does not eat.</p>	<p><b>No.</b> The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has not chosen (i.e., has no intent) to participate in the meal. Since the teacher knows this child typically does not eat, it would be clear that the child did not intend to participate in the meal.</p> <p>If the child willingly comes to the table, chooses to take a serving of food, but then does not eat, the meal is reimbursable. In this case, the child has the intent to eat, even if he or she did not follow through.</p>
<p>A child who normally participates in the meal service comes to the table then chooses not to take any food.</p>	<p><b>No.</b> The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has chosen not to participate.</p>
<p>At snack time, a child is crying and upset over an altercation with another child. The teacher asks her to come to the table but she refuses.</p>	<p><b>No.</b> The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child has chosen not to participate.</p>
<p>A child willingly comes to the table at mealtime. He helps himself to several meal components, takes one bite, then stops eating because he does not feel well.</p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> The CACFP facility may claim the meal for reimbursement because the child chose to participate and had the intent to eat, even though he changed his mind when he did not feel well.</p>
<p>A child gets sick just before lunch. She is lying on a cot, waiting for her parent to pick her up.</p>	<p><b>No.</b> The CACFP facility cannot claim the meal for reimbursement because the child does not have the intent to participate in the meal.</p>



## Water Availability

[USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: \*Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program\*](#) summarizes the requirements for water availability in the CACFP. The [Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act](#) requires that CACFP facilities must make drinking water available to children, as nutritionally appropriate. Throughout the day (including mealtimes), water must be made available to children to drink upon their request. CACFP facilities can also choose to make water available for children to self-serve, for example:

- providing disposable cups near sinks that are available to children, with a step stool if children are unable to reach the sink; and
- providing covered water pitchers and disposable cups if water fountains are not available.

While drinking water must be made available to children during mealtimes, it is not part of the reimbursable meal or snack and cannot be served instead of fluid milk. Additionally, if juice is served as one of the two required snack components, water cannot be served as a choice instead of juice.

Caregivers should not serve young children too much water before and during mealtimes. Excess water may reduce the amount of food and milk that children consume. CACFP facilities should serve water with snacks when no other beverage is being served. Water should also be made available instead of high-calorie, sweetened beverages that are served outside mealtimes, such as juice drinks, soda, and sports drinks. **Note:** The CSDE recommends not serving these types of sweetened beverages in child care programs. For more information, see the CSDE's guide, [Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies](#).



If safe water is not readily available in a facility, purchasing water for children is a reasonable and allowable cost for CACFP facilities. However, purchasing water for consumption by adults or CACFP facility employees is not an allowable cost. For more information, see [USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: \*Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities\*](#).

## Meals Consumed Off Site

The USDA regulations define reimbursable meals and snacks as those that meet the meal pattern requirements, and are served to enrolled participants at the CACFP facility. CACFP facilities receive reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children on the premises. A

meal consumed off site is not reimbursable because a child who has left the premises is no longer participating in the activities of the institution.

If a child leaves the meal service early, uneaten meal or snack components cannot be packed “to go.” By leaving the facility and consuming the food off site, the child is not participating in the meal or snack service with the rest of the group. CACFP facilities cannot claim these meals and snacks for CACFP reimbursement.

The CACFP is a congregate feeding program intended to provide meals that are consumed on site unless children are on an approved field trip. Meals served on field trips are reimbursable if they meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements, and are served and consumed as part of a related function of the CACFP facility.

### Offer versus Serve

Offer versus serve (OVS) is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack. OVS is only allowed in:

- CACFP at-risk afterschool programs; and
- CACFP centers that serve meals prepared by a CACFP facility participating in the NSLP and SBP. For information on the school meal patterns, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages.

Generally, OVS is not appropriate for young children because it may interfere with CACFP nutrition goals and the CACFP facility’s efforts to introduce new foods to children. The USDA encourages CACFP institutions to consider using family-style meal service as a way to provide younger children some choice in the types and amounts of food selected. For more information, see “[Family-style Meal Service](#)” in this section.

CACFP institutions that may benefit from the use of OVS include those caring for school-age children in outside-school-hours care centers or at-risk afterschool care centers. These schools or community-based centers could be operated by the school or CACFP facility, or by another CACFP institution that contracts with the CACFP facility for meals. Eligible CACFP facilities that choose to implement OVS must notify CSDE. For more information, see the USDA’s handout, [Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP](#), and the USDA’s handout, [Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP](#).

**Note:** In Connecticut, all at-risk afterschool centers currently operate under the NSLP, not the CACFP. The OVS requirements for the NSLP are different from the OVS requirements for the CACFP. For more information, see the CSDE's [Offer Versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

### OVS in CACFP at-risk afterschool centers

Table 4-2 summarizes the OVS requirements for CACFP meals in at-risk afterschool centers.

- For a reimbursable breakfast, the CACFP center must offer at least four food items and the child must select at least three food items.
- For a reimbursable lunch or supper, the CACFP center must offer all five food components and the child must select at least three food components.

For more information on OVS, see the CSDE's handout, [Offer Versus Serve in At-risk Afterschool Centers](#).

Table 4-2. OVS requirements for CACFP meals in at-risk afterschool centers		
Meal	CACFP facility must offer	Child must select
<b>Breakfast</b>	<p><b>A least four food items from three food components</b><sup>1</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One serving of milk<sup>2,3</sup></li> <li>2. One serving of vegetables and fruits</li> <li>3. One serving of grains</li> <li>4. One serving of meat/meat alternates or one additional serving of fruits and vegetables or grains</li> </ol>	At least <b>three</b> food items
<b>Lunch and supper</b>	<p><b>Five Components</b><sup>1</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One serving of milk<sup>3</sup></li> <li>2. One serving of fruits One serving of vegetables</li> <li>3. One serving of grains</li> <li>4. One serving of meat/meat alternates</li> </ol>	At least <b>three</b> food components
<p><sup>1</sup> The serving for each component must be at least the minimum required quantities in the CACFP meal patterns for children.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The four food items cannot include two serving of milk.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Milk must be unflavored low-fat or unflavored fat-free. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, but the USDA's <a href="#">CACFP Best Practices</a> recommends only unflavored milk.</p>		

### OVS in NSLP and SBP meals

The CACFP regulations permit the substitution of the NSLP meal pattern, including the use of OVS, when meals are prepared by CACFP facilities and served by schools or other institutions participating in the CACFP. Table 4-3 summarizes the OVS requirements for centers operating under the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

- At breakfast, the meal must offer at least four food items and the child must select at least three food items including at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered).
- At lunch, the meal must offer all five components and the child must select at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full portion (minimum serving size) of at least two other components.



OVS must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch but is optional for breakfast. For junior high, middle schools and elementary schools, OVS is optional for both breakfast and lunch. For all grades other than high school, the local CACFP facility makes the decision of whether to implement OVS.

For CACFP facilities receiving meals from CACFP facilities, OVS is an option for breakfast, lunch and supper, but not for snack. CACFP facilities electing this option must implement OVS in accordance with the method used by the CACFP facility providing the meals. OVS cannot be used with snack services under either the NSLP or CACFP.

For more information, see the CSDE's [Offer Versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Table 4-3. OVS requirements for NSLP and SBP meals  
in at-risk afterschool centers**

Meal	CACFP facility must offer	Child must select
<b>Breakfast</b>	<p><b>A least four food items from three food components</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One serving of milk <sup>2,3</sup></li> <li>2. One serving of vegetables and fruits</li> <li>3. One serving of grains</li> <li>4. One serving of meat/meat alternates or one additional serving of fruits and vegetables or grains</li> </ol>	At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered)
<b>Lunch and supper</b>	<p><b>Five components <sup>1</sup></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One serving of milk <sup>3</sup></li> <li>2. One serving of fruits</li> <li>3. One serving of vegetables</li> <li>4. One serving of grains</li> <li>5. One serving of meat/meat alternates</li> </ol>	At least <b>three</b> food components
<p><sup>1</sup> The serving for each component must be at least the minimum daily required quantities in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The four food items cannot include two serving of milk.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 require that schools offer a choice of at least two different varieties of milk, e.g., unflavored low-fat milk, unflavored fat-free milk, or flavored fat-free milk.</p>		



## 5 – Resources

This section includes links to federal and state regulations, policy memoranda, websites, and the CSDE’s guides, resource lists, forms, and handouts.

### CSDE Forms and Handouts

All handouts are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

#### Crediting handouts

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>

Allowable Milk Substitutions for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/SpecDiet/CACFPmilksub.pdf>

Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainCalcCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCerealsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditMMACACFP.pdf>

Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditDeliCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Juice in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf>



Crediting Legumes in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditLegumesCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditNutsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSmoothieCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Soup in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSoupCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditTofuCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrainsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditYogurtCACFP.pdf>

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP (effective October 1, 2021):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/OzEqCACFP.pdf>

Grain Servings for the CACFP (through September 30, 2021):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/GrainsCACFP.pdf>

How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/IdentifyCreditableGrainsCACFP.pdf>

Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/NoncredCACFP.pdf>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNlabelCACFP.pdf>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFScacfp.pdf>

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/VeggroupCACFP.pdf>

Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGRCriteriaCACFP.pdf>

### **Crediting worksheets**

Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Purchased Grains in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit1.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit2.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 3: Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit3.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-Size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit4.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit5.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 6: Nutrition Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit6.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 7: Nutrition Standards for Soup:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit7.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 8: Nutrition Standards for Meat/Meat Alternates:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit8.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 9: Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit9.xlsx>

Child Care Worksheet 10: Nutrient Analysis of Recipes:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCredit10.xlsx>

### **Menu forms for at-risk supper and snack**

CACFP Menu Form: At-risk Snack for Ages 6-18:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_atrisksnack6-18.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_atrisksnack6-18.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: At-risk Snack and Supper for Ages 6-18:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_atrisksnacksupper6-18.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_atrisksnacksupper6-18.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Two-weeks At-risk Supper for Ages 6-18:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_atrisksupper2weeks6-18.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_atrisksupper2weeks6-18.doc)

### **Menu forms for breakfast, lunch, and snack**

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 1-2:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_breaklunchsnack1-2.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_breaklunchsnack1-2.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 3-5:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_breaklunchsnack3-5.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_breaklunchsnack3-5.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack for Ages 6-12:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_breaklunchsnack6-12.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_breaklunchsnack6-12.doc)

### Menu forms for breakfast and snack

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_breaksnackampm3-5.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_breaksnackampm3-5.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_breaksnack3-5.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_breaksnack3-5.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast and PM Snack for Ages 6-12:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_breaksnack6-12.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_breaksnack6-12.doc)

### Menu forms for emergency shelters

CACFP Menu Form: AM, PM, and Evening Snack for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_sheltersnack6-18.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_sheltersnack6-18.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper for Ages 6-18 in Emergency Shelters:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_shelterbreaklunchsup6-18.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_shelterbreaklunchsup6-18.doc)

### Menu forms for lunch and snack

CACFP Menu Form: AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_lunchsnackampm3-5.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_lunchsnackampm3-5.doc)

### Menu forms for snack

CACFP Menu Form: AM and PM Snack for Ages 1-2:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_snackampm1-2.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_snackampm1-2.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: AM and PM Snack for Ages 3-5:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_snackamp3-4.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_snackamp3-4.doc)

CACFP Menu Form: Two-week AM or PM Snack for Ages 3-5:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP\\_snack2week3-5.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/MenuForm/menuformCACFP_snack2week3-5.doc)

### **Production records**

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM and PM Snack:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_snackamp.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_snackamp.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM Snack, Lunch, and PM Snack:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_lunchsnackamp.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_lunchsnackamp.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for AM, PM, and Evening Snack in Emergency Shelters:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_sheltersnack.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_sheltersnack.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Any Meal:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_components.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_components.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for At-Risk Snack and Supper:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_atrisknacksup.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_atrisknacksup.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast and PM Snack:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_breaksnack.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_breaksnack.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, AM Snack, and PM Snack:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_breaksnackamp.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_breaksnackamp.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack (AM or PM):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_breaklunchsnack.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_breaklunchsnack.doc)

CACFP Child Care Menu Production Record for Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper in Emergency Shelters:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP\\_shelterbreaklunchsup.doc](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Forms/ProdRecord/prCACFP_shelterbreaklunchsup.doc)

## Sample menus

Sample Cold Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menubreakcoldCACFP.pdf>

Sample Hot Breakfast Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menubreakhotCACFP.pdf>

Sample Cold Lunch and Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:

Sample <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menulunchcoldCACFP.pdf>

Sample Hot Lunch and Supper Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menulunchhotCACFP.pdf>

Sample Snack Menus for CACFP Child Care Centers and Homes:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/menusnackCACFP.pdf>

## CSDE Guides

Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/SpecDiet/NPGspdiet.pdf>

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/CCPolicy/CCAG.pdf>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/NPGmealpattern.pdf>

Planning Healthy Meals in CACFP Child Care Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/NPGhealthy.pdf>

## CSDE Resource Lists

The CSDE resource lists are available on the CSDE’s Resources for Child Nutrition Programs webpage at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>.

Child Nutrition Programs Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesChildNutritionPrograms.pdf>

Competitive Foods Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesCompetitiveFoods.pdf>

Dietary Guidelines and Nutrition Information Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesDietaryGuidelines.pdf>

Food Safety Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesFoodSafety.pdf>

Health and Achievement Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesAchievement.pdf>

Menu Planning and Food Production Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesMenuPlanning.pdf>

Nutrition Education Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesNutritionEducation.pdf>

Physical Activity and Physical Education Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesPhysicalActivity.pdf>

Promoting Healthy Weight Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesHealthyWeight.pdf>

Special Diets Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesSpecialDiets.pdf>

Wellness Policies for Schools and Child Care Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesWellnessPolicy.pdf>.



## USDA CACFP Crediting Resources

All documents are available on the USDA's Team Nutrition Meal Pattern Training Tools webpage at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-meal-pattern-training-tools>.

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (English):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNS\\_USDA\\_CACFP\\_11\\_AddingWholeGrains\\_04-508c.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNS_USDA_CACFP_11_AddingWholeGrains_04-508c.pdf)

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu (Spanish):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNS\\_USDA\\_CACFP\\_11\\_AddingWholeGrains\\_spanish03-508c.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNS_USDA_CACFP_11_AddingWholeGrains_spanish03-508c.pdf)

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu Webinar (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-halfime-adding-whole-grains-your-menu>

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu Webinar (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-halfime-adding-whole-grains-your-menu-spanish>

Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (English):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_CalcCereal.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_CalcCereal.pdf)

Calculating Sugar Limits for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (Spanish):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_SugarCalcCerealSP.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_SugarCalcCerealSP.pdf)

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (English):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_CalcYogurt.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_CalcYogurt.pdf)

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (Spanish):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_SugarCalcYogurtSP.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_SugarCalcYogurtSP.pdf)

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-cereal.pdf>

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-cereal-sp.pdf>

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halfime-thirty-thursdays-%E2%80%9Cchoose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-added-sugars%E2%80%9D>

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halfime-thirty-thursdays-choose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-added-sugars-spanish>

Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars (English):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-chooseyogurts.pdf>

Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/FNSCACFPSP.pdf>

Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-choose-yogurts-are-lower-added-sugars>

Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars Webinar (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/seminario-web-medio-tiempo-del-cacfp-treinta-los-jueves-yogures>

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPGrainBasedDesserts.pdf>

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPWorksheetGrainSP.pdf>

Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (English):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_IDingWholeGrains%20E.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_IDingWholeGrains%20E.pdf)

Identifying Whole Grain-rich Foods for the CACFP (Spanish):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP\\_IDingWholeGrains\\_SP.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP_IDingWholeGrains_SP.pdf)

Methods for Healthy Cooking (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPHealthyPrep.pdf>

Methods for Healthy Cooking (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPHealthyPrepSP.pdf>

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPOfferVersusServe.pdf>

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP OVSSP.pdf>

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMeatAlt.pdf>

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFP-MeatAlternates-sp.pdf>

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast Webinar (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-halfime-serving-meat-and-meat-alternatives-breakfast>

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast Webinar (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/los-seminarios-web-medio-tiempo-del-cacfp-servir-carne-y-sustitutos-de-carne-en-el-desayuno>

Serving Milk in the CACFP (English):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMilk18.pdf>

Serving Milk in the CACFP (Spanish):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMilk18SP.pdf>

Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/CACFPworksheetGrainsOzEq%20.pdf>

## Websites

CACFP Afterschool Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-programs>

CACFP At-risk Afterschool Care Centers (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-At-Risk-Afterschool-Care-Centers>

CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Child-Care-Centers>

CACFP Emergency Shelters (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Emergency-Shelters>

CACFP Family Day Care Homes (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Family-Day-Care-Homes>

CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-halftime-thirty-thursdays-training-webinar-series>

CACFP Handbooks (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-handbooks>

CACFP Meal Pattern Training Tools (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp-training-tools>

CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-meal-pattern-training-worksheets>

Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Care-Nutrition-and-Physical-Activity-Policies>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/child-nutrition-cn-labeling-program>

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-to-preschool>

Farm to School (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Farm-to-School>

FNS Instructions for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Forms for CACFP Child Care Centers (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Child-Care-Centers/Documents>

Forms for CACFP Homes (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP-Family-Day-Care-Homes/Documents>

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification>

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Manuals-and-Guides-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Operational Memos for the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-the-CACFP>

Program Guidance for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-CACFP-Child>

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

## USDA Regulations and Policy

CACFP Policy Memos (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources>

CACFP Regulations (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/part-226%E2%80%94child-and-adult-care-food-program>

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 02C-18 and 02H-18: Requirements for Meal Modifications in CACFP Child Care Centers and Family Day Care Homes:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OM2018/OM02C18\\_02H18.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OM2018/OM02C18_02H18.pdf)

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 03A-16, 04C-16 and 04H-16: Statements Supporting Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities in the Child Nutrition Programs:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OM2016/OM03A16\\_4C16\\_04H16.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OM2016/OM03A16_4C16_04H16.pdf)

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 03C-07 and 03H-07: Reimbursement for Meals Provided by Parents for Medical Reasons in CACFP:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OMEarlierYears/OM03C07\\_03H07.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OMEarlierYears/OM03C07_03H07.pdf)

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 04A-16, 05C-16 and 05H-16: New Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OM2016/OM04A16\\_05C16\\_05H16.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OM2016/OM04A16_05C16_05H16.pdf)

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[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OMEarlierYears/OM11C11\\_14H11.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Memos/OMEarlierYears/OM11C11_14H11.pdf)

FNS Instruction 783-13, Revision 3: Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons: Jewish Schools, Institutions and Sponsors.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/FNSinstruction/783-13.pdf>

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>

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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

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<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/04/25/2016-09412/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>

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<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/01/2016-26339/child-and-adult-care-food-program-meal-pattern-revisions-related-to-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>
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<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/09/25/2019-20808/delayed-implementation-of-grains-ounce-equivalents-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program>
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/meal-disallowance-policies-family-day-care-homes-child-and-adult-care-food-program-cacfp>
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/offer-versus-serve-and-family-style-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program>
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/risk-afterschool-meals-component-child-and-adult-care-food-program-questions-and-answers-0>
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/questions-and-answers-updated-meal-pattern-requirements-child-and-adult-care-food-program>
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-cacfp-qas>
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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers>
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<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/CACFP10-2017os.pdf>
- USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp>

USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo CACFP 17-2016: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk and Fluid Milk Substitutions in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Q&As:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-requirements-fluid-milk-and-fluid-milk-substitutions-cacfp-qas>

USDA Memo CACFP 17-2017: Documenting Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/documenting-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/water-availability-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo SP 01-2016, CACFP 01-2016 and SFSP 01-2016: Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/procuring-local-meat-poultry-game-and-eggs-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 01-2019 and CACFP 01-2019: Guidance for FY19: Updated CACFP Meal Patterns and Updated NSLP and SBP Infant and CACFP meal patterns:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/guidance-fy19-updated-cacfp-meal-patterns-and-updated-nslp-and-sbp-infant-and-preschool-meal>

USDA Memo SP 11-2015 v2, CACFP 10-2015 and SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation>

USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019 and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-shelf-stable-dried-and-semi-dried-meat-poultry-and-seafood-products-child-nutrition>

USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:

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

USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019 and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs>



USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019 and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs:

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

USDA Memo SP 27-2015, CACFP 09-2015 and SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and>

USDA Memo SP 30-2017 and CACFP 13-2017: Transition Period for the Updated Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns and the Updated National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Infant and CACFP meal patterns:

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP30\\_CACFP13-2017os.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP30_CACFP13-2017os.pdf)

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer vs. Serve and Family Style Meal Service:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/clarification-use-offer-vs-serve-and-family-style-meal-service>

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>

USDA Memo SP 42-2016 and CACFP 14-2016: Early Implementation of the Updated Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern Requirements and the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs' Infant and CACFP meal patterns:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/early-implementation-updated-cacfp-meal-pattern-requirements-and-nslp-and-sbp-infant-and-preschool>

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>

## Glossary

**added sugars:** Sugars and syrups added to foods in processing or preparation, as opposed to the naturally occurring sugars found in foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy products. Names for added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup.

**Administrative Review (AR):** A periodic review of an institution’s operations of the Child Nutrition Programs, conducted by the Connecticut State Department of Education to monitor performance and assess compliance with all USDA regulations.

**alternate protein products (APPs):** APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APPs in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see “Alternate Protein Products” in section 3, and the CSDE’s handout, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP](#).

**artificial sweeteners:** Ingredients with little or no calories used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Artificial sweeteners are hundreds of times sweeter than sugar. Common artificial sweeteners include acesulfame potassium (Acesulfame-K, Sunett, Sweet & Safe, Sweet One), aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal), neotame, saccharin (Sweet and Low, Sweet Twin, Sweet ‘N Low Brown, Necta Sweet), sucralose (Splenda), and tagatose. These nonnutritive sweeteners are calorie-free, except for aspartame, which is very low in calories. For more information, see “nonnutritive sweeteners” in this section.

**bran:** The protective coating around the whole-grain kernel that is rich in nutrients, fiber and other health promoting substances called phytochemicals. Bran is not a whole grain, but is a creditable grain in the CACFP meal patterns.

**CACFP facilities:** Child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, and at-risk afterschool care centers that participate in the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program.

**CACFP meal patterns for children:** The required food components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. The CACFP meal patterns for children apply to children ages 1-12; children ages 15 and younger of migrant workers; children of any age with disabilities; and children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool care centers and emergency shelters. For more information, see [section 1](#) and the CSDE’s handout, *CACFP Meal Patterns for Children*.

**CACFP meal patterns for infants:** The required food components and minimum serving sizes that facilities participating in the CACFP must provide to infants from birth through 11 months to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to infants. For more information, see the *CACFP Infant Meal Pattern*, and the CSDE’s [Feeding Infants in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

**CACFP sponsor:** A public or private nonprofit organization that is entirely responsible for the administration of the CACFP in one or more day care homes, child care centers, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, or adult day care centers. In some situations, for-profit institutions may also be eligible to participate in the CACFP. For more information, see Section 226.2 of the CACFP regulations ([7 CFR 226](#)).

**cereal grains:** The seeds that come from grasses. Cereal grains can be whole grain (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rolled wheat, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and wheat berries) or enriched, such as cornmeal, corn grits, and farina.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program providing nutritious meals and snacks to children in child care centers, family day care homes, and emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to children participating in eligible at-risk afterschool care programs. The CACFP also provides meals and snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. For more information, visit the USDA’s [CACFP](#) webpage and the CSDE’s [CACFP](#) webpage.

**Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the USDA’s meal patterns, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. The CN label will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, see “Child Nutrition CN Labels” in section 2, the CSDE’s handout, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP*, and the USDA’s [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling](#) webpage.

**Child Nutrition Programs:** The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CCCNS):** The CSDE’s recommended guidelines for the nutritional content of all foods and beverages served throughout the child care environment, including CACFP meals and snacks, celebrations and any other activities where foods and beverages are provided by the child care program or families. The CCCNS reflects current nutrition science and national health recommendations, and promotes whole or minimally processed nutrient-rich foods that are low in fat, added sugars, and sodium. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

**creditable food:** A food or beverage that counts toward the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

**cycle menu:** A series of menus planned for a specific period of time, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help CACFP facilities to increase variety, control food cost, and save time. For more information, see “[Using cycle menus](#)” in section 2.

**deep-fat frying:** Cooking by submerging food in hot oil or other fat. The USDA final rule for the CACFP meal patterns prohibits deep-fat frying foods on site.

**Dietary Guidelines for Americans:** A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines* every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education and information programs. For more information, visit the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) webpage.

**disability:** A condition in which a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

## Glossary

**edible portion:** The portion of a food that can actually be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

**endosperm:** The soft, white inside portion of the whole-grain kernel. The endosperm contains starch, protein, and small amounts of B vitamins.

**enriched grains:** Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B<sub>1</sub>), riboflavin (B<sub>2</sub>), niacin (B<sub>3</sub>), folic acid, and iron. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP*.

**enrichment:** Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, see “enriched grains” in this section.

**family-style meal service:** A method of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. For more information, see “[Family-style Meal Service](#)” in section 4.

**fluid milk substitutes:** Nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) that can be used as a substitute for fluid milk in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For reimbursable meals and snacks, nondairy beverages served to children without disabilities must comply with the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes. For more information, see “[USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*.

**food components:** The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates. For information on the individual food components, see [section 3](#) and visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

**food-based menu planning:** A type of menu planning for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs that uses a meal pattern with specific food components in certain amounts based on specific age/grade groups. For more information, see “food components” in this section and the meal patterns in section 1.

**fortification:** Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (e.g., fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body’s absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., an “energy” bar made from processed flour that is fortified with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

**fruits component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Up to half of the weekly fruit offerings may be in the form of full-strength juice. For more information, see “[Fruits Component](#)” in section 3.

**full component:** The daily quantity designated by the menu planner (no less than the established minimum) to meet the required weekly ranges.

**full serving:** See “full component” in this section.

**full-strength fruit or vegetable juice:** An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” **Note:** The CACFP meal patterns allow pasteurized full-strength juice to credit as the vegetables or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. For more information, see “[Juice limit](#)” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Juice in the CACFP*.

**germ:** The sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel that contains B vitamins, vitamin E, trace minerals, healthy fats, antioxidants, and phytochemicals. Germ is not a whole grain, but is a creditable grain in the CACFP meal patterns.

**grains component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. To credit as the grains component, all foods be whole grain-rich or enriched. Breakfast cereals must be whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified. For more information, see “[Grains Component](#)” in section 3.

**hominy:** A traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures that is commonly served as a vegetable or milled grain product, e.g., hominy grits. Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). This process removes the hull and germ, causes the corn to puff up to about double its normal size, and increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as calcium and niacin. For crediting information, see [“Crediting Hominy as Vegetables”](#) and [“Crediting Hominy as Grains”](#) in section 3.

**juice drink:** A product resembling juice that contains full-strength juice along with added water and possibly other ingredients, such as sweeteners, spices, or flavorings. Juice drinks do not credit toward the meal pattern requirements.

**lactose:** The naturally occurring sugar found in milk. Lactose contains glucose and galactose. For more information, see [“simple carbohydrates \(sugars\) in this section.](#)

**main dish:** The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. Examples of main dish items include pizza, chicken stir-fry, and chef’s salad with ham, hard-boiled egg, and cheese.

**masa harina:** Corn flour used for making corn products such as tortillas, tortilla chips, and tamales. Masa harina is nixtamalized and credits as a whole grain. For more information, see [“Crediting Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal”](#) in section 3.

**meal pattern:** The required food components and minimum servings that CACFP facilities must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. For more information, see the CACFP breakfast, lunch and supper, and snack meal patterns in section 1.

**meal:** A grain made by coarsely grinding corn, oats, wheat, or other grains. Meal credits toward the USDA’s meal patterns only if it is whole grain, enriched, or fortified.

**meals:** See [“reimbursable meals”](#) in this section.

**meat alternates:** Foods that provide similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut and coconut), tofu and other soy products containing at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume), tempeh, and yogurt (plain or flavored) containing no more than 23 grams of sugars per 6 ounces. For more information, see [“Meat/Meat Alternates Component”](#) in section 3.



**meat/meat alternates component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans and peas (legumes) nuts, and seeds. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component](#)” in section 3.

**medical statement:** A document that identifies the specific medical conditions and appropriate dietary accommodations for children with special dietary needs. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*, and the CSDE’s [Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

**menu item:** Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items.

**menu of record:** The official menu that documents exactly what is served each day in the CACFP facility. This provides a record of the meal pattern components and portion sizes served to all enrolled children and infants, and provides documentation for the number of CACFP meals claimed for reimbursement.

**MyPlate:** Released in June 2011, MyPlate is the USDA’s food guidance system to translate the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* into a healthy eating plan. MyPlate emphasizes consuming more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. For more information, visit the USDA’s [Choose MyPlate](#) website.

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program](#) webpage.

**natural cheese:** Cheese that is produced directly from milk, such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheeses do not include pasteurized process cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, or pasteurized process cheese products.

**nixtamalization:** A process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients and provides a nutritional profile similar to whole-grain corn. Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Nixtamalized corn credits as a whole grain. For more information, see “[Crediting Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal](#)” in section 3.

**noncreditable foods:** Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods and beverages are either in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverage that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a food component), or they do not fit into one of the meal pattern components. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

**noncreditable grains:** Grain ingredients and products that do not contribute toward the grains component of the CACFP meal patterns. Examples include fiber and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For a list of noncreditable grains, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

**nonnutritive sweeteners:** Ingredients with no calories used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners can be 200 to 600 times sweeter than sugar. They include artificial sweeteners such as acesulfame-potassium, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose and “natural” sweeteners such as stevia (e.g., Rebiana, Rebaudioside A, Truvia, PureVia, and SweetLeaf). For a list of artificial sweeteners, see “artificial sweeteners” in this section.

**nutrient-dense foods:** Foods and beverages that provide vitamins, minerals, and other substances that contribute to adequate nutrient intakes or may have positive health effects, and contain little or no solid fats, added sugars, refined starches, or sodium. Ideally, these foods and beverages are also in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. Examples include all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry (when prepared with little or no added solid fats, sugars, refined starches, and sodium). The term “nutrient dense” indicates the nutrients and other beneficial substances in a food have not been “diluted” by the addition of calories from added solid fats, sugars, or refined starches, or by the solid fats naturally present in the food.

**nutrient-rich foods:** See “nutrient-dense foods” in this section.

**nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes:** The nutrition requirements for nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk and meet the following nutrients based on a 1-cup serving (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 500 international units (IU) of vitamin A; 100 IU of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, see “USDA’s Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes” in section 3 and the CSDE’s handout, *Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP*.

**offer versus serve (OVS):** An optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows children to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed in the CACFP, except for at-risk afterschool programs and CACFP facilities that serve meals prepared by a school food authority (SFA) participating in the National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP). OVS is not allowed at snack. For more information, see “[Offer versus Serve](#)” in section 4.

**ounce equivalent:** A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns (effective October 1, 2021) that takes into account dry versus cooked grains. An ounce equivalent of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as pretzels, bread sticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as muffins and pancakes). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP](#).

**point-of-service (POS) meal count:** The point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child.

**potable water:** Water that is safe for human consumption.

**pre-fried foods:** Commercially prepared foods such as meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables that are fried by the manufacturer during preparation. These foods are usually cooked by the food service operation in the oven or microwave. Pre-fried foods include refrigerated or frozen items that are breaded or battered, most frozen potato products, and most frozen products described as “crispy” or “crunchy.” Examples include chicken nuggets, chicken patties, fish sticks, french fries, tater tots, hash browns, and onion rings.

**primary grain ingredient:** The greatest grain ingredient by weight. For commercial grain foods, this is the first ingredient (excluding water) listed in the product’s ingredients statement. For commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion, this is the first grain ingredient (excluding water) listed in the product’s ingredients statement. For commercial combination foods that contain a grain portion listed separately, this is the first ingredient (excluding water) listed in the grain portion of the product’s ingredients statement. For more information, see “[Grains Component](#)” section 3.

**product fact sheet:** See “product specification sheet” in this section.

**product formulation statement (PFS):** An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal pattern requirements, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The CACFP facility must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals. For more information, see “[Product Formulation Statements](#)” in section 2 and the CSDE’s handouts, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*.

**product specification sheet:** Manufacturer sales literature that provides various information about the company’s products. These materials do not provide the specific crediting information that is required on a product formulation statement, and cannot be used to determine a product’s contribution toward the USDA meal pattern components.

**production record:** A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare CACFP meals and snacks. Production records must demonstrate how meals contribute to the required food components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. Production records are only required for CACFP child care centers that follow the NSLP meal pattern. However, the CSDE encourages all CACFP facilities to use production records because they provide appropriate documentation that meals and snacks meet the CACFP meal patterns. For more information, see “[Production Records](#)” in section 2.

**recognizable food item:** A food that is visible in the offered meal or snack, and allows students to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the CACFP meal patterns. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies and vegetable flours in pasta. For more information, see “[Crediting Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies](#),” “[Crediting Legume Flour Pasta Products as Meat/Meat Alternates](#)” and “[Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flours](#)” in section 3.

**recognized medical authority:** A state-licensed health care professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law and is recognized by the State Department of Public Health (DPH). In Connecticut, recognized medical authorities include physicians, physician assistants, doctors of osteopathy, and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs. For more information, see the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in CACFP Child Care Programs*.

**refined grains:** Grains that have been processed to remove the bran and germ, making the product less nutritious than whole grains. Refined grains may or may not be enriched. For more information, see “enriched grains” in this section.

**reimbursable meals:** Meals and snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the USDA regulations, and are eligible for USDA funds.

**residential child care institution (RCCI):** RCCIs include, but are not limited to homes for the mentally, emotionally or physically impaired, and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities for chronically ill children; and juvenile detention centers. A long-term care facility is a hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

**School Breakfast Program (SBP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Breakfast Program](#) webpage.

**school food authority (SFA):** The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and that has the legal authority to operate the school meals programs in those schools.

**serving size or portion:** The weight, measure, or number of pieces or slices of a food or beverage. For meals to be reimbursable, CACFP facilities must provide the minimum servings specified in the CACFP meal patterns.

**simple carbohydrates (sugars):** Carbohydrates consisting of one sugar (e.g., fructose and galactose) or two sugars (e.g., lactose, maltose, and sucrose). Sugars can be naturally present in foods (such as the fructose in fruit or the lactose in milk) or added to foods (such as sucrose or table sugar). Foods that naturally contain simple carbohydrates (such as fruits, milk, and milk products, and some vegetables) also contain vitamins and minerals. Foods that contain large amounts of added sugars (such as cookies, candy, pastries, sweetened baked goods, regular soft drinks, and other sweetened drinks) provide calories with few, if any, nutrients. For more information, see “added sugars” in this section.

**standard of identity:** The mandatory government requirements that determine what a food product (like whole-wheat bread) must contain or may contain to be marketed under a certain name in interstate commerce. These standards protect consumers by ensuring that a label accurately reflects what is inside. For example, mayonnaise is not an imitation spread, and ice cream is not a similar, but different, frozen dessert. The USDA develops standards for meat and poultry products. The FDA develops standards for other food products.

**standardized recipe:** A recipe that a given food service operation has tested and adapted for use. This recipe produces 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. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, see “Standardized Recipes” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, [Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP](#).

**sucrose:** Another name for table sugar. Sucrose contains glucose and fructose. For more information, see “simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

**sugar alcohols (polyols):** A type of carbohydrate used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Sugar alcohols are incompletely absorbed and metabolized by the body, and contribute fewer calories than most sugars. They also perform other functions such as adding bulk and texture to foods. Common sugar alcohols include sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, maltitol syrup, lactitol, erythritol, isomalt, and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH). Products with sugar alcohols are often labeled “sugar free.” Large amounts of sugar alcohols may cause bloating, gas, or diarrhea. For more information, see “nonnutritive sweeteners” in this section.

**sugars:** See “added sugars” and “simple carbohydrates” in this section.

**supplements:** Reimbursable snacks served in the CACFP.

**surimi:** Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood product usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, see “[Crediting Surimi](#)” in section 3.

**tempeh:** A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. For more information, see “[Crediting Tempeh](#)” in section 3.



**USDA Foods:** Foods available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE Food Distribution Program. For more information, visit the USDA's [Food Distribution Programs](#) webpage, and the CSDE's [Food Distribution Program](#) webpage.

**vegetables component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. For more information, see "[Vegetables Component](#)" in section 3.

**wheat bread:** Bread that often has wheat flour or enriched wheat flour (not whole-wheat flour) as an ingredient. Wheat bread is not whole grain unless it is labeled "whole-wheat bread." Wheat bread is low in fiber unless the manufacturer has added fiber.

**whole foods:** Foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, and sodium.

**whole fruits and vegetables:** Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, or sodium.

**whole grain-rich (WFR):** Foods that contain 100 percent whole grain or contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any other grain ingredients are enriched. For more information, see "[Part B: WGR Requirement](#)" in section 3, and the CSDE's handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP*.

**whole grains:** Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP*.

**whole-grain flour:** Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Flour or meal that does not contain all parts of the grain is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour.

**whole-wheat bread:** Bread that contains the whole grain, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Whole-wheat flour will be listed as the first grain ingredient.









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