

Crediting Soup in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

This guidance applies to meals for preschoolers (ages 1-4) and grades K-12 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP.



Soups Made On Site

Soups made on site by the school food authority (SFA) credit based on the amount of the meal pattern components (e.g., vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates) contained in one serving of the recipe. SFAs must document this information with a standardized recipe based on the yields in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). One serving of the recipe must contain at least the minimum creditable amount of a component to credit toward the meal patterns, e.g., 1/8 cup of vegetables, 1/4 ounce equivalent of grains, and 1/4 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternates. If the amount in a serving of soup is less than the full serving of a component, the menu must include additional foods from that component to meet the full serving for each grade group.



For information on standardized recipes, see section 2 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, section 2 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*, chapter 4 of the USDA's *Menu Planner for School Meals: School Year 2018-2019*, and the CSDE's *Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs*.

Crediting Commercial Soups as the Vegetables Component

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-12 requires weekly servings of five vegetable subgroups, including dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), starchy, and "other." The NSLP meal pattern for preschoolers requires a serving of the vegetables component, but does not require the vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends that preschool meals contain at least one weekly serving of each of the five vegetable subgroups. SFAs may serve the vegetables component as one of the two required snack components in the ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers. For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP*.

Only certain types of commercial vegetable soups credit as the vegetables component in the USDA's meal patterns. A 1-cup serving of lentil, pea, or bean soup credits as 1/2 cup of vegetables (legumes subgroup). A 1-cup serving of other allowable commercial vegetable soups credits as 1/4 cup of "additional" vegetables. Commercial beef barley, chicken or turkey noodle, and chicken or turkey rice soups do not credit in the USDA's meal patterns.

Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP

Table 1 lists commercial vegetable soups that credit in school nutrition programs.

Table 1. Creditable commercial soups	
“Additional” vegetables ¹	Legumes ²
Minestrone soup Tomato soup Tomato soup with other basic components such as rice Vegetable soup (contains only vegetables) Vegetable soup with other basic components such as meat or poultry	Lentil soup Pea soup, e.g., split pea Bean soup, e.g., black bean, mixed bean
<p>¹ The FBG indicates that 1 cup of commercial vegetable soup credits as ¼ cup of “additional” vegetables. Vegetable soup cannot credit toward any other subgroup unless the manufacturer’s product formulation statement (PFS) documents the amount of each vegetable subgroup per serving.</p> <p>² The FBG indicates that 1 cup of commercial lentil, pea, or bean soup credits as ½ cup of the beans/peas (legumes) subgroup.</p>	

To credit a commercial soup product differently from the yields listed in the FBG, the SFA must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating the specific contribution of all vegetables toward the vegetable subgroups. The PFS must provide the information specified in the USDA’s *Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits*.

SFAs cannot use any other type of manufacturer product information, such as sales literature or product specification sheets, to document compliance with the USDA’s meal pattern requirements for the vegetable subgroups in the NSLP meal pattern for grades K-12. These materials do not provide the specific crediting information that is required on a PFS. Table 2 shows an example of unacceptable product information for crediting commercial soups.

Table 2. Sample unacceptable product information for commercial soups							
Product UPC CODE	Description	Vegetable subgroup contribution (cups)					Total
		Dark green	Red/orange	Beans/peas (legumes)	Starchy	Other	
0-00000-00000-0	Tomato soup, canned		½				½
0-00000-00001-0	Vegetable soup, canned		⅛		⅛		¼
0-00000-00002-0	Minestrone soup, canned		¼			⅛	¾

Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP

SFAs cannot use this type of product information because it is not a PFS, and does not provide the specific contribution of all vegetables toward the vegetable subgroups. For example, the company information indicates that tomato soup provides ½ cup of the red/orange vegetable subgroup. Based on the FBG, 1 cup of commercial tomato soup credits as ¼ cup of “additional” vegetables. Tomato soup cannot credit as the red/orange subgroup unless the manufacturer supplies a PFS with the appropriate crediting information.

Note: The preschool meal patterns do not require vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least one serving of each vegetable subgroup per week.

Portion Sizes

Menu planners must ensure that a serving of soup is sufficient to provide the required amount of the vegetables component. A 1-cup serving is the minimum amount for lentil, pea, or bean soup to credit as ½ cup of the legumes subgroup. A 1-cup serving is the minimum amount for other allowable commercial vegetable soups to credit as ¼ cup of “additional” vegetables.

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, SFAs 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 (½ cup) of soup.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/AcceptDoc.pdf>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASPHandbook.pdf>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CNlabel.pdf>

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP

Menu Planner for School Meals: School Year 2018-2019 (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/MPGpreschool.pdf>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

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

Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables and Fruits (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Vegetables_Subgroups_Fruits.pdf

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/PFS.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 Grains: Ounce Equivalents (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Sample_oz_eq.pdf

Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplevegetables.pdf>

Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/stdrecipeschools.doc>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/manufacturePFStipsheet.pdf>

Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/VegSubgroup.pdf>

Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP



For more information, review the CSDE's guides, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*, and *Afterschool Snack Program Handbook*, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditSoup.pdf>.

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