

Sample Cold Breakfast Menus for Centers and Family Day Care Homes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This document provides sample cold breakfast menus for ages 3-5 with menu planning considerations for child care centers, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and family day care homes that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The specified servings meet or exceed the requirements of the [CACFP meal patterns for children](#) and are indicated in parentheses after each menu item. Servings may be adjusted for other ages.

The CACFP breakfast meal pattern requires the minimum serving of three meal components, including $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables, fruits, or both; and 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains. Meats/meat alternates may substitute for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week.

Each meal component must provide at least the minimum meal pattern serving. CACFP menus may include additional foods or larger servings beyond the minimum requirements. Serve nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to children's nutrition needs.

For guidance on the CACFP meal patterns for children, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Guide to Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children and Crediting Requirements](#). For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and refer to the CSDE's [Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns](#).

Menu Planning Considerations

Consider the meal pattern requirements and recommendations below when planning CACFP menus. For guidance on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Meats/meat alternates (MMA) component

- The serving size of MMA refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Commercial processed products that contain added ingredients (such as combination entrees, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to document crediting information. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

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- Nut and seed butters credit by volume (tablespoons) not weight. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). Effective October 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the limit for yogurt to no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).
- The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.

For more information, visit the "[Meats and Meat Alternates](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage

Fruits component and vegetables component

- Before serving juice at breakfast, make sure that the other daily meals and snacks do not contain juice. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)). The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component.
- Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of raw leafy greens credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component.

For more information, visit the "[Fruits](#)" section and the "[Vegetables](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage

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Grains component

- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR). The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. To meet the CACFP WGR criteria, foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and refer to "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- To credit as the required oz eq, the serving of grain products and recipes must provide either: 1) the required serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)); or 2) the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)). For more information, refer to "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.
- Grain-based desserts do not credit. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. Sweet crackers such as graham crackers and animal crackers are not grain-based desserts and may credit as the grains component. However, the CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, visit the USDA's [Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) webpage
- Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. Effective October 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the limit for breakfast cereals to no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

For more information, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage.

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Milk component

- The CACFP meal patterns for ages 3-5 require unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk.

For more information, visit the “Milk” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage

Noncreditable foods

Noncreditable foods cannot be served in place of the required meal components. Examples of noncreditable foods include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

Crediting Documentation

CACFP facilities must be able to document that CSCFP menus provide the minimum portion of each required meal component. Use the USDA’s [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the meal pattern requirements.

- Commercial processed products require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information unless they are listed in the FBG. CACFP sponsors must verify PFS forms for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).
- Foods made from scratch must have a recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. Standardized recipes are encouraged to ensure accurate crediting information. For more information, refer to the “[Standardized Recipes](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Additional guidance on meal pattern documentation is available on the CSDE’s [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program](#) webpage.

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Abbreviations for Sample Menus

The abbreviations used in the CACFP sample menus are indicated below.

Meal components

M = Milk component

FV = Vegetables component

G = Grains component

WGR = Whole grain-rich

MMA = Meats/meat alternates substituted for the grains component

Menu items not credited

A = Additional creditable food (credits but does not provide full serving)

O = Other food (noncreditable)

Measurements

c = cup

Tbsp = tablespoon

tsp = teaspoon

oz = ounce

oz eq = ounce equivalent

Note: The CSDE's sample menus are intended for informational purposes and do not guarantee compliance with the CACFP meal patterns for children. Crediting information for local menus will vary depending on the types of foods purchased by the CACFP facility and the recipes and preparation techniques used. CACFP facilities are responsible for ensuring that their menus meet the CACFP meal patterns for children and maintaining appropriate crediting documentation on file (refer to "[Crediting Documentation](#)" above).

Sample Cold Breakfast Menus for Centers and Family Day Care Homes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Week 1

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
G ½ oz eq	Low-fat yogurt (¼ c) MMA	Cheese roll-up: Whole-wheat tortilla (½ oz) WGR	Whole-grain bagel (½ oz) WGR	Whole-grain puffed cereal (¾ c) WGR	Enriched blueberry muffin (1 oz)
FV ½ cup	Mixed berries (½ c)	Pineapple chunks (½ c)	Sliced green grapes (½ c)	Banana slices (½ c)	Diced apricots (½ c)
A		Low-fat cheese (¼ oz)	Peanut butter (½ Tbsp)		
O			Jelly (1 tsp)		

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Week 2

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
G ½ oz eq	Low-fat cottage cheese (⅛ c) MMA	Whole-grain cereal rounds (½ c) WGR	Yogurt-fruit parfait: Vanilla Greek yogurt (¼ c) MMA	Enriched banana bread (1 oz)	Whole-wheat roll (½ oz) WGR
FV ½ cup	Pineapple tidbits in juice (½ c)	Blueberries (½ c)	Sliced strawberries (¼ c) and peaches (¼ c)	Applesauce (½ c)	Orange slices (½ c)
A			Whole-grain granola (1 Tbsp)	Almond butter (½ Tbsp)	
O					Margarine (1 tsp) or jelly (1 tsp)

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Week 3

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
G ½ oz eq	Hard-boiled egg (½ large) MMA	Cold quinoa fruit salad: Cooked quinoa (¼ c) WGR	Whole-wheat roll (½ oz) WGR	Enriched buttermilk biscuit (½ oz)	Whole-grain granola cereal (⅛ c) WGR
FV ½ cup	Cantaloupe cubes (½ c)	Sliced grapes, bananas, peaches, strawberries (½ c)	Diced fresh pears (½ c)	Clementine (½ c)	Sliced cherries (½ c)
A			Low-fat cheese (¼ oz)	Sliced ham (¼ oz)	Low-fat yogurt (¼ c)
O		Orange yogurt sauce (1 Tbsp)			

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Week 4

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
G ½ oz eq	Enriched corn muffin (1 oz) WGR	Cheddar cheese (½ oz) MMA	Cold pancake roll-up: Whole-grain pancake (1 oz) WGR	Whole-grain puffed cereal (¾ c) WGR	Whole-wheat English muffin (½ oz) WGR
FV ½ cup	Banana slices (½ c)	Apple slices (½ c)	Diced strawberries (½ c)	Honeydew melon (½ c)	Sliced peaches (½ c)
A					
O			Syrup (1 tsp)		Sunflower butter (1 tsp)

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Week 5

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M ¾ cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (¾ c)
G ½ oz eq	Whole-grain flaked cereal (½ c) WGR	Cinnamon cottage cheese (⅛ c) MMA	Peach-mango smoothie: low-fat yogurt (¼ c) MMA	Apple roll-up: Whole-grain tortilla (½ oz) WGR	Enriched pumpkin-cranberry bread (1 oz)
FV ½ cup	Orange slices (½ c)	Red grapes (½ c)	Pureed peaches (¼ c) and mangos (¼ c)	Diced apples (½ c)	Cantaloupe cubes (½ c)
A				Peanut butter (½ Tbsp)	
O					

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Resources

Breakfast (“Menu Planning” section of CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/menu-planning#Breakfast>

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/grains>

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp.pdf

Guide to Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children and Crediting Requirements (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guide_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs>

Menu Planning Basics: A Guide for CACFP Operators in Child Care (Institute of Child Nutrition):

<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menu-planning-basics-cacfp>

Menu Planning for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE’s Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/menu-planning>

Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage)

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/recipes-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage or contact the [CACFP staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/menu_cacfp_breakfast_cold.pdf.

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