

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program

This guidance applies only to preschoolers (ages 1-4) 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. For additional guidance on preschool meals, see the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.



Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that cannot credit in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. They include foods and beverages in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverages that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a meal pattern component) and foods and beverages that do not fit into one of the meal pattern components. For information on the preschool meal patterns, see the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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. The chart on page 2 lists additional examples of noncreditable foods for preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and ASP. This list is not all-inclusive.

School food authorities (SFAs) 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.

Some noncreditable foods (such as candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks) cannot be sold in school nutrition programs due to federal or state requirements. For more information, see the CSDE’s webpages, [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) and [Beverage Requirements](#).

To ensure that preschool meals and ASP snacks meet children’s nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages SFAs to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugar, 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.



Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP ¹

The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends that preschool 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).

For information on crediting foods in preschool meals and ASP snacks, review the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP* and *Afterschool Snack Program Handbook*, and visit the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's *Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

Examples of noncreditable foods for preschoolers (ages 1-4) ¹

Almond milk ²	Fruit drink, fruit beverage, powdered fruit drink mix ⁶
Bacon and bacon bits	Fruit leathers (100 percent fruit)
Banana chips	Fruit punch (not 100 percent juice) ⁶
Bread products that are not whole grain or enriched ³	Fruit snacks, e.g., fruit roll-ups, wrinkles, twists
Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) with more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce ⁴	Gelatin, regular and sugar free
Brownies ⁵	Grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies ⁵
Butter	Grains that are not whole or enriched ³
Cake ⁵	Granola bars ⁵
Candy ⁶	Honey
Candy-coated popcorn ⁶	Hot chocolate ⁵
Chocolate milk-based drinks, e.g., Yoo-Hoo ⁶	Ice cream
Cereal bars ⁵	Ice cream novelties
Cinnamon buns or rolls ⁵	Ice milk
Coffee (regular, decaffeinated, and iced) ⁶	Iced coffee ⁶
Condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, relish, and barbecue sauce	Iced tea ⁶
Cookies ⁵ , except for animal crackers and graham crackers	Jam and jelly
Cranberry cocktail drink ⁶	Lemonade ⁶
Cream, half and half	Limeade ⁶
Cream cheese	Maple syrup
Cream soups, canned, e.g., cream of mushroom, cream of celery, and cream of broccoli	Margarine
Drinkable or squeezable yogurt ⁷	Marshmallows
Eggnog ⁶	Mayonnaise
Egg whites	Mustard
Frozen yogurt ⁷	Milk for age 1: Plain or flavored reduced fat (2%), plain or flavored low-fat (1%), and plain or flavored fat-free

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP

Examples of noncreditable foods for preschoolers (ages 1-4) ¹, *continued*

Milk for ages 2-5: Plain or flavored whole, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%), and flavored low-fat (1%)	Sour cream
Nondairy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ²	Soy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ²
Pastries ⁵	Sports drinks, regular and diet ⁶
Pie ⁵	Spreadable fruit
Popsicles (not 100 percent juice)	Sweet rolls ⁵
Potato chips	Syrup
Pudding	Tea, regular, herbal, and iced ⁶
Pudding pops	Toaster pastries ⁵
Rice milk ²	Tofu with less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or 1/4 cup (volume) ⁸
Salad dressings	Water ⁹
Scones, sweet, e.g., blueberry, raisin, or orange cranberry ⁵	Yogurt or soy yogurt in commercial smoothies ⁷
Sherbet	Yogurt or soy yogurt with more than more than 3.83 grams of total sugars per ounce ⁷
Soda, regular and diet ⁶	
Soups, non-vegetable, canned, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice	

- ¹ Snack foods sold a la carte must meet the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) (which apply to public school districts that participate in the healthy food option of [Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\)](#)) or the USDA's [Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards (which apply to public school districts that do not participate in the healthy food option of HFC, and to private schools and residential child care institutions).
- ² Milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).
- ³ For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, [How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP](#) and [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP](#).
- ⁴ For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP](#).
- ⁵ These items are grain-based desserts and cannot credit in the preschool meal patterns. For more information, see the USDA's handout, [Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP](#).
- ⁶ These competitive foods and beverages cannot be sold in the USDA's school nutrition programs due to federal or state requirements. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Competitive Foods](#) webpage and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.
- ⁷ For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP](#).

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP

Examples of noncreditable foods for preschoolers (ages 1-4) ¹, *continued*

⁸ For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP*.

⁹ The [Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act](#) requires that schools make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service (including the ASP). However, SFAs cannot promote or offer water or any other beverage as an alternative selection to fluid milk throughout the food service area. For more information, see [USDA Memo SP 49-2016 CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#) and [USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs](#).

Resources

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

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

Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Preschoolers (CSDE):

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

Calculation Methods for Grain Servings for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

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

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):

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

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):

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

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12 in the ASP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASPComparisonPreschoolK12.pdf>

Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Competitive-Foods>

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards>

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<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

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

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

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

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP

Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

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

Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE): [https://portal.ct.gov/-](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedGrains.pdf)

[/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedGrains.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedGrains.pdf)

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

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

Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/CompetitiveFoodsGuideHFC.pdf>

Guide to Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/CompetitiveFoodsGuideNonHFC.pdf>

Guide to Competitive Foods in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/CompetitiveFoodsGuidePrivateRCCI.pdf>

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification>

How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

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

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/List-of-Acceptable-Foods-and-Beverages>

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

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

Menu Planning Guidance for Preschoolers in the ASP (CSDE):

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

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

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

USDA Final Rule (81 FR 24347): CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516>

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP

USDA Final Rule Corrections (81 FR 75671): Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010:

<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>

USDA Memo SP 08-2019, CACFP 02-2019 and SFSP 02-2019: Update of Food Crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/update-food-crediting-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2018/SP19-2018s.pdf>

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>

Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

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

Noncreditable Foods for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP



For more information, review the CSDE's guide, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*, and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage, 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/NoncredPreschool.pdf>.

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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