

MEAL PATTERN FOR CHILDREN – Ages 1 through 12 Years, 13 through 18

Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Illinois State Board of Education
Nutrition Department
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Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
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<h2>Breakfast</h2> <p>(Select all three components for a reimbursable meal)</p>				
Meal Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1 - 2	Ages 3 - 5	Ages 6 - 12 ²	Ages 13-18 ²
Fluid Milk ³	4 fluid ounces ³	6 fluid ounces ⁴	8 fluid ounces ⁵	8 fluid ounces
Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both ⁷	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains ⁸	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

¹ Must serve all three components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk after-school care and adult day care centers.

² At-risk after-school programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must be unflavored whole milk for children age 1.

⁴ Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁵ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁶ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to adults. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less. Yogurt may be offered in the place of milk once per day for adults. Yogurt may count as either a fluid milk substitute or as a meat alternate, but not both, in the same meal. Six ounces (by weight) or ¾ cup (by volume) of yogurt is the equivalent of 8 ounces of fluid milk. Through Sept. 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By Oct. 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

⁷ Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day.

⁸ Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement. Meats/meat alternates may be offered in place of the entire grains requirement, up to 3 times per week at breakfast. One ounce equivalent of meats/meat alternates credits equal to one ounce equivalent of grains. Through Sept. 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By Oct. 1, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Information on crediting grain items and meats/meat alternates may be found in FNS guidance

Lunch and Supper

(Select all five components for a reimbursable meal)

Food Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1 - 2	Ages 3 - 5	Ages 6 - 12	Ages 13-18 ²
Fluid Milk	4 fluid ounces ³	6 fluid ounces ⁴	8 fluid ounces ⁵	8 fluid ounces ⁵
Meat/meat alternates⁷	1 ounce equivalent	1 ½ ounce equivalent	2 ounce equivalent	2 ounce equivalent
Vegetables⁸	1/8 cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits⁸	1/8 cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Grains (oz eq)⁹	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

¹ Must serve all five components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk afterschool care and adult day care centers.

² At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must serve unflavored whole milk to children age 1.

⁴ Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁵ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁶ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to adults. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less. Yogurt may be offered in place of milk once per day for adults. Yogurt may count as either a fluid milk substitute or as a meat alternate, but not both, in the same meal. Six ounces (by weight) or ¾ cup (by volume) of yogurt is the equivalent of 8 ounces of fluid milk. A serving of fluid milk is optional for suppers served to adult participants.

⁷ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226. Through Sept. 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By Oct. 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). Information on crediting meats/meat alternates may be found in FNS guidance.

⁸ Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day. A vegetable may be offered to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.

⁹ Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement. Through Sept. 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By Oct. 1, 2025, breakfast cereal must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Information on crediting grain items may be found in FNS guidance.

Snack

(Select two of the five components for a reimbursable meal)

Food Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1 - 2	Ages 3 - 5	Ages 6 - 12	Ages 13-18 ²
Fluid Milk	4 fluid ounces ³	4 fluid ounces ⁴	8 fluid ounces ⁵	8 fluid ounces ⁵
Meat/meat alternates⁷	½ ounce equivalent	½ ounce equivalent	1 ounce equivalent	1 ounce equivalent
Vegetables⁸	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Fruits⁸	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Grains (oz eq)⁹	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

¹ Must serve two of the five components for a reimbursable snack. Milk and juice may not be served as the only two items in a reimbursable snack.

² At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must serve unflavored whole milk to children age 1.

⁴ Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁵ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁶ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to adults. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less. Yogurt may be offered in place of milk once per day for adults. Yogurt may count as either a fluid milk substitute or as a meat alternate, but not both, in the same meal. Six ounces (by weight) or ¾ cup (by volume) of yogurt is the equivalent of 8 ounces of fluid milk. A serving of fluid milk is optional for suppers served to adult participants.

⁷ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226. Through Sept. 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By Oct. 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). Information on crediting meats/meat alternates may be found in FNS guidance.

⁸ Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day. A vegetable may be offered to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.

⁹ Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement. Through Sept. 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By Oct. 1, 2025, breakfast cereal must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Information on crediting grain items may be found in FNS guidance.

GRAIN/BREAD REQUIREMENTS

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING ACCEPTABLE GRAINS/BREADS:

The item must be enriched or whole-grain or made from enriched or whole-grain, meal or flour. If it is a cereal, the product must be enriched, whole-grain, or fortified.

WHAT IS WHOLE GRAIN-RICH (WGR)?

Whole grain-rich foods contain 100% whole grains, or at least 50% whole grains, and the remaining grains are enriched.

IDENTIFYING WHOLE GRAINS (This is not an all-inclusive list):

Amaranth, brown rice, wild rice, buckwheat, bulgur (cracked wheat), bromated whole wheat flour, crushed wheat, graham flour, millet, oatmeal or rolled oats, quinoa, triticale, whole grain barley, whole rye, whole grain corn, whole cornmeal, whole grain sorghum, whole grain triticale, whole durum wheat, whole-wheat.

For more info on identifying whole grains, visit: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/cacfp-worksheet-identifying-wgrfoods-en-2021.pdf>

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING A GRAIN AS WHOLE GRAIN:

1. The label says 100% whole grain or 100% whole wheat.
2. The package includes one of the following health claims:
 - “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 some cancers.”
 - 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.”
3. Use the ingredient list:
 - A whole grain is listed as the first ingredient or second after water.
4. In mixed dishes (i.e. pizza, burrito, pasta entrée), a whole grain is the first grain ingredient listed in the ingredients, or multiple whole grains are the primary grain ingredient by weight.

If the food includes many different types of grains, proper documentation from the manufacturer or a standardized recipe is required.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING MINIMUM-SERVING SIZES IN RECIPES:

The Grains/Breads Chart lists equivalent, minimum, serving sizes for a wide variety of grain/bread products. In lieu of using the minimum serving sizes listed in the chart, the contribution of a recipe may be calculated to determine the number of grains/breads servings the recipe provides. The crediting of a food item as a grains/breads serving is determined by the total amount of enriched or whole-grain meal and/or flour in the recipe divided by the number of servings the recipe yields. The amount of enriched or whole-grain meal and/or flour contained in each serving is then divided by 16 grams.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING MINIMUM-SERVING SIZES IN GRAINS/BREADS CHART:

The following Grains/Breads Chart has been divided into nine groups. The required weight for each group is based on the key nutrients in one slice of bread (25 grams or 0.9 ounce) or an equal amount (16 grams) of enriched or whole-grain meal and/or flour. Within each group, all bread items have approximately the same nutrient and grain content in each serving. Items with fillings, toppings, etc. require larger serving sizes to meet the minimum grain content.

RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENT:

Whole grain (WG) or whole grain-rich (WGR) must be written on menus next to the grain item. If you do not serve a WGR item on a given day, the least reimbursable meal or snack serving a grain must not be claimed.

Proper documentation, such as a Child Nutrition (CN) label or a product formulation statement or an ingredient panel or a standardized recipe, must be on file to demonstrate that whole grains are the primary ingredient by weight.

EXHIBIT A: GRAIN REQUIREMENT FOR CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS^{1,2}

Color Key: Footnote 5 = Blue, Footnote 3 or 4 = Red

Some of the following foods, or their accompaniments, may contain more sugar, salt, and/or fat than others. This should be a consideration when deciding how often to serve them.

GROUP A	Ounce Equivalent (Oz Eq) for Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breading-Type Coating Bread Sticks (<i>hard</i>) Chow Mein Noodles Savory Crackers (<i>saltines and snack crackers</i>) Croutons Pretzels, (<i>hard</i>) Stuffing, (<i>dry</i>) Note: weights apply to bread in stuffing. 	1 oz eq = 22 gm or 0.8 oz ¾ oz eq = 17 gm or 0.6 oz ½ oz eq = 11 gm or 0.4 oz ¼ oz eq = 6 gm or 0.2 oz
GROUP B	Oz Eq for Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bagels Batter type Coating Biscuits Breads – all (i.e. <i>white, wheat, whole wheat, French, Italian</i>) Buns (<i>hamburger and hot dog</i>) Sweet Crackers⁵ (<i>graham crackers – all shapes, animal crackers</i>) Egg Roll Skins English Muffins Pita Bread Pizza Crust Pretzels (<i>soft</i>) Rolls Tortillas Tortilla Chips Taco Shells 	1 oz eq = 28 gm or 1.0 oz ¾ oz eq = 21 gm or 0.75 oz ½ oz eq = 14 gm or 0.5 oz ¼ oz eq = 7 gm or 0.25 oz
GROUP C	Oz Eq for Group C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cookies³ (<i>plain – includes vanilla wafers</i>) Cornbread Corn Muffins Croissants Pancakes Pie Crust (<i>dessert pies³, cobbler³, fruit turnover⁴, and meat/meat alternate pies</i>) Waffles 	1 oz eq = 34 gm or 1.2 oz ¾ oz eq = 26 gm or 0.9 oz ½ oz eq = 17 gm or 0.6 oz ¼ oz eq = 9 gm or 0.3 oz
GROUP D	Oz Eq for Group D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doughnuts⁴ (<i>cake and yeast, raised, unfrosted</i>) Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars⁴ (<i>plain</i>) Muffins (<i>all, except corn</i>) Quick Breads Sweet Roll, Sticky Buns, Cinnamon Rolls, Danish Pastries, Caramel Rolls⁴ (<i>unfrosted</i>) Toaster Pastry⁴ (<i>unfrosted</i>) 	1 oz eq = 55 gm or 2.0 oz ¾ oz eq = 42 gm or 1.5 oz ½ oz eq = 28 gm or 1.0 oz ¼ oz eq = 14 gm or 0.5 oz
GROUP E	Oz Eq for Group E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars⁴ (<i>with nuts, dried fruit, and/or chocolate pieces</i>) Cookies³ (<i>with nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces and/or fruit purees</i>) Doughnuts⁴ (<i>cake and yeast raised, frosted or glazed</i>) French Toast Sweet Roll, Sticky Buns, Cinnamon Rolls, Danish Pastries, Caramel Rolls⁴ (<i>frosted</i>) Toaster Pastry⁴ (<i>frosted</i>) 	1 oz eq = 69 gm or 2.4 oz ¾ oz eq = 52 gm or 1.8 oz ½ oz eq = 35 gm or 1.2 oz ¼ oz eq = 18 gm or 0.6 oz
GROUP F	Oz Eq for Group F
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cake³ (<i>plain, unfrosted</i>) Coffee Cake⁴ 	1 oz eq = 82 gm or 2.9 oz ¾ oz eq = 62 gm or 2.2 oz ½ oz eq = 41 gm or 1.5 oz ¼ oz eq = 21 gm or 0.7 oz

GROUP G	Oz Eq for Group G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brownies³ (<i>plain</i>) Cake³ (<i>all varieties, frosted</i>) 	1 oz eq = 125 gm or 4.4 oz $\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq = 94 gm or 3.3 oz $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq = 63 gm or 2.2 oz $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq = 32 gm or 1.1 oz
GROUP H	Oz Eq for Group H
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cereal Grains (<i>barley, quinoa, etc.</i>) Breakfast Cereals (<i>cooked</i>)^{6,7} Bulgur or cracked wheat Corn Grits Macaroni (<i>all shapes</i>) Noodles (<i>all varieties</i>) Pasta (<i>all shapes</i>) Ravioli (<i>noodle only</i>) Rice 	1 oz eq = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 gm) dry
GROUP I	Oz Eq for Group I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ready to eat breakfast cereal (<i>cold, dry</i>)^{6,7} 	1 oz eq = 1 cup or 1 ounce for flakes and rounds 1 oz eq = 1.25 cups or 1 ounce for puffed cereal 1 oz eq = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup or 1 ounce for granola

¹In NSLP and SBP (grades K-12), all grains served must meet whole grain-rich criteria. For all other Child Nutrition Programs, grains are whole grain or enriched or made with enriched or whole-grain meal and/or flour, bran, and/or germ. Under CACFP child and adult meal patterns, and in NSLP/SBP preschool meals, at least one grain serving per day must meet whole grain-rich criteria.

²For NSLP and SBP (grades K-12), grain quantities are determined using ounce equivalents (oz eq). All other Child Nutrition Programs determine grain quantities using grains/bread servings. Beginning October 1, 2019, grain quantities in CACFP and NSLP/SBP preschool meals will be determined using oz eq.

³Allowed in NSLP (up to 2.0 oz eq grain-based dessert per week in grades K-12) as specified in §210.10 and at snack service in SFSP. Considered a grain-based dessert and cannot count towards the grain component in CACFP or NSLP/SBP preschool meals beginning October 1, 2017, as specified in §§226.20(a)(4) and 210.10.

⁴Allowable in NSLP (up to 2.0 oz eq grain-based dessert per week for grades K-12) as specified in §210.10. May count towards the grain component in SBP (grades K-12) and at snack and breakfast meals in SFSP. Considered a grain-based dessert and cannot count towards the grain component in the CACFP and NSLP/SBP preschool meals beginning Oct. 1, 2017, as specified in §§226.20(a)(4) and 210.10.


⁵Allowed in NSLP (up to 2.0 oz eq grain-based dessert per week in grades K-12) as specified in §210.10. May count towards the grain component in SBP (grades K-12), CACFP, NSLP/SBP preschool meals, and SFSP.

⁶Refer to program regulations for the appropriate serving size for supplements served to children aged 1 through 5 in the NSLP; breakfast served in the SBP, and meals served to children ages 1 through 5 and adult participants in the CACFP. Breakfast cereals are traditionally served as a breakfast menu item but may be served in meals other than breakfast.

⁷In the NSLP and SBP, cereals must list a whole grain as the first ingredient and be fortified, or if the cereal is 100 percent whole grain, fortification is not required. For CACFP and SFSP, cereals must be whole-grain, enriched, or fortified; cereals served in CACFP and NSLP/SBP infant and preschool meals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.

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3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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