| Meal Pattern Components and Requirements | **School Meal Programs (NSLP and SBP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO)** | **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** | **K-12 Afterschool Snack Program** **(under NSLP)** | **Pre-K Meal Pattern** **(under NSLP and SBP)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Milk**  |
| Sugar Content | Starting July 1, 2025: flavored milk limited to 10 grams of sugar per 8 ounces. | No restrictions | No restrictions | Starting July 1, 2025: flavored milk limited to 10 grams of sugar per 8 ounces. |
| Fat Content | Low-fat or fat-free flavored or unflavored | No restrictions | Low-fat or fat-free flavored or unflavored | * 1 year old: unflavored whole milk
* 2 years old and older: low-fat or fat-free unflavored milk
 |
| Non-dairy beverages (fluid milk substitutes) | * Non-dairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk1 may be served
* Non-dairy beverages that are not nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk must be accompanied by a signed medical statement to be served as part of a reimbursable meal
 | Same as NSLP, SBP and SSO | Same as NSLP, SBP and SSO | * Same as NSLP, SBP and SSO
* Breastmilk may be served in lieu of fluid milk; written request is not required
 |
| **Vegetables/Fruits** |
| Components | * Only the fruit component is required at breakfast; vegetables may be offered in place of fruits
* Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch
 | * Vegetables and fruits are one component at all meals and snacks.
* At lunch or supper, two or more different kinds of vegetables and/or fruits must be served.
 | Vegetables and fruits are one component | * Vegetables and fruits are one component at breakfast
* Vegetables and fruits are two separate components at lunch and snack
 |
| Vegetable Subgroups | NSLP: Must offer grade group-specific amounts of each vegetable subgroup (dark green, red-orange, beans/peas (legumes), starchy, and other) for lunch over the course of a week. Breakfast requires subgroup variety, if offering vegetables 2 or more times per week. | No requirements | No requirements | No requirements |
| Full-strength juice (100% juice) | May count towards no more than half of the vegetables or fruits offered per week, per meal type | * May count towards no more than half of the daily vegetable/fruit requirement at lunch/supper
* Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component
 | * May count towards the entire vegetable/fruit component
* Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component
 | * May count towards the entire vegetable/fruit component no more than once per day
* Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as the only other component
 |
| Crediting | * Dried fruit credits as twice the amount offered
* Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount offered
* Tomato paste and puree credit based on the Food Buying Guide yields
 | * All fruits and vegetables credit based on the volume served
* Tomato paste and puree credit based on the Food Buying Guide yields
 | * All fruits and vegetables credit based on the volume served
* Tomato paste and puree credit based on the Food Buying Guide yields
 | * Dried fruit credits as twice the amount offered
* Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount offered
* Tomato paste and puree credit based on the Food Buying Guide yields
 |
| **Grains** |
| Whole grain-rich | At least 80% of grains offered per week must be whole grain-rich2 and the remainder must be enriched. Each serving line must be assessed independently. | Grains/Breads must be whole grain or enriched, or made from whole grain or enriched flour or meal that may include bran and/or germ. Cereal must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified | Grains must be whole grain or enriched, or made from whole grain or enriched flour or meal that may include bran and/or germ. Cereal must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified. | Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day |
| Grain-based desserts | * Up to 2 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts may be offered per week
* No quantity restrictions at breakfast
* Allowable grain-based desserts for NSLP and SBP are noted on [Exhibit A](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf) using superscripts
 | Allowable grain-based desserts are noted on [Exhibit A](http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/exhibitanonwholegrains) using superscripts | Only two grain-based desserts per week are permitted, providing the item meets grain requirements | * Grain-based desserts cannot count toward the grain requirement
* Foods considered grain-based desserts are noted on [Exhibit A](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf) using superscripts
 |
| Breakfast cereals | 24-25 SY – No sugar limitStarting July 1, 2025 No more than 6 g sugar per ounce. | No sugar limit | No sugar limit | Must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce3 |
| Crediting | Based on ounce equivalents | Based on serving sizes | Based on ounce equivalents | Based on ounce equivalents |
| **Meat/Meat Alternates** |
| Yogurt | 24-25 SY -No sugar limitStarting July 1, 2025, no more than 12g of added sugar per 6 ounces. | No sugar limit | No sugar limit | 24-25SY No more than 23 g of sugar per 6 ounces.Starting July 1, 2025 No more than 12g of added sugar per 6 ounces. |
| Meat/Meat alternates at breakfast | * Meat/Meat alternates and/or grains are one component.
* May be served as an extra, if within the dietary specifications
 | * May be served as an extra
* May be offered as the fourth food item when using Offer versus Serve at breakfast
 | Not applicable | May substitute meat/meat alternate for the entire grain component no more than 3 times per week |
| **Dietary Specifications** |
|  | * Meals must, on average, meet weekly limits for calories, saturated fat and sodium
* Starting July 1, 2027, meals must meet new sodium and added sugar dietary specifications.
 | No dietary specifications | No dietary specifications | Sugar limits on breakfast cereals and yogurt |
| **Age/Grade Groups** |
|  | * Allowable NSLP grade groups: K-5, 6-8, K-8 and 9-12
* Allowable SBP grade groups: K-5, 6-8, K-8, 9-12 and K-12
* Pre-K students may be served the K-5 meal patterns when comingled during meals
* Meals must meet all daily and weekly requirements for respective grade groups
 | One meal pattern for all youth ages 1-18 | * Ages 3-5 and grades K-12
* Pre-K students may be served the K-12 snack meal pattern when comingled during snack service
 | * Ages 1-2 and ages 3-5 (and not yet in K5 kindergarten)
* Must be enrolled in the district to be eligible
 |

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| **Meal Service Options** |
| Offer Versus Serve (OVS) | * At lunch, students must select at least 3 food components out of the 5 components offered
* At breakfast, 4 food items must be offered, and students must select at least 3 food items
* Students must select at least ½ cup fruit and/or vegetable at breakfast and lunch
* Required at high school; optional for middle and elementary schools
* State agencies may approve exceptions for high schools not able to implement OVS
 | * Allowed at all SFSP sites
* At lunch/supper, children must select at least 3 food components out of the 4 components offered
* At breakfast, at least 4 food items must be offered and children must select at least 3 food items
* Not allowed at snack
 | Not allowed | Not allowed |

1 Defined by [regulation](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/specialdietaryneedsdetermininganon-dairybeveragesnutrients)

2 Whole grain-rich products must contain at least 50-percent whole-grains and the remaining grain, if any, must be enriched.

3 Use the [Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugar](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-breakfast-cereals-cacfp) handout to determine if a cereal is below the sugar limit

4 Use the [Calculating Sugar Limit for Yogurt](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt-cacfp) handout to determine if a yogurt is below the sugar limit

Additional Resources:

* [NSLP and SBP menu planning and meal patterns](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutrimenuplanning)
* [SFSP menu planning and meal patterns](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/summerfoodserviceprogramrequirements#menuplanningandmealpatterns)
* [Afterschool Snack Program](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/osnafterschoolcaresnackprogrammealpattern)
* [Pre-K Meal Patterns](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/prekmealpattern)