Section 9

Pre-Kindergarten Meals

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Update Guide

June 8, 2026	Incorporated guidance from the Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs.
March 11, 2026	Updated guidance to reflect new flexibilities under the *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025*. Simplified formatting for meal pattern charts.
September 2, 2025	Incorporated following guidance: - Infant Meal Patters for SBP and NSLP - Milk Component Incorporated the following provisions from the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*: - Dietary Specifications (Added Sugars)
February 14, 2025	Incorporated the following provisions from the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*: - Nuts and Seeds - Terminology Change: "Beans/Peas (Legumes)" vegetable subgroup changed to "Beans, Peas, and Lentils" - Removal of "Trans Fat" from the Nutrient Standards
May 19, 2023	Created new *Definitions* and *Contact Information* sections, located at the beginning of the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM)*. Removed definitions and contact information from this section.
July 28, 2022	Updated *Section 8, Pre-Kindergarten Meals* to clarify guidance on: - Food production records
January 4, 2022	Updated *Section 8, Pre-Kindergarten Meals* to incorporate the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) memos and guidance: - *USDA Memo SP 11-2021, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs - REVISED* (May 14, 2021)
August 12, 2020	Updated *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 9* to update *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM)* section references. Removed meal flexibilities no longer available.

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Pre-Kindergarten Meals

Except where noted in this section, Contracting Entities (CEs) that operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) must use Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) pre-kindergarten (pre-K) meal pattern when serving students 5 years of age and under who are not enrolled in kindergarten.

[NOTE: CEs are required to implement the updated CACFP pre-K meal pattern for SBP and NSLP pre-K students, but other CACFP operational requirements do not apply to NSLP or SBP sites.]

The information in this section provides guidance for the pre-K meal pattern that is specific to CEs operating NSLP or SBP.

- For detailed guidance on the ASCP and CACFP At-Risk meal patterns, see the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 10, Afterschool Snacks & Meals*.
- For more detailed guidance on the pre-K meal pattern, see the *Child and Adult Care Food Program—Child Care Centers Handbook*, available at *www.SquareMeals.org*.
- For more detailed guidance on the SBP meal pattern, see *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 7, Breakfast Meals*, available at *www.SquareMeals.org*.
- For more detailed guidance on the NSLP meal pattern, see *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 8, Lunch Meals*, available at *www.SquareMeals.org*.

CEs may also find the crediting guidance for specific food products contained in the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 7, Breakfast Meals* and *Section 8, Lunch Meals* helpful.

Milk Component

Fluid Milk Requirements

Fluid milk must meet the following requirements by age group:

	Approved Milk Options
12-23 months	Unflavored whole milk
2-5 years	Unflavored whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk

All milk served must be unflavored. Reimbursable milk options for children ages 2 through 5 include:

- Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk
- Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free lactose reduced milk
- Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free lactose free milk
- Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free buttermilk
- Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free acidified milk

All milk must be pasteurized.

Non-Dairy Beverages

- CEs have the additional option to offer a nondairy, nutritionally equivalent milk substitute to all students to meet the fluid milk requirement.
  - If offering nondairy beverages to all students, the CE is not required to notify TDA about the substitution. Additionally, students are not required to submit a written statement to request a milk substitute for a non-disability reason.
- If the CE opts **not** to provide a nutritionally equivalent non-dairy option to all students and receives a non-disability request to provide one, CEs should follow the procedures outlined in *ARM Section 25, Meal Accommodations*.
- Other beverages, including water, cannot be offered in place of milk as part of the reimbursable meal or snack.

Fruit and Vegetable Components

Breakfast

- Fruit and vegetables are one component at breakfast.

Lunch, Supper, and Snack

- Fruit and vegetables are two separate components at lunch, supper, and snack.
- Two vegetables may be served in place of a fruit component and a vegetable component for breakfast and lunch. If two vegetable servings are offered at breakfast and lunch, two different vegetables must be served.
- Food items that are mixtures of fruit and vegetables may credit for the fruit component as long as the fruit portion size is creditable (⅛ cup or more) and

for the vegetable component as long as the vegetable portion size is creditable (⅛ cup or more).

Beans, Peas, and Lentils

- If two distinct servings of beans, peas, and lentils are provided, the CE may credit one serving toward the vegetable component and one serving toward the meat/meat alternate component as long as the beans, peas, and lentils are in separate food items and are not the same vegetable. Two serving of the same vegetable at the same meal service cannot be credited as one serving of the vegetable component and one serving of the meat/meat alternate component for pre-K students.

Juice

- Juice must be full strength, 100 percent juice. Mixed fruit and vegetable juice credit as either the fruit or vegetable component (not both) based on the most prominent ingredient.
- Pureed fruits or vegetables in a smoothie may be credited toward the fruit and/or vegetable component as 100 percent juice. The limitation on the number of juice servings per day applies to the juice in a smoothie.
- Fruit juice is creditable at one meal per day across all meals at the site based on the programs the CE operates as defined in the *Pre-K Juice Option Scenario Chart*.

Pre-K Juice Option Scenario Chart
One Juice Serving Across All Meals at the Same Site on the Same Day

	SNP			CACFP At-Risk		Allowable?
Scenarios	**SBP**	**NSLP**	**ASCP**	**Snack**	**Supper**	
Scenario 1	Juice	No Juice	No Juice	Juice	No Juice	Yes
Scenario 2	No Juice	Juice	No Juice	No Juice	Juice	Yes
Scenario 3	No Juice	No Juice	Juice	Juice	No Juice	Yes
Scenario 4	Juice	Juice	No Juice	No Juice	No Juice	No[1]
Scenario 5	No Juice	Juice	Juice	Juice	No Juice	No[2]
Scenario 6	Juice	No Juice	No Juice	Juice	Juice	No[3]

[1] Juice cannot be offered in two SNP meals services at the same site on the same day.
[2] Juice cannot be offered in two SNP meal services at the same site on the same day.
[3] Juice cannot be offered at two CACFP snacks/meals at the same site on the same day.

SNP Sites Operating Any Combination of SBP, NSLP, and ASCP

CEs may credit juice as the fruit or vegetable component (not both) for pre-K students one time across all meals or snacks served each day at the same site across all SNPs operating at the site.

SNP Half-Day Pre-K Programs Operating SBP Only, NSLP Only, or NSLP and ASCP

CEs may credit juice as the fruit or vegetable component (not both) for pre-K students one time for pre-K students attending a morning half-day session and a second time for the other pre-K students attending an afternoon half-day session. The CE may also treat the combined half-day sessions as a whole day and only serve juice in either the morning session or afternoon session. If the students in the afternoon session also attend ASCP, the juice may credit as the fruit or vegetable component (not both) for pre-K students one time across the lunch and snack services.

For half-day pre-K programs, the juice crediting option the CE uses must be consistent with the requirement to serve a whole-grain rich food item once per day as described in the *Grain Component* subsection of this section.

CACFP Sites Operating At-Risk Snack and At Risk Supper

CEs may credit juice as the fruit or vegetable component (not both) for pre-K students one time across all meals or snacks served each day at the same site across all CACFPs operating at the site.

Minimum Creditable Amount for Fruit and Vegetables

- The minimum creditable amount for fruits and vegetables is ⅛ of a cup.

Grain Component

Serving

- One whole-grain rich food item must be served each day across all meals. The remaining grains served throughout the day must be enriched.

NSLP, SBP, ASCP

When a CE operates one or more SNPs, the CE must offer pre-K students a whole-grain rich food item at least once over all SNP meal services for the day at the site.

- If the CE is offering grains at other meals on the same day, the CE may provide whole-grain rich food items for all meal services.
- If the CE does not provide other whole-grain rich food items at other meal services, all other grains must be enriched grain food items.
- If operating only one SNP and a grain is offered, the grain must be whole-grain rich at the meal/snack service for the day at the location.
- If a grain food item is provided that is not whole-grain rich or enriched, the grain is not creditable toward a reimbursable meal.

Half-Day Pre-K

For half-day pre-K programs, the CE may choose to implement the whole-grain rich requirement as one whole-grain rich food item for each half-day session or may offer one whole-grain rich food item across all meals offered for all half-day sessions on that day in that location.

For half-day pre-K programs, the requirement to serve a whole-grain rich food item once per day must be consistent with the juice crediting option the CE uses as described in the *Juice* subsection in this section.

CACFP At-Risk

When a CE operates a CACFP At-Risk program for pre-K students and offers a grain, the CE must offer a whole-grain rich food item at least once over all CACFP At-Risk meal services for the day at the location.

- If the CE provides snack only and a grain is offered, the grain must be whole-grain rich.

- If the CE provides snack and supper and a grain is offered, a whole-grain rich item must be offered in at least one of the meal services.

Grain-Based Desserts

- Grain-based desserts are not creditable toward the grains component.
- Quick breads,[1] pancakes, waffles, savory[2] scones, savory puddings, and savory pies are not considered to be grain-based desserts.
- CEs may serve grain-based desserts as an additional food item that is not part of a reimbursable meal. This option should be used occasionally, not frequently.
- The fruit in a grain-based dessert may credit toward the fruit component, even though the grain portion of a grain-based dessert cannot count toward the grain component.

Information Box 1

Grain-Based Desserts

The following food items are considered to be grain-based desserts:

- Breakfast bars
- Brownies, including black bean brownies
- Cake
- Cereal bars
- Cookies
- Doughnuts
- Granola bars (made in house or commercial)
- Rice pudding
- Sweet bread pudding
- Sweet pie crusts
- Sweet rolls
- Sweet scones
- Toaster pastries

This list is not exhaustive. When there is a question about whether food item may be a grain-based dessert, CEs should consider the ingredients and appearance of the product if the specific grain food item is not listed in ***Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs or other USDA guidance.***

Breakfast Cereals

- Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar[3] per dry ounce.
- Breakfast cereals must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified.

Substitution

- Meat and meat alternates may be substituted for the entire grain requirement a maximum of three times a week.

Meat/Meat Alternate Component

Serving

- Meat/Meat alternates may be served for the entire grain component no more than three times per week for breakfast.

Meat Alternates

- Tofu may be served.[4]
- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces.

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1 See *Exhibit A* of the *USDA Memo CACFP 01-2018, Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Questions and Answers* for additional information on crediting quick breads. USDA has also updated the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* to include this information. Available at *http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs.*

2 In this reference savory means a food item that is not sweet. Savory food items are typically flavored with herbs and often contain protein ingredients such as cheese.

3 This formula is not the same formula used to calculate sugar for Competitive Foods.

4 Same specifications as NSLP or SBP, see the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 7, Breakfast Meals* or *Section 8, Lunch Meals* for additional information on the specifications.

Water Availability

CEs serving meals to pre-K students must continue to follow the NSLP or SBP requirement to have water available during meal service. Moreover, since very young children may lack the ability to request water, CEs are encouraged to offer water to pre-K students at every meal rather than just have it available.

Dietary Specifications

Added Sugar

- Breakfast cereals can have no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. USDA provides a calculation resource, Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP, at *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/calculating-sugar-limits-breakfast-cereals*.
- Yogurt can have no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). USDA provides a calculation resource, Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Yogurt in the CACFP, at *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt*.

Daily Specifications

- All dietary specifications for the pre-K meal pattern are based on daily or individual item limits; therefore, meals served under the pre-K meal pattern are not included in the weekly dietary specifications for NSLP or SBP.
- Pre-K students may be served the same size portions as older students as long as the daily or individual food item specifications are met.

Pre-K Meal Service Methods for NSLP or SBP Operators

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Method for Pre-K Students

- OVS is not allowed for pre-K students.[1]
- A choice of food items within the same food component is not considered to be OVS.

Plated Meal Method for Pre-K Students

- The use of *choice* among food items or food components is applied differently for plated meals for pre-K students served under the pre-K meal pattern and K-8 students served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).
- A plated meal must include all required food components[2] in the required minimum serving size for each required food component.
- The menued meal may include a choice of items within the same component.
  For Example:
  - Vegetable Component: green beans or carrots
  - Meat/Meat Alternate Component: chicken or beef
  - Milk Component: reduced-fat or fat-free unflavored milk

[1] See the *Meal Pattern Flexibility for Comingled Age/Grade Groups* subsection in this section for information on flexibility for meal service options.
[2] For lunch, five components; for breakfast, three components.

- If the student does not take a meal which includes all food components,[1] it is not a reimbursable meal.

Family Style Method for Pre-K Students

- Family style service is allowed for all age groups.
- A pre-K student must take at least ¼ cup of a vegetable or fruit for a meal to be reimbursable.
- The supervising adult should initially offer the required minimum serving size of each food component/food item to each pre-K student.

Crediting

Alternate Meal Item

- For NSLP or SBP sites providing pre-K meals, a parent may provide food items for the student to eat onsite as long as it is allowable under local policy. However, the CE must provide all meal components for a reimbursable meal—the parent cannot replace a food component for a reimbursable meal.

Standardized Recipes

- CEs may credit food items with more than one component if the CE uses a standardized recipe, CE-developed, or manufacturer developed.[2]
  - All USDA Foods recipes are standardized; therefore, CEs may use the crediting information provided on the recipe as long as the CE follows the recipe.
  - Child Nutrition (CN) label crediting information is created using standardized recipes; therefore, CEs may use the crediting information as long as the CE follows the preparation and serving directions provided on the CN label.[3]
  - A manufacturer may provide a product formation statement with crediting information; therefore, if a product formula statement is provided, the CE may use the crediting information as long as the product is prepared and served as specified.[4]
  - CEs may also create their own standardized recipes using the information provided in the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*[5] in the recipe analysis section and credit components based on the calculations described in the standardized recipe development process.

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1 For lunch, five components; for breakfast, three components.
2 USDA provides guidance on creating standardized recipes in the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*, available at *http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs*.
3 See the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 23, Food Product Documentation* for additional information on this topic.
4 See the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 23, Food Product Documentation* for additional information on this topic.
5 Available at *http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs*

Pre-K Students with Medical Disabilities or Special Dietary Needs

For pre-K students with medical disabilities or special dietary needs, CEs that operate NSLP or SBP must follow the guidance described in the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 13, Meal Accommodations*.

A La Carte Items

CEs may sell a la carte items to pre-K students. However, the sale of a la carte items must not encourage a student to purchase an a la carte item over a reimbursable meal. A la carte sales for pre-K students must meet the competitive food rule.

Performance-Based Reimbursement

When the CE serves pre-K students under the NSLP program, all reimbursable lunches served, including lunches to pre-K students, earn the performance-based reimbursement.

Severe Need Reimbursement

When a CE serves pre-K students under NSLP or SBP, all reimbursable meals served, including meals served to pre-K students, earn severe need reimbursement if the CE/site receives severe need reimbursement.

Meal Pattern Flexibility for Comingled Age/Grade Groups

USDA allows flexibility in the pre-K meal pattern for CEs that are serving meals to pre-K students in the same service area at the same time as older age/grade groups. With this flexibility, CEs may serve the pre-K students the same meal pattern as the kindergarten students at the meal service. The flexibility to use comingle is based on the CE's ability to identify the age/grade groups of the students and the amount of time to serve the meals. However, USDA encourages CEs to evaluate a variety of serving strategies that will allow them to serve the pre-K meal pattern to pre-K students before utilizing this flexibility.

Before adopting this flexibility, the CE must consider the following:

1. Can the pre-K class or group of pre-K students be reasonably distinguished in the service line?
2. Is there reasonably sufficient time to serve the pre-K students the pre-K meal pattern before older students are served?

The presence of pre-K students in the dining area at the same time as older students does not mean that the meal service is comingled. The CE must still consider the ability to distinguish age/grade groups and if there is reasonable time or opportunity to change the service line. CE's may also find that there is a comingled serving situation at one meal service and not another.

Serving Options That Are Not Considered to Be Comingled

When the pre-K student is easily distinguishable, and there is time and opportunity to serve the appropriate pre-K meal pattern, the pre-K meal pattern must be used.

For Example:

- Pre-K students are served and consume breakfast in the classroom. In this situation, pre-K students are served the pre-K meal pattern.
- Pre-K students pick up a grab-n-go meal in an area of the building dedicated to pre-K students. In this situation, pre-K students are served the pre-K meal pattern.

Serving Options That May Be Considered to Be Comingled

When the pre-K student is not easily distinguishable, and there is not the time or opportunity to change the service line set up for different age/grade groups, the CE may use the meal pattern that is used for kindergarten students at that meal service. For breakfast, the age/grade groups are K-5, K-8, or K-12; for lunch, K-5 or K-8.

For Example:

- Pre-K students pick up a grab-n-go meal in the cafeteria where students of all age/grade groups pick up a grab-n-go meal. In this situation, pre-K students may be served the kindergarten meal pattern.
- Pre-K students go through the cafeteria line and are intermingled with older students or are served in a fashion where pre-K classes alternate with older age/grade group classes. In this situation, pre-K students may be served the kindergarten meal pattern.

Infant Meal Patterns for SBP and NSLP

The following tables illustrate the CACFP meal pattern requirements for snacks and meals fed to infants.

See *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM) Section 20, Counting & Claiming* for information on claiming infant meals.

Afterschool Snack for Infant Age Birth through Five Months	Afterschool Snack for Infant Age Six through Eleven Months
4-6 fluid ounces of breast milk[1] or formula[2]	• 2-4 fluid ounces breast milk[1] or formula[2]; and • 0-1/2 ounce equivalent bread[3 4]; or • 0-1/4 ounce equivalent crackers[3 4]; or • 0-1/2 ounce equivalent infant cereal[2 4]; or • 0-1/4 ounce equivalent ready-to-eat breakfast cereal[3 4 5 6]; and • 0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit, or a combination of both[6 7].

[1] Breast milk or formula, or portions of both, must be served; however, it is recommended that breast milk be served from birth through 11 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered, with additional breast milk offered at a later time if the infant will consume more.

[2] Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.

[3] A serving of grains must be whole grain-rich, enriched meal, enriched flour, bran, or germ.

[4] Information on crediting grain items may be found in FNS guidance.

[5] Through September 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By October 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

[6] A serving of this component is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

[7] Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.

Lunch for Infant Age Birth through Five Months	Lunch for Infant Age Six through Eleven Months
4-6 fluid ounces of breast milk[1] or formula[2]	• 6-8 fluid ounces breast milk[1] or formula[2]; and • 0-1/2 ounce equivalent infant cereal[2] [3]; or • 0-4 tablespoons meat, fish, poultry, whole egg, cooked dry beans, peas, or lentils; or • 0-2 ounces of cheese; or • 0-4 ounces (volume) of cottage cheese; or • 0-4 ounces or 1/2 cup of yogurt[4]; or • a combination of the above[5]; and • 0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit, or a combination of both[5] [6].

[1] Breast milk or formula, or portions of both, must be served; however, it is recommended that breast milk be served from birth through 11 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered, with additional breast milk offered at a later time if the infant will consume more.

[2] Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.

[3] Information on crediting grain items may be found in FNS guidance.

[4] Through September 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By October 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

[5] A serving of this component is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

[6] Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.

Pre-K Meal Pattern for SBP and NSLP

The following charts provide general information on the portion size requirements for each food component for pre-K students for NSLP and SBPs.

Preschool Breakfast Meal Pattern Chart

Meal components and food items[1]	Minimum quantities	
	Age 1-2	Age 3-5
Fluid Milk Age 1, unflavored whole milk Age 2-5, unflavored approved fluid milk options[2]	4 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces
Vegetables, Fruits, or portions of both[3]	¼ cup	½ cup
Grains [4]	½ ounce equivalent	½ ounce equivalent

1 Must serve all three components for a reimbursable meal.
2 Unflavored whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk for children two through five years old; nondairy beverages meeting FDA nutritional standards.
3 Pasteurized full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal, including snack, per day.
4 At least one serving per day, across all eating occasions, must be whole grain-rich. Grain-based desserts do not count toward meeting 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 a meat/meat alternate credit is equal to one ounce equivalent of grains. Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Preschool Lunch Meal Pattern Chart

Meal components and food items[1]	Minimum quantities	
	Age 1-2	Age 3-5
Fluid Milk Age 1, whole milk, unflavored Age 2-5, approved fluid milk options[3]	4 fluid ounces[2]	6 fluid ounces[3]
Meats/meat alternates[4]	1 ounce equivalent	1 ½ ounce equivalents
Vegetables[5]	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits[5]	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains[6]	½ ounce equivalent	½ ounce equivalent

1 Must serve all five components for a reimbursable meal.
2 Must serve unflavored whole milk to children age 1.
3 Unflavored whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), or fat-free (skim) milk; nondairy beverages meeting FDA nutritional standards.
4 Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in 7 CFR 226, Appendix A (*https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-226*). Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
5 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. Vegetables may be offered to meet the entire fruits requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.
6 Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be offered to meet the grains requirement. Breakfast cereals must have no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

The following chart may assist CEs as they determine the appropriate serving sizes based on different methods of measurement.

Measurement Conversion Chart
(Converting Common Serving Portion Sizes into Applicable Measurement Methods)[12]

Component			Other	Volume		Weight		Scoop Size (Scoop serving per quart)
				Level Measure (cup, Tbsp)	Fluid Ounce (fl oz)	Ounce (oz)	Ounce Equivalent (oz eq)	
Milk			--	½ cup	4	--	--	--
			--	¾ cup	6	--	--	--
Fruits/Vegetables			--	¼ cup	--	--	--	16
			--	½ cup	--	--	--	8
Grains	Bread Product: (biscuit, roll, muffin)		½ serving	--	--	0.5 oz	0.5 oz eq	--
	Cooked: Cereal, Cereal Grain, Pasta		--	¼ cup	--	0.5 oz	0.5 oz eq	16
	Ready-To-Eat Breakfast Cereal (Dry /Cold)	Flakes/Rounds	--	½ cup	--	0.5 oz	0.5 oz eq	8
		Puffed	--	¾ cup	--	1.0 oz	1.0 oz eq	4
		Granola	--	⅛ cup	--	0.5 oz	0.5 oz eq	30
Meat/ Meat Alternates	Lean meat, poultry, or fish		--	--	--	1.0 oz	1.0 oz eq	--
			--	--	--	1.5 oz	1.5 oz eq	--
	Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products		--	⅛ cup	--	1.1 oz	0.25 oz eq	30
			--	⅓ cup	--	1.5 oz	0.33 oz eq	12
	Cheese		--	¼ cup	--	1.0 oz	1.0 oz eq	16
			--	⅓ cup	--	1.5 oz	1.5 oz eq	12
	Large egg		½ serving	⅛ cup	--	--	1.0 oz eq	30
			¾ serving	⅓ cup	--	--	1.5 oz eq	12
	Beans, Peas, and Lentils		--	¼ cup	--	0.5 oz	1.0 oz eq	16
			--	⅜ cup	--	1.5 oz	1.5 oz eq	10
	Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butter		--	2 Tbsp	--	1.1 oz	1.0 oz eq	30
			--	3 Tbsp	--	1.7 oz	1.5 oz eq	20
	Yogurt, plain, or flavored unsweetened or sweetened		--	¼ cup	--	2.0 oz	0.5 oz eq	16
			--	½ cup	--	4.0 oz	1.0 oz eq	8
			--	¾ cup	--	6.0 oz	1.5 oz eq	4
	Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds		--	--	--	0.5 oz	1.0 oz eq	--
			--	--	--	0.75 oz	1.5 oz eq	--

TDA Forms

TDA provides the following forms on the *SquareMeals* website[13] to assist CEs in implementing the guidance presented in this section:

- *Daily Food Production Record for Central Kitchen, Receiving Kitchen, and Onsite Kitchen*
- *Fluid Milk Substitute Worksheet*

USDA Resources

USDA provides a large number of tools that can help CEs in operating NSLP and SBP, including the following:

- *Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*—Fill in the blank calculation tool.

[12] The *Child Nutrition Food Buying Guide* available at *http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs* provides additional information on converting amounts.
[13] Available at *www.SquareMeals.org*.

Available at *https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPCalcYogurt.pdf*

- *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*—Web-based interactive tool that assists in calculating food yields and provides purchasing information

  Available at *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs;*

  USDA has also released the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* as a mobile app.

  See the following website for additional information on the app: *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-mobile-app*

- *Tools for Schools Webpage*—Website hosting a variety of tools to assist schools in implementing the meal pattern.

  Available at *https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools*

USDA has released an updated *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG)* that provides information on standardized portion size information. The updated guide is a resource tool for NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) meal patterns. The *FBG* is available as a single PDF file, a web-based tool and as an app that can be used on phones or tablets. Access to all versions is available at *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs*. USDA has also released the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* as a mobile app. See the following website for additional information on the app: *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-mobile-app.*

Food Production Records

The CE must keep complete and accurate food production documentation including, but not limited to, food production records, menus, standardized recipes, Child Nutrition (CN) labels, production formulation statements, records indicating food substitutions, invoices or receipts for food products purchases, and meal pattern contribution documentation for the meals they produce. Food production documentation demonstrates that the meals served and claimed met meal pattern requirements and are, therefore, reimbursable.[14]

Information Box 3

Records Retention

Public and charter schools are required to keep documentation related to school nutrition programs for 5 years.

Nonprofit private schools, other organizations, and residential childcare institutions (RCCIs) are required to keep documentation for 3 years.

For meals served to pre-K students, CEs may use their existing NSLP or SBP food production record system as long as they retain documentation that demonstrates their compliance with the pre-K meal pattern which includes, but is not limited to, portion sizes, number of servings prepared, number of servings served, and amount of not served. CEs may keep separate records for pre-K students or may combine the records with other age/grade groups. CEs may also use the CACFP food production record form for pre-K meals.

While there is no one specific strategy for maintaining food production documentation, TDA recommends that each CE develop a system that aligns with its menu cycle.

For Example: A CE uses a four-week menu cycle. For each week, the CE has created a notebook that has a divided section for each serving day of the week. In each daily section, the CE has collected that day's food production documentation, standardized recipes, product labels, or manufacturer product formulation statements, and other information.

[14] See *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 20, Counting & Claiming* for additional information on the claims process.

CEs should keep in mind that this requirement includes all meal services (breakfast, lunch, and snack), including salad and other food bars, quick lines, sack meals, field trips, etc.

CEs should use the following guidance in maintaining production records:

- These records must show how the meals offered and served[15] contribute to the required food components and food quantities for each age/grade group every day including, but not limited to,
  - food item replaced,
  - substituted food item, and
  - reason for the substitution.
- Any meal claimed for reimbursement must be supported by food production documentation.
- When recording the amount of prepared food on a food production record, CEs should record amounts by purchased unit/container size. These reporting units are also used in the *Child Nutrition Program Food Buying Guide (FBG)*[16] The Shopping List function in the web-based (or app) FBG can also be used to quickly determine the number of servings in a unit/container.

  For Example: If a CE is planning to prepare 310 one oz eq servings of sausage, the CE will report the total amount prepared as 3 cases@96/case +12. The sausage patties come 96 to the case.
- When recording the amount of leftover food on a food production record, CEs may record amounts by the number of remaining servings.

Planned, Offered, and Selected/Served

CEs must use the following definitions as they prepare menus and production documentation:

- **Planned**. A planned menu is what the menu planner intends to offer to students. It represents the CE's calculation of the items that will need to be prepared for a school's usual average daily participation (ADP). Ideally, the planned and the offered meals are the same.
- **Offered**. An offered menu is what is actually prepared and set out on the serving lines for students to take. Offered menus may differ from *planned* menus when there are unexpected circumstances.

  For Example: A planned food item was not received from the distributor, and the menu planner had to offer a different food item.
- **Selected/Served**. Selected or served refers to the foods that were actually served to, or selected by,[17] students. Menu planners should use selected/served food item data to assist in future menu planning and reduce food waste, so the school does not offer items that students do not select. Food production records should be updated to indicate actual selected/service food items after the meal service so that production records reflect serving trends.

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15 Meals service for pre-K students does not include offer versus serve (OVS), however, a student is allowed to refuse a food item.

16 Available at *https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs*

17 Meals service for pre-K students does not include offer versus serve (OVS); however, a student is allowed to refuse a food item.

Records Retention

CEs must retain documentation about food production and service. All documentation or records must be kept on file for a minimum of five years for public and charter schools or three years for private schools, nonprofit organizations, and residential child care institutions after the end of the fiscal year to which they pertain. CEs have the option to maintain records on paper or electronically.

TDA may also request documentation for both offsite and onsite administrative review. CEs are encouraged to develop a system of document retention that allows them to readily retrieve documentation.

For more information on the specific types of documentation that are required, see *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 30, Records Retention*.

Compliance

TDA will review documentation submitted through TX-UNPS, retained onsite during Administrative Reviews (ARs), or on request to ensure that the CE is in compliance with the regulations described in this section. A review will include an assessment of food production documentation and a review of the meal pattern and may include a nutrient analysis of individual food items served. TDA has the discretion to take fiscal action for the following violations:

- Not meeting the meal pattern requirements
- Not meeting food quantity requirements
- Not meeting nutrition standards for food item as appropriate
- Inadequate or unavailable documentation[18]

[18] See *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 23, Food Product Documentation* for additional information on this topic.