Guidance Memorandum L
Family Day Care Home Sponsors

CACFP Meal Requirements: 1-12 Years

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Meals and snacks served must meet the meal pattern and documentation requirements specified within this guidance memorandum in order receive CACFP meal reimbursement.

Terms to Know:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creditable Foods</th>
<th>Foods that count toward meal pattern requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-creditable Foods</td>
<td>Foods that do not count toward meal pattern requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Component</td>
<td>A group of foods in a reimbursable meal. Food components include: Milk, Vegetable, Fruit, Meat/Meat Alternate, Grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Item</td>
<td>Foods that are part of a Food Component (e.g.: Broccoli is a food item in the vegetable food component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Serving Size</td>
<td>Required amount of the Food Component that must be served</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CACFP MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS

Meals and snacks must meet CACFP meal pattern requirements with creditable foods in at least the minimum serving sizes per the CACFP meal pattern charts.

- **CACFP Meal Pattern Charts**: Lists the required food components and their respective minimum serving sizes for each meal and snack.
- **CACFP E-Learning Course**: CACFP Meal Pattern (1-18 years) lesson reviews the meal pattern requirements.

FOOD COMPONENTS

The following charts detail specific requirements for each food component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLUID MILK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required at breakfast, lunch, and supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must be pasteurized and meet Grade A standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Creditable Milks**: Whole, 1% (low-fat), skim (fat-free), lactose-free, lactose-reduced, kefir
Goat’s milk may be creditable if it meets State and local standards

**Required Milks**:
- 1 year olds: unflavored whole
- 2-5 year olds: unflavored 1% or skim
- 6-12 year olds: unflavored or flavored 1% or skim

Cannot be served to infants (less than 12 months of age)

May be served as a beverage, on cereal, or both

Not creditable when used in cooking (i.e. cooked cereals, soups, pudding, etc.)

If served at snack, juice cannot be served as the other component

**Non-dairy beverages** nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk are creditable. When served for a non-disability special dietary need, a written statement from a participant’s family must be on file.
- Currently only some soymilk products are creditable.
The Creditable Non-Dairy Beverages handout lists some creditable soymilks.

| Milk and Foods not creditable to the Milk Component (Not an all-inclusive list) |
| --- | --- |
| • 2% (reduced-fat) milk | • Ice cream, Ice Milk |
| • Almond Milk | • Powdered Milk |
| • Cheese (creditable as meat alternate, not as milk) | • Pudding |
| • Coconut Milk | • Raw Milk |
| • Cream Cheese | • Rice Milk |
| • Cream Soup/Sauces | • Reconstituted Dry Milk |
| • Evaporated Milk | • Sour Cream |
| • Frozen Yogurt | • Yogurt (creditable as meat alternate, not as milk) |
## GRAINS

Required at breakfast, lunch, and supper

The first ingredient, or second after water, must be whole grain or enriched grain

Veggie straws, chips, or sticks, and tortilla chips are only creditable as a grain when the first ingredient, or second after water, is a whole or enriched grain

For a list of common creditable grain items and how much to serve: [CACFP Grains Chart](#)

### Whole Grain Rich (WGR):

At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR)

- WGR foods contain 100% whole grains, or at least 50% whole grains and the remaining grains are enriched

If your program:
- Claims more than one meal/snack (breakfast, lunch and snack), you may choose the meal to serve the WGR food
- Only claims a snack, if one of the two components is a grain item, it must be WGR
- Only claims one meal (breakfast, lunch or supper), a grain is required to be served and must be WGR
  - If breakfast is the only meal, then a WGR item does not need to be served if a meat/meat alternate is served in place of the grain (allowed up to 3 times/week)

### Identifying Whole Grain Rich (WGR):

There are six options to determine if a grain product meets the WGR criteria. Any one of the options may be used. They are detailed in the [CACFP Reference Guide](#).

#### Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat, instant & hot cereals)

- Must be whole grain, enriched or fortified
- Must contain no more than [6 grams of sugar](#) per dry ounce
  - Cereals on the [Cereals That Meet CACFP Requirements](#) meet sugar limits
  - For cereals not in the above document, use the Nutrition Facts Label and the [CACFP Reference Guide](#) to determine if the cereal meets sugar limits

Programs cannot mix creditable cereals that meet sugar limits with non-creditable cereals that are above sugar limits to meet sugar limit requirements.

### Grain-Based Desserts (GBD)

- Brownies
- Cakes, including coffee cake and cupcakes
- Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, and marshmallow cereal treats
- Cookies, including vanilla wafers and fruit-filled rolls/bars/cookies
- Doughnuts
- Gingerbread

- Potatoes (creditable as vegetable, not grain)
- Potato chips
- Tapioca
- Ice cream cones
- Pie crusts of dessert pies, cobblers, and fruit turnovers
- Sweet biscotti/scones with fruits, chocolate, icing
- Sweet bread pudding and rice pudding
- Sweet croissants (e.g. chocolate-filled)
- Sweet pita chips (e.g. cinnamon-sugar flavored)
- Sweet rolls (e.g. cinnamon rolls)

### Foods not creditable to the Grains Component

- Grains not made with whole or enriched grain
- Cereals not fortified or enriched
- Cereals above sugar limits

- Potatoes (creditable as vegetable, not grain)
- Potato chips
- Tapioca

### Is it a Grain-Based Dessert?

For a more extensive list, refer to the [Is it a Grain-Based Dessert?](#) handout or the [Foods not creditable to the Grains Component box](#), below.

- Even if the GBD is homemade with healthy ingredients, whole grains or less sugar, it is not creditable
**MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE (M/MA)**

- Required at lunch and supper
  - Must be served in a main dish or in a main dish and one other menu item
  - A main dish may credit as the M/MA plus up to two other food components (3 total)
- A M/MA may be served at breakfast, in place of grains, up to three days/week

**Creditable M/MA:** Lean meat, poultry, fish, cheese, eggs, cooked dry bean or peas, peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts or seeds and their butters, yogurt, tofu, tempeh, soy products or alternate protein products

- Cooked dry beans or peas may not be served as a meat alternate and a vegetable in the same meal

**Yogurt (regular and soy)** must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces

- Use the Nutrition Facts Label and CACFP Reference Guide to determine if a yogurt meets sugar limits

**Creditable Cheese:** natural or processed, cottage, ricotta, cheese spread, cheese food

→ For examples, refer to: [Creditable & Non-Creditable Cheeses](#)

**Store-bought combination foods** (i.e. chicken nuggets, pizza, ravioli, fish sticks, corn dogs, etc.) and some processed meats (i.e. pepperoni, turkey bacon) must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) from manufacturer on file prior to serving

**Processed meats** (i.e. hotdogs, bologna, sausage):

- 100% meat ingredients are creditable (may contain salt and seasonings)
- If item contains fillers (i.e. byproducts, cereals, binders, or extenders) it is not 100% meat and requires a CN label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) on file prior to serving

**Common binders/extenders:** soy flour, starchy vegetable flour, calcium reduced dried skim milk, dried milk, modified food/vegetable starch, soy protein concentrate, cereal, isolated soy protein, carrageenan, hydrolyzed milk protein

**Alternate Protein Products:** Foods made from alternate protein and/or textured vegetable protein ingredients may only credit to the CACFP meal pattern with a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS).

→ For further information on alternate protein products, refer to: [Appendix A: Alternate Protein Products](#)

**Soup:**

- Commercial Bean or Pea: ½ cup of soup is 1 oz. meat alternate
  - Credit as a meat alternate or vegetable, but not both in the same meal
- Commercial Other (i.e. chicken noodle): Does not credit as a M/MA because there is not a sufficient amount of M/MA per serving
- Homemade with M/MA: Only creditable if there is at least ¼ oz. M/MA per serving. Another M/MA may need to be served to meet the minimum serving size requirements. Must be identified and documented by a recipe.

**Tofu:** Creditable for participants ages 1 and older. Must be commercially prepared firm, extra firm, soft, or silken.

- Tofu products such as links and sausages can only credit when the product has a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) from manufacturer to document how item meets CACFP requirements
- 2.2 oz. (1/4 cup) of tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein = 1.0 oz. meat alternate

Use the Nutrition Facts Label and the calculation below to determine if tofu is creditable:

\[
\text{Protein (g) \div Serving Size (oz.) or (g) = Threshold for ounces: 2.27 or more} \\
\text{Threshold for grams: .08 or more}
\]

**Local Foods:** For information on wild and domesticated game animals and birds:

→ [Local Meats, Poultry, and Eggs](#)

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**Foods not creditable to the Meat/Meat Alternate Component** (Not an all-inclusive list)

- Bacon
- Cheese Products
- Nut Butter Spreads
- Tofu incorporated into drinks, such as smoothies, or other dishes to add texture, such as in baked desserts

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| Cream Cheese | Powdered Cheese (ex. macaroni & cheese, boxed) | Yogurt above sugar limits |
| Imitation Cheese | Velveeta™ | Yogurt products (frozen yogurt, drinkable yogurt, yogurt bars, yogurt-covered fruit or nuts) |

**FRUIT AND VEGETABLES (TWO SEPARATE COMPONENTS)**

- One serving of vegetable, fruit or both is required at breakfast.
- One serving of fruit and one serving of vegetable (or two different vegetables) is required at lunch and supper.
- One fruit and one vegetable may be served at snack as two components.
- Cooked dry beans or peas may not be served as a vegetable and a meat alternate in the same meal.
- Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried may be served.

The following vegetable and fruit serving sizes vary from the meal pattern chart:
- 1 cup raw leafy greens (e.g. lettuce) = ½ cup vegetable
- ¼ cup dried fruit (e.g. raisins) = ½ cup fruit

- **Juice** must be full strength (100%) fruit or vegetable juice and must be pasteurized.
  - If served at snack, milk cannot be served as the other component.
  - Can only be served once per day. This applies to all meals and snacks, even when served to different groups of participants. For example:
    - Program serves one group breakfast and lunch, and another group lunch and PM snack. If breakfast includes juice, the program cannot serve juice at lunch or PM snack.
    - Program serves the same food items at multiple snacks (AM and PM snack) to different groups of children, juice may only be served at one of those snacks.

**Smoothies:** Pureed fruits and vegetables served in a smoothie are considered juice. This counts as serving juice once per day. For more information, refer to: [Smoothies in CACFP](#)

**Soup**
- **Commercial Bean or Pea:** ½ cup of soup is ¼ cup of heated vegetable.
  - Can credit as a meat alternate or vegetable but not both in the same meal.
- **Canned, Condensed, or Ready-To-Serve** (minestrone, tomato, tomato with other basic components such as rice and vegetable, and vegetable with basic components such as meat and poultry):
  - 1 cup of reconstituted or ready-to-serve soup will yield ¼-cup vegetable.
- **Homemade:** Must contain at least 1/8 cup vegetable per serving. Another vegetable may need to be served to meet the minimum serving size requirements. Must be identified and documented by a recipe.

**Foods not creditable to the Fruit and Vegetable Components** (Not an all-inclusive list)

| ‘Ade’ drinks (e.g. Lemonade) | Fruit in Commercial Yogurt (e.g. Strawberry Yogurt) | Potato Chips |
| Cranberry Juice Cocktail | Fruit Snacks | Sherbet |
| Frozen Fruit Flavored Bars | Home Canned Products | Snack Chips (e.g. Banana or other FV chips) |
| Fruit Butters (e.g. Apple Butter) | Jam/Jelly | Soy Nuts |
| Fruit in Quick Breads (e.g. Banana Bread) | Gelatin/Jell-O™ | Veggie straws, chips or sticks |
| Fruit in Muffins (e.g. Blueberry Muffins) |  |  |
PRODUCT DOCUMENTATION

Product Information for Breakfast Cereals, Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Items, Yogurt, and Tofu

The required product information and resource to use for crediting each of these food items is listed in the table below.

Providers must:

➢ Use this information, which is found on each product’s packaging, to verify they meet the CACFP crediting criteria specified within the Food Components section (above), before serving for meals.

➢ Keep the product packaging (or picture/copy) that shows the specified product information, on-hand until the end of the day, for review during home visits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item and Crediting Resource</th>
<th>Required Product Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast Cereal</strong> (≤ 6 grams sugar/1 dry oz.)</td>
<td>Each item’s actual product package (or picture/copy) must show:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cereals That Meet CACFP Requirements List AND/OR</td>
<td>(1) The name and brand AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CACFP Reference Guide</td>
<td>(2) The Nutrition Facts Label if not on the Cereals That Meet CACFP Requirements List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Items</strong></td>
<td>Depending on which of the 6 options used to determine if it is WGR (refer to CACFP Reference Guide):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CACFP Reference Guide OR</td>
<td>(1) The name and brand AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grains Handout</td>
<td>(2) The package label, ingredients list, CN Label/product formulation statement, or recipe if made from scratch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yogurt</strong> (≤ 23 grams sugar/6 oz.)</td>
<td>(1) The name and brand AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CACFP Reference Guide</td>
<td>(2) The Nutrition Facts Label</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tofu</strong> (≥ 5 grams protein/2.2 oz.)</td>
<td>(1) The name and brand AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• See the Meat/Meat Alternate Food Component section above</td>
<td>(2) The Nutrition Facts Label</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The WI FDCH Sponsor – DPI Agreement: New CACFP Meal Pattern Implementation (Add. A)

WI FDCH sponsors must follow the provisions of this agreement for the new meal pattern documentation and monitoring requirements specified for each meal component.

This agreement provides resources to use for identifying creditable foods and details the menu documentation requirements, claim allowances/disallowances, and home visit monitoring checkpoints agreed upon by all WI FDCH sponsors and DPI.

Child Nutrition (CN) labels or Product Formulation Statements (PFS)

Store-bought combination items
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- Store-bought combination items include (but are not limited to) chicken nuggets, fish sticks, meatballs, pizza, frozen casseroles, and pre-cooked foods containing fillers, etc. purchased at the grocery store and at restaurants.

Store-bought combination items must each have a CN label printed on the packaging or a PFS for crediting it to the meal pattern.

**CN Label:** If a store-bought combination food item has a CN label, it will be on the product packaging. Not all foods will have a CN Label. The Nutrition Facts Label on the package is not the CN label nor does it provide the required information. Here is an example of a CN label:

| CN Label: This 1.95 oz. Fully Cooked Beef Patty provides 1.5 oz. equivalent meat/meat alternate for the Child Nutrition Meal Pattern Requirements. (Use of this logo and statement authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA 06-2018.) |

**Product Formulation Statement (PFS):** If a store-bought combination food item does not have a CN label, you may contact the manufacturer and request a PFS. Keep in mind that a PFS may not be available. A PFS must include a signature from the manufacturer.

- **If a CN label or PFS cannot be obtained, the item cannot be served as part of a reimbursable meal.**

The CN label or PFS provides information on how the food item contributes to the meal pattern.

- Obtain the CN label or PFS prior to preparing the item.
- Use the CN label or PFS to determine how much to prepare and serve.

→ For information on how to use this documentation, refer to: **Store-Bought Combination Foods Handout**

- Providers must keep the product information (or picture/copy) showing the item’s name, brand, and CN label/PFS, on-hand until the end of the day, for review during home visits:

**Home Visit Responsibilities**

The home visit’s menu review component includes looking at the current month’s menus, product documentation for items on-hand, discussing meal pattern errors identified on the provider’s claim error reports etc. Monitors must review CN labels or PFS for store-bought combination items as well as product documentation for breakfast cereals, whole grain-rich items, yogurt, and tofu as detailed within the home visit checkpoints of the **WI FDCH Sponsor – DPI Agreement: New CACFP Meal Pattern Implementation (Add. A).**

When reviewing store-bought combination items on-hand, the monitor must:

- Disallow the observed meal when the provider serves a store-bought combination food item without having the CN label or PFS.
- Review the meal contribution information on the CN label(s) or PFS to verify the provider is serving appropriate quantities of the food item(s) to meet the meal pattern serving size requirements.
- Cite the provider for noncompliance and require corrective action when she doesn’t have the required CN documentation for the specific store-bought combination item served or if she did not serve enough of the food item to meet the minimum serving size requirements according to the CN contribution information.
• In cases where a provider intentionally and/or repeatedly ignores this requirement, appropriate
disciplinary action, including a declaration of serious deficiency, must be pursued by the
sponsor.

MEAL PLANNING AND DOCUMENTATION

Menus
Providers must record dated menus for all meals and snacks served by the end of each day. All food
items actually served to the children for each required component of each meal must be documented
on these menus. FDCH sponsors must only reimburse providers for meals that meet the CACFP
requirements.

Meeting Serving Size Requirements
Enough food must be prepared so that each participant is served at least the minimum serving size of
each component according to the CACFP meal pattern. To help ensure enough food is prepared, use the
following tools:
• Meal Requirements Calculator: Determine the minimum amounts to serve for each component
• Food Buying Guide Calculator: Determine the right amount of food to purchase and prepare so that the minimum amounts for each component are met

Combination Foods Made from Scratch
For combination foods made from scratch, a recipe should be used to ensure that each ingredient crediting as a meal component provides enough to meet the CACFP meal pattern.
➢ A standardized recipe provides exact amounts of ingredients and meal pattern contribution
information for a specified portion size. This information enables you to determine the amount that
must be served to each participant. ➔ For these recipes go to:

Cooking Methods
Foods that are deep-fat fried onsite cannot count toward a reimbursable meal in the CACFP. Deep-fat
frying means cooking by fully covering (submerging) food in hot oil or other fat. “Onsite” means in the
provider’s home. Packaged par-fried or flash-fried foods purchased from a grocery store (such as par-
fried frozen potatoes) or from a restaurant is creditable if heated or reheated onsite by baking,
microwaving, or another method that is not deep-fat frying.
➢ Refer to Child Nutrition (CN) Labels or Product Formulation Statements section above for crediting
requirements for purchased combination foods at the grocery store or restaurants.

MEAL SERVICE

Sponsor Approved Meal Service Times
Providers should serve meals/snacks according to their scheduled meal times that they have agreed to
within their written agreement with the sponsor. Infants should be fed according to their own feeding
schedule.

Meal Service Schedule Changes:
Providers must also inform the sponsor of changes to their regularly scheduled meal service times.
➢ However, sponsors should not restrict providers from serving and claiming meals/snacks outside of
their scheduled meal service times when reasonable variations occur. Depending on the children’s
schedule variations, their hunger needs, and the provider’s flow of activities for the day, it is acceptable for meal service times to vary for some children, for some days.

If a child happens to arrive earlier or later than a scheduled meal service time for a specific day and would like that meal/snack, for example because (s)he is hungry and/or may have to leave soon for an appointment, the provider may serve that child the meal/snack and claim it for reimbursement.

Notification Requirements – when providers will not be home during approved meal services:
Per USDA regulation [§ 226.18(b)(14)]: “Providers must notify the sponsor in advance whenever they are planning to be out of their home during a scheduled meal service time. The Sponsor must disallow meals/snacks that the provider is scheduled to serve during the monitor’s attempted unannounced review when the provider does not notify the monitor prior to the attempted visit.”

**Meal Service Requirements for Claiming Meals**

Meals can be claimed for CACFP reimbursement when the following criteria is met:

- **Meals must be eaten while under Provider’s Care:**
  Meals and snacks eaten by participants while under the provider’s supervision, either in his/her home or during outings, can be claimed. Meals and snacks eaten by participants when not under the provider’s care, including when food is sent home with the participant, cannot be claimed.
  - *Do not claim meals when:*
    The enrolled children’s meals/snacks are provided under a different Child Nutrition Program, such as under the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). For example, if a provider takes her enrolled children to a site to receive meals that are served under the SFSP during the summer, the provider cannot claim those meals for reimbursement.

- **Children must be present and participating:**
  This means that the children are sitting together at the serving table with the other enrolled children during the meal service. If a child is in another room away from the other children, he/she is not present and participating in the meal, and therefore must not be claimed for reimbursement.
  - *This requirement does not apply to infants because they eat “on demand” and may eat different components of a “meal” at different times.*

- **All meal components must be served together:**
  All required meal components must be served together at the same time during a meal or snack. A food or beverage cannot be withheld until the end of the meal. Children should be encouraged to try different foods but cannot be forced to try all foods or to finish one food prior to receiving additional servings of other foods.
  - *This requirement does not apply to infants because they eat “on demand” and may eat different components of a “meal” at different times.*

**Meal Service Methods**

Refer to the Meal Service Styles handout for the definition, requirements and best practices of each meal service style below.

- **Pre-plated:** The minimum serving size of each component, as listed on the CACFP meal pattern for the participant’s age, is served to participants on their plate and in their cup.

- **Family Style Dining:** Participants serve themselves from common dishes of food and small pitchers with the assistance of supervising adults, as needed.
Foods and beverages should be provided in age-appropriate serving dishes and small pitchers, and placed on each table. The amounts of food in the serving dishes must be enough to provide the minimum required CACFP serving sizes for each participant seated at the table, including the supervising adults if they eat. For more information, refer to:

- Participants determine how much food and beverage they want to take, if any.
- As participants serve themselves, they should be encouraged to take the minimum serving size.
- Any component served solely by an adult must be provided in the minimum serving size.

When a complete family style meal service is not practical, providers may offer one or more components using the family style method, and staff may serve other components by the pre-plated style. For foods being served family style, quantities in common serving dishes must provide the minimum serving size for each participant seated at the table. For foods served by staff pre-plated style, the minimum serving sizes of each food must be placed on the participant’s plate or in their cup.

- Cafeteria-Style (from a line, table, or cart): All required meal components in the minimum serving sizes are taken by each participant when going through a serving line or selected from a cart, counter or table.

For more information, view the Meal Service Styles lesson in the CACFP E-Learning Course.

**Drinking Water**

Drinking water must be available and offered to participants throughout the day, including at meal times. However, water is not part of a reimbursable meal and may not be served in place of milk. Serve water with snacks when two creditable food components are served with no other beverage. Younger children must be asked frequently, throughout the day, if they want water. Water can be made available in a variety of ways: cups next to a sink, assigned water bottles, pitchers of water with cups set out, and scheduled water breaks, etc.

- For more information, visit this website: Drinking Water

**Food Safety**

Follow state and local health and sanitation requirements applicable to your program. Licensed and certified providers must follow the Department of Children and Families food safety and sanitation requirements.

The following handouts provide more information about general Food Safety:

- Food Safety & Sanitation
- Safe Food Storage
- CACFP Food Storage Chart