

Crediting Smoothies for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served 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 guidance on preschool meals and ASP snacks, see the CSDE's guide, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.



Smoothies credit differently depending on whether the school food authority (SFA) prepares them on site or purchases commercially prepared products. The USDA recommends not offering smoothies at more than one meal or ASP snack per day.

Smoothies Made on Site

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies made on site by the SFA credit only as juice toward the preschool meal patterns. Crediting is based on the actual volume of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving, which must be documented by the SFA's standardized recipe.



Menu planners must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the preschool juice limit. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as the vegetables or fruits component at only one preschool meal or ASP snack per day, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. For example, if a smoothie credits as the fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at lunch or ASP snack. The USDA's crediting requirements for smoothies are summarized below.

- Smoothies that contain a mix of pureed fruits and vegetables, or that contain 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends, credit as the fruits component if fruit juice or fruit puree is the predominant ingredient. If vegetable juice or vegetable puree is the predominant ingredient, the smoothie credits as the vegetables component.
- Concentrated fruit puree and concentrated juice are added sugars and do not credit toward the meal patterns, unless they are reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice.
- Milk used in smoothies made on site by the SFA credits as the milk component if it is the appropriate type for each age group. Milk must be unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 2-4. The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. If the amount of milk in a smoothie is less than

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the full serving of the milk component, the meal or snack must include an additional serving of milk to meet the full requirement for each age group.

- Yogurt and soy yogurt used in smoothies made on site by the SFA credit as the meat/meat alternates component if they contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*.
- Smoothies may include additional ingredients to improve flavor and consistency, such as oatmeal and peanut butter, but these ingredients cannot credit toward the meal patterns.
- At ASP snack, a smoothie consisting of only milk and juice (or pureed fruits/vegetables) credits as either juice or milk. To be reimbursable, the snack must also include a second component, such as grains or meat/meat alternates. SFAs cannot serve juice (including pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies) when milk is the only other snack component.

The table below shows how a smoothie made with blueberry puree, yogurt, fat-free milk, and oatmeal could credit in the preschool meal patterns for ages 2-4. **Note:** This smoothie recipe cannot credit as the milk component for age 1 because the preschool meal patterns require unflavored whole milk for age 1.



Crediting example for a blueberry smoothie	
Ingredient	Crediting for preschool meal patterns ¹
Frozen blueberry puree, ½ cup ²	½ cup of fruit juice (fruits component)
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup ³	1 ounce of meat/meat alternates
Unflavored fat-free milk, 4 fluid ounces ⁴	4 fluid ounces of fat-free milk
Oatmeal, 2 tablespoons	None
<p>¹ If the amount is less than the full serving of a component, the meal or ASP snack must include additional foods to meet the full serving for each age group.</p> <p>² Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. Juice credits as the vegetables component or fruits component at only one preschool meal or snack per day.</p> <p>³ Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 3.83 grams of sugar per ounce. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <i>Crediting Yogurt for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP</i>.</p> <p>⁴ Unflavored fat-free milk credits only for ages 2 and older. The preschool meal patterns require unflavored whole milk for age 1. The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is ¼ cup. If the amount of milk in a smoothie is less than the full serving of the milk component, the meal or snack must include an additional serving of milk to meet the full requirement for each age group.</p>	

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Commercial Smoothies

Commercial smoothies do not meet the USDA's requirements for fluid milk or yogurt because they do not comply with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for milk or yogurt. Smoothies with dietary supplements such as whey protein powder or herbal supplements such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, and echinacea cannot credit in the NSLP and SBP.

Commercial smoothies made with pureed fruits/vegetables credit only as **juice** toward the fruits component or vegetables component. The product label should include a statement regarding the "percent juice content," which is required by the FDA for beverages made with fruit/vegetable juice or fruit/vegetable puree. For example, an 8-fluid ounce smoothie made from fruit puree with the juice content labeled as "contains 50% juice" credits as 4 fluid ounces or ½ cup of juice. SFAs may need to obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) to document the amount of pureed fruit in the product. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Product Formulation Statements*.

Resources

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPCalcYogurt.pdf>

Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Added Sugars (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/cacfp-chooseyogurts.pdf>

Create a Reimbursable Meal Smoothie (New England Dairy & Food Council):

<http://www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org/media/SmoothieRecipeBooklet2015.pdf>

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

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

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

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

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

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

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

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

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Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables and Fruits (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Vegetables_Subgroups_Fruits.pdf

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

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

Resources and Recipes for Smoothies (New England Dairy & Food Council):

<https://www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org/schools/dairy-in-schools/smoothies/>

Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Fruits (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplefruits.pdf>

Sample Completed Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplevegetables.pdf>

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMeatAlt.pdf>

Serving Milk in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMilk18.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/VegGroupCACFP.pdf>

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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](#) webpages, 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/CreditSmoothiePreschool.pdf>.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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