Minnesota Department of Education

Creditable and Non-creditable Foods in Child Nutrition Programs

	Creditable	Non-creditable
Milk Products Fluid milk must be pasteurized and meet state and local standards. A variety of fluid milk must be offered. Serving a variety of flavors of any of the allowable milks would count as a variety.[8] *Section 202 of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act Policy Memos SP 29-2011and CACFP 21-2011*	• Fat-free milk • One percent low fat milk • Fat-free or low-fat lactose reduced or lactose-free milk • Fat-free or low-fat buttermilk • Fat-free or low-fat acidified milk • Fluid milk substitutes[1] • Whole and two percent milk can only be served to children between the ages of one and two	• Ice milk • Ice cream • Cream cheese • Custard • Evaporated milk • Powdered milk (*exception: Summer Food with state agency waiver*) • Half and Half • Pudding • Sherbet • Yogurt • Frozen yogurt • Fluid milk for infants under 12 months of age • Whole or two percent milk for participants above age two
Meat/Meat Alternates Must be served as the main dish or in a main dish and only one other menu item. *7 CFR 210.10 (k) (3)* *7 CFR 210 App. A (II)* *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*	• Nuts and seeds (one ounce = 50 percent)[2] • Peanut butter (two ounces = four tablespoons) • Lean meat, poultry, fish • Cheese • Cottage cheese • Cheese food, cheese spread[3] • Eggs • Cooked dry beans and peas[4] • Yogurt[5] • Alternate protein products[6]	• Acorns, chestnuts, coconut • Bacon and imitation bacon/bacon bits • Gelatin • Pizza, commercial[7] • Powdered cheese • Cheese sauce, commercial[7] • Cheese product/imitation cheese • Meat in commercial soups[7] • Cream cheese • Tofu • Donations of meat, wild game, poultry, and fish if not inspected and approved by the appropriate federal/state agency • Yogurt products (frozen yogurt, homemade yogurt, yogurt-flavored products, yogurt bars, yogurt covered fruit and nuts)

[1]For all Child Nutrition Programs except the Summer Food Service Program, fluid milk substitutes that are nutritionally equivalent to fluid cow's milk may be provided to non-disabled participants when supported by a written statement from a participant's parent or legal guardian. The state agency must be notified of a sponsor's intent to offer fluid milk substitutes.

[2]Nuts and seeds may provide no more than 50 percent of the meat/meat alternate requirement.

[3]"Cheese substitute," "cheese food substitute" and "cheese spread substitute" must meet the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity for substitute foods and be labeled as "cheese substitute," "cheese food substitute" or "cheese spread substitute" to be creditable in child nutrition programs. The standard requires that a "cheese substitute" is not nutritionally inferior to the standardized cheese for which it is substituting. Any item labeled with the wording "imitation" or cheese "product" does not meet the requirements for use in food-based menu planning approaches and is not creditable in child nutrition programs.

[4]May be credited as either the meat or the vegetable in any one meal.

[5]Yogurt may be used to meet all or part of the meat/meat alternate requirement. Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened. Noncommercial and/or nonstandardized yogurt products, such as frozen yogurt, homemade yogurt, yogurt flavored products, yogurt bars, yogurt covered fruit and/or nuts or similar products shall not be credited. Four ounces (weight) or one-half cup (volume) of yogurt fulfills the equivalent of one ounce of the meat/meat alternate requirement in the meal pattern.

[6]The biological quality of the protein in the alternate protein must be at least 80 percent that of casein and contain at least 18 percent protein by weight when fully hydrated or formulated. Manufacturers supplying an alternate protein product to participating schools or institutions must provide documentation that the product meets this criteria.

[7]Commercially-prepared main dish products that are supported by a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product fact sheet indicating how the product credits toward meal pattern requirements in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs are creditable as stated.

[8]This applies to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program and Special Milk Program. It does not apply to the Summer Food Service Program and Child Adult Care Food Program.

	Creditable	Non-creditable
Grains/Breads Must be or be made with whole grain or enriched meal and/or flour. Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts – the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of grain, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain. Serving equivalents for all grain/bread categories are available on the Grains/Breads Crediting Chart. For the NSLP, one grain-based dessert per day may be counted as a serving of grain/bread. *7 CFR 210.10 (k) (3)* *USDA Memo TA 01-2008 Issued 12/11/07*	• Whole wheat and enriched flours • Amaranth • Bran • Bulgur • Cornmeal[8] • Couscous • Dry cereals • Pasta • Corn grits[8] • Oatmeal • Quinoa • Wheat germ • White or brown rice	• Potato chips • Shoestring potatoes • Popcorn • Starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, peas)[12]
Fruits/Vegetables Two or more servings of different fruits and/or vegetables must be served to meet the fruit/vegetable requirement. Each fruit/vegetable must contribute at least 1/8 cup to be considered creditable. *7 CFR 210.10 (k) (4)* *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*	• Any fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit/vegetable[9] • 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice[10] • Cooked dry peas/beans[11] • Pickled fruits and vegetables if served in quantities of 1/8 cup or more	• Catsup, pickle relish • Juice drinks with less than 50 percent fruit juice • Home canned fruits/vegetables • Jam, jelly • Hominy • Popsicles, gelatin[13] • Potato chips • Fruit snacks or fruit leather[13]

[8]To be credited towards meeting the Grains/Breads Meal Pattern Requirements, corn products must be labeled as either:

- "Whole corn" or other "whole" corn designations, such as whole grain corn, whole ground corn, whole cornmeal, whole corn flour, etc.
- "Enriched" corn or other "enriched" corn designations, such as enriched yellow corn meal, enriched corn flour, enriched corn grits, etc.

[9]Menu items that are mixtures, for example, fruit cocktail and mixed vegetables, only count as one fruit/vegetable serving. Large combination fruit/vegetable salads, served as an entrée containing at least three-fourths cup or more of two or more fruits/vegetables in combination with a meat/meat alternate, such as a chef's salad or a fruit plate with cottage cheese, are considered two or more servings of the fruit/vegetable component and will meet the full requirement. If only two fruits/vegetables are included in the salad, the second fruit/vegetable must contain a minimum of one-eighth cup.

[10]Any liquid or frozen product labeled “juice,” “full strength juice,” “single strength juice” or “reconstituted juice” is considered full-strength juice. Only 100 percent full-strength juice may be used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the School Breakfast Program. For the CACFP and NSLP, you may meet no more than one-half of the total fruit/vegetable requirement with full-strength vegetable or fruit juice. Full-strength juice may be used to meet the total requirement for breakfast or as one component of a snack. You may not serve juice if you serve milk as the only other component of a snack (except in adult day care programs that participate in the CACFP). (In the NSLP, the product must contain a minimum of 50 percent full-strength juice to be used in meeting a part of the fruit/vegetable requirement. Only the amount of full-strength juice contained in a juice drink product is creditable.)

[11]May be credited as either the meat or the vegetable component in any one meal.

[12]Creditable as a fruit/vegetable component but not as a grain/bread component.

[13]Non-creditable unless supported by a CN label or product fact sheet that indicates how the product credits towards meal pattern requirements in USDA Child Nutrition Programs.