



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)  
Child Care Centers and Homes Sponsors

**FROM:** Cheryl Resha, Education Manager *Cheryl Resha*  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

**DATE:** April 6, 2010

**SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #07C-10 and 07H-10  
Clarification Regarding Limit of Weekly Servings of Sweetened Grains/Breads in  
the Child and Adult Care Food Program**

## Meal Pattern for Children

As indicated in the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Nutrition Policies and Guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Crediting Foods* (September 2009), sweetened dessert-type grain/bread items can be served **no more than two times per week total between all snacks** (morning, afternoon and evening) provided in the CACFP Meal Pattern for Children. Dessert-type items include any sweetened grain/bread items, such as cookies (including animal and graham crackers), cakes, brownies, pastries, doughnuts, sweet rolls, granola bars, formulated grain-fruit products (e.g., cereal bars), fruit turnovers, fruit dessert pies, fruit cobblers and fruit crisps. For example, a weekly snack menu with animal crackers, graham crackers, oatmeal raisin cookies and cereal bars exceeds the maximum of two times per week because it contains four sweetened grain/bread items.

As a reminder, cookies include animal and graham crackers. While they contain the word "cracker" in their description, graham crackers and animal crackers are more nutritionally equivalent to cookies and therefore count toward the total requirement of no more than two servings of sweetened grain/bread items per week at snack. Unlike regular crackers, animal and graham crackers contain added sugar and do not fill the role of crackers in a meal. For example, animal or graham crackers would not be served with cheese or soup. They are served as a dessert or snack item.

Enriched products are not nutritionally equivalent to whole-grain products because enrichment does not replace all the nutrients and fiber originally present in the whole grain. While animal and graham crackers may be better choices than some cookies, they are still not nutrient-rich choices. They are made with enriched flour (not whole grain) and contain few nutrients or fiber. Enriched grain products such as crackers and cookies can meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements for grain/breads but they do not provide optimal nutrition for young children. CACFP snack menus should encourage nutrient-rich foods that provide substantial amounts of naturally occurring nutrients with relatively few calories, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat dairy products, lean meats and legumes.

Please note that the CSDE's *Guidance for Crediting Cookies, Crackers and Cereals in the CACFP* (2003) is obsolete and must be discarded. Guidance to help child care facilities determine CACFP crediting information for cookies, crackers and cereals is incorporated in the new *Nutrition Policies and Guidance* (see *Crediting Foods – Grains/Breads*) at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322326>. This guide includes two worksheets to assist CACFP facilities in determining whether purchased cookies, crackers and cereals meet CACFP requirements:

- Worksheet for Crediting Purchased Grains/Breads in the CACFP; and
- Worksheet for Crediting Cereals in the CACFP.

CACFP sponsors are responsible for using these worksheets to determine whether purchased cookies, crackers and cereals meet the minimum requirements of the CACFP Meal Pattern for Children. The CSDE will review these documents as part of the CACFP facility's administrative review.

### **Meal Pattern for Infants**

Sweetened dessert-type grain/bread items (including cookies) should not be served to infants. Sweetened foods add unnecessary calories without providing essential nutrients. They also promote the development of tooth decay in babies.

The CACFP Infant Meal Pattern includes a category of **Bread and Crackers** that allows only specific cracker-type products, not the broader category of **Grains and Breads** contained in the CACFP Meal Pattern for Children. In addition to specific types of crackers (saltines, low-salt crackers or snack crackers without nuts, seeds or hard pieces of whole-grain kernels, matzo crackers and Zwieback), the Bread and Crackers category includes animal crackers, graham crackers without honey and teething biscuits, none of which are actually "crackers." These foods are allowed due to their lower sugar content compared with traditional cookies, as well as their product consistency, i.e., they easily become soft and dissolve when babies suck or chew on them. Any other cookies or crackers are **not** creditable in the CACFP Infant Meal Pattern (see "cracker-type products" in *Crediting Commercial Bread and Crackers* on page 58 of *Nutrition Policies and Guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Feeding Infants* at [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/CACFP/Feeding\\_Infants/Feeding\\_Infants.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/CACFP/Feeding_Infants/Feeding_Infants.pdf)).

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