The CACFP regulations require that lunch and supper meals contain a serving of meat/meat alternate as specified in the meal patterns. In order to meet the minimum serving, the meat/meat alternate for lunch and supper may be served in the main dish or in the main dish together with another menu item. For example, offering a ⅛ cup serving of cooked pinto beans with 1 ounce of grilled chicken breast provides 1½ ounce equivalents of meat/meat alternate and meets the minimum serving size required in the meal pattern for children ages 3 through 5.

A meat/meat alternate is not required to be served at breakfast. However, meats and meat alternates may be used to meet the entire grains requirement a maximum of 3 times per week at breakfast. One ounce of meat or meat alternate is equal to 1 ounce equivalent of grains. A menu item must provide at least a ¼ ounce equivalent of meat or meat alternate to count towards the meat or meat alternate requirement.

Meats and meat alternates include lean meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, cheese, eggs, tofu, yogurt, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds, nut or seed butters (except for acorn), or an equivalent quantity of any combination of these foods. All meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish must meet State or local regulations for food safety.

Please note, a serving of cooked, dry beans or peas cannot be credited as both a meat alternate and a vegetable in the same meal. If two different cooked, dry beans or peas are offered at a meal, the program operator may choose to credit one as a meat alternate and the other as a vegetable. Creditable portion sizes for beans as vegetables and as meat alternates are found both in the CACFP meal patterns and the *Food Buying Guide*. Additionally, when yogurt is served in place of milk to adults, the yogurt cannot credit toward both the milk and the meats/meat alternates component in the same meal.

Alternate Protein Products (APPs)

Alternate Protein Products (APPs) such as soy protein isolate or whey protein concentrate are generally included as an added ingredient in processed meat/meat alternate products such as a formed meat patty or vegetarian patty that resembles a meat product. Meats/meat alternates with APPs should be accompanied by a CN label or a Product Formulation Statement. Prior to being added to other products, APPs must meet the specific standards. Before using products containing APP and claiming the meals for reimbursement, contact your State agency or your sponsoring organization. See the Resource Section on page 134 for State agency contact information.

Nuts, Seeds, and Nut and Seed Butters

Nuts and seeds may fulfill no more than one-half of the meat/meat alternate requirement for reimbursable meals. They must be combined with another meat or meat alternate to meet the full requirement for a reimbursable meal. However, nut and seed butters may credit toward the entire meats/meat alternates component. Please be aware that some participants may have nut or seed intolerances or allergies. You are encouraged to make reasonable accommodations for children with allergies to ensure they are receiving safe and nutritious meals. Nuts and seeds should be served with caution to children under 4 years of age and some elderly participants, as they may cause choking. Always supervise participants during meals and snacks.

Use this section as a guide to identify creditable meats/meat alternates and products that contain creditable meats/meat alternates. This is NOT an all-inclusive list. For information on creditable meats/meat alternates commonly served in Child Nutrition Programs, see the *Food Buying Guide*.

Details in the "Additional Information" column help you to determine if the product is creditable and where to go to get more information, for example the *Food Buying Guide*.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Acorns			X	Acorns are not creditable due to their low protein content.
Bacon and Imitation Bacon Products			X	Bacon is not creditable. These products contain little meat. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.
Bacon Rinds			X	Bacon Rinds are not creditable.
Bacon, Turkey		X		Turkey bacon is creditable only if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.
Bean Flour		X		Bean flour is creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component when served with at least 0.25 oz eq of visible meat/meat alternate. Document meal pattern contribution with a Product Formulation Statement.
Beans or Peas (Legumes), Canned or Dry	X			Cooked dry or canned beans or peas (kidney, garbanzo, black, lentils, etc.) may be credited as either a meat alternate or a vegetable, but not as both in the same meal. See the Vegetables section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Beans, Refried	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Beef Jerky		X		Beef jerky is creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component if it is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement (PFS). The PFS should identify the type of beef or pork used to make the product as listed in the *Food Buying Guide*. For example, "ground beef (not more than 30 percent fat)." Please note beef jerky may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Bologna		X		Bologna is creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide* for creditable luncheon meats such as bologna. Bologna containing byproducts, cereals, or binders/extenders is only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. Examples of binders/extenders are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. Examples of byproducts are glands, hearts, and other organ meats. As a best practice, it is recommended to serve low-fat versions of luncheon meats.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Canadian Bacon or Mild Cured Pork	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide* for creditable pork products.
Canned or Frozen Combination Foods such as: Stews, Beef-a-Roni, Chili, Macaroni, Pizzas, Pot Pies, Raviolis		X		These products are creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement and contains at least 0.25 oz eq meat/meat alternate per serving.
Canned, Pressed Luncheon Meat (Potted/Deviled)			X	Canned, pressed luncheon meat is not creditable.
Ceviche (Raw Fish Marinated in Citrus Juice)			X	Raw ceviche is not creditable. Raw fish is a potential health hazard for vulnerable populations.
Cheese, Cottage or Ricotta	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. A 2 oz serving of cottage cheese credits as 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Cheese, Natural or Processed	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. A 1 oz serving of hard cheese provides 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Cheese Foods, Cheese Food Substitutes, Cheese Spreads, and Cheese Spread Substitutes	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. A 2 oz serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. These products are not creditable in the infant meal pattern.
Cheese, Imitation			X	Cheese labeled as "imitation" is not creditable because the nutrient content is inferior to the food it substitutes and therefore is not creditable.
Cheese Products			X	Cheese labeled as a cheese "product" is not creditable. Cheese products do not have a standard of identity.
Chestnuts	X			Chestnuts credit as 1 oz eq meat alternate per 1 oz of nuts. Note that chestnuts are not in the *Food Buying Guide*.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Chicken Nuggets		X		The edible chicken portion is creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Commercial chicken nuggets are creditable only if they have (1) a CN label or (2) a Product Formulation Statement. Document the meal pattern contribution of homemade nuggets with a standardized recipe. For breading/batter crediting, see the Grains section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Deep-fat frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods onsite. Chicken nuggets credit if reheated using a method other than deep-fat frying. This product has a high fat content and should be served on a limited frequency.
Chickpeas, Roasted (Roasted Garbanzo Beans)	X			Roasted chickpeas may be credited as either a meat alternate or a vegetable but not as both in the same meal. A ¼ cup roasted chickpeas credit as a 1 oz eq meat alternate or a ¼ cup vegetable, but not both at the same meal. Please note they may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Chitterlings	X			Chitterlings are small intestines and credit as a meat alternate. A ½ cup chitterlings is equal to 2 oz eq meat alternate.
Corn Dogs, Corn Dog Nuggets		X		Only the weight of the hot dog (frankfurter) credits toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. If the hot dog contains byproducts, cereals, or binders/extenders they are only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. Examples of binders/extenders are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. For breading/batter crediting see the Grains section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Deep-fat frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods onsite. Corn dogs credit if reheated using a method other than deep-fat frying. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe, a CN label, or a Product Formulation Statement. This product has a high fat and salt content and should be served on a limited frequency. Remember to serve corn dogs in small pieces for those participants where choking is a potential hazard.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Cream Cheese			X	Cream cheese is not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.
Deviled Eggs	X			Whole eggs are creditable. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. The weights of the added ingredients (for example, relish, mayonnaise, etc.) cannot contribute to the meal pattern requirements.
Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Snacks, Shelf-Stable		X		These products credit based on the percent of meat, poultry, and/or seafood the product contains. These products are creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. The creditable amount cannot exceed the weight of the volume served. The creditable ingredients must match or have a similar description as listed on the product label and must match or have a similar description as listed in the *Food Buying Guide*. Please note these products may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Eggs, Liquid Substitutes			X	Liquid egg substitutes are not whole eggs and are not creditable. Only whole liquid eggs are creditable.
Eggs, Whites Only			X	Egg whites are not creditable if served without the yolks. Only whole eggs are creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.
Eggs, Whole, Fresh, Frozen, Dried, or Liquid	X			All forms of whole eggs are creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. One large egg credits as 2 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Eggs, Yolks Only			X	Only whole eggs are creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.
Falafel		X		The volume of meat alternate, such as beans, in each serving is creditable. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a Product Formulation Statement.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Fish, Commercial	X			Must comply with State and local regulations. See Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. The FDA and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that pregnant women and young children avoid eating fish that typically have higher mercury levels. When including fish in menus, you should consider the fish allergies or intolerances of participants. Please note that bones in fish should also be considered a choking hazard.
Fish, Home Pickled			X	For safety reasons home pickled fish is not creditable.
Fish, Noncommercial, Home-Caught		X		Home-caught fish is only creditable if it meets State or local public health policies regarding food safety or if the center is serving primarily an Native American population with donated traditional foods. The FDA and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that pregnant women and young children avoid eating fish that typically have higher mercury levels. When including fish in menus, you should consider the fish allergies or intolerances of participants. Please note that bones in fish should also be considered a choking hazard.
Fish Sticks or Portions		X		The edible fish portion credits toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. For breading/batter crediting, see the Grains section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Document the meal pattern contributions with a CN label, Product Formulation Statement, or a standardized recipe. Deep-fat frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods onsite. Fish sticks credit if reheated using a method other than deep-fat frying. This product has a high fat content and should be served on a limited frequency. The FDA and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that pregnant women and young children avoid eating fish that typically have higher mercury levels. When including fish in menus, you should consider the fish allergies or intolerances of participants.
Game [e.g., Deer Meat (Venison), Bison, Squirrel, Elk, etc.]		X		Game, for safety reasons, is only creditable if it is inspected and approved by the appropriate State, local, or Federal agency or when it is served as a traditional food on Indian Reservations or schools or institutions operated by Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Home-Slaughtered Meat			X	For safety reasons, home-slaughtered meat is not creditable.
Hot Dogs (Frankfurters)	X			Hot dogs (frankfurters) are creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. If they contain byproducts, cereals, or binders/extenders they are only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. Examples of binders/extenders are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. Examples of byproducts are glands, hearts, and other organ meats. The selection of low-fat versions of these types of products is encouraged. Remember to serve hot dogs in small pieces for those participants where choking is a potential hazard.
Hummus	X			The volume of meat alternate, such as beans, in each serving may credit toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a Product Formulation Statement.
Kidney, Liver, Heart, Gizzards	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Liverwurst		X		Liverwurst is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.
Luncheon Meats (Chicken, Turkey, Beef, Pork, all Deli Meats)		X		Only luncheon meats that are listed in the *Food Buying Guide* or have a (1) CN label or (2) Product Formulation Statement are creditable.
Meat Sauce (Spaghetti or Brown)		X		Only the amount of cooked meat in the sauce may be credited toward the meats/meat alternates component. The minimum creditable amount is 0.25 oz of meat. Commercial meat sauce is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement; and the meat ingredient matches or has a similar description to a meat item in the *Food Buying Guide* (e.g., Ground Beef, not more than 30% fat).
Meat and Poultry Sticks (Not Dried or Semi-Dried and Not Jerky)		X		Meat sticks in a jar are similar to Vienna sausage. Meat sticks are creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. The creditable amount cannot exceed the weight of the volume served. The creditable ingredients must match or have a similar description as listed on the product label and must match or have a similar description as listed in the *Food Buying Guide*.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Neufchatel Cheese			X	Neufchatel cheese is not creditable.
Nut Flour			X	Nut flour is not creditable.
Nuts	X			A 1 oz serving of nuts provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Please note that nuts may be a choking hazard for some populations. When including nuts and nut products in menus, you should consider the nut allergies or intolerances of participants.
Nut or Seed Butters	X			A 2 tablespoon serving of nut or seed butters provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. It is suggested that nut butters be served in combination with another meat/meat alternate since the required portion sizes may be too large for preschool children. When including nuts and nut products in menus, you should consider the nut allergies or intolerances of participants.
Oxtail, Beef	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Pasta/Noodles (made from Beans/Peas)		X		To credit as a meat alternate, pasta/noodles made from beans/peas are creditable if a serving provides at least a 0.25 oz eq of meat/meat alternate. It must be offered with additional meat/meat alternate, such as tofu, cheese, or meat. Document meal pattern contribution with a CN label or a Product Formulation Statement.
Peanut Butter Spreads			X	Peanut butter spreads are not the same as peanut butter. Peanut butter spreads do not have a standard of identity and are not creditable.
Peas or Lentils, Dry	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. A ¼ cup cooked dry peas or lentils credits as 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Pepperoni, Traditional, Dried		X		These products credit based on the percent of meat (beef and pork) the product contains. Pepperoni is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Pepperoni, Turkey		X		These products credit based on the percent of poultry the product contains. Turkey Pepperoni is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.
Pig's Feet, Neck Bones, or Tails (Parts)			X	These products contain small amounts of meat and are not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.
Pimento Cheese, Commercial	X			A 2 oz serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Pizza, Commercial		X		Commercial pizza is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. Only the meat/meat alternate ingredients are creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the *Food Buying Guide* for information on crediting remaining ingredients toward meal pattern requirements.
Pizza, Homemade	X			Only the meat/meat alternate ingredients are creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the *Food Buying Guide* for information on crediting remaining ingredients toward meal pattern requirements. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Polish Sausage		X		Polish sausage is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.
Pot Pies, Commercial		X		Commercial pot pies are creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.
Pot Pies, Homemade		X		The meat and meat alternate ingredients are creditable if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq meat/meat alternate per serving. See the *Food Buying Guide* for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward meal pattern requirements. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Potted or Deviled Meats			X	Potted or deviled meats are not creditable.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Powdered Cheese (in Boxed Macaroni and Cheese)			X	Powdered cheese mix is not creditable. The macaroni, if made from enriched or whole grains, may be credited toward the grains component.
Queso Blanco, Commercial, Pasteurized	X			Queso blanco is a creamy, soft cheese. Commercial, pasteurized queso blanco is creditable. See the Meats/ Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Queso Blanco, Homemade			X	Homemade queso blanco is not creditable. There are potential safety concerns with this product.
Queso Fresco, Commercial, Pasteurized	X			Queso fresco is a fresh, white cheese. Commercial, pasteurized queso fresco is creditable. See the Meats/ Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Queso Fresco, Homemade			X	Homemade queso fresco is not creditable. There are potential safety concerns with this product.
Quiche		X		The eggs, cheese, and/or meat may be credited toward the meats/meat alternates component if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq per serving. See the *Food Buying Guide* for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward meal pattern requirements. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Salami		X		Creditable only if it is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. This product is high in sodium and fat.
Salt Pork			X	Salt pork is not creditable. Salt pork contains little meat.
Sausage		X		Products labeled “fresh pork sausage” or “fresh Italian sausage” may be credited. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Other sausage products must have (1) CN label or a (2) Product Formulation Statement.
Scrapple			X	Scrapple has an insufficient meat content and is not creditable.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Seeds	X			A 1 oz serving of seeds provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Seeds may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Shellfish	X			Shellfish must be fully cooked; only the edible fish portion is creditable. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. When including shellfish in menus, you should consider the shellfish allergies or intolerances of participants.
Shellfish, Imitation (Commercial Surimi and Imitation Crab)	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. A 3 oz serving of thawed, commercially prepared imitation shellfish provides 1 oz eq meat. A 4.4 oz serving of thawed, commercially prepared imitation shellfish provides 1.5 oz eq meat. Document imitation shellfish products containing higher quantities of fish product, or other creditable ingredients with a Product Formulation Statement or a CN Label.
Soups, Commercial, Bean or Pea	X			A ½ cup bean or pea soup equals ¼ cup or 1 oz eq meat alternate. Beans and peas may be credited either as a vegetable or meat alternate, but not both in the same meal. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Soups, Commercial with Meat or Meat Alternate		X		Creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement.
Soups, Homemade with Meat or Meat Alternate		X		The meat and meat alternate ingredients are creditable if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq meat/meat alternate per serving. See the *Food Buying Guide* for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward meal pattern requirements. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Soy Nut Butter, Almond Butter, Cashew Butter	X			A 2 tablespoon serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. Nut butters such as almond, cashew, or soy are a good alternative for those participants who are allergic to peanut butter. It is suggested that nut butter be served in combination with another meat/meat alternate since the required portion sizes may be too large for preschool children.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Soy Beans, Fresh (Edamame)	X			May be credited either as a meat alternate or a vegetable, but not both in the same meal. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Soy Beans, Roasted (Soy Nuts)	X			Roasted soy beans may be credited as either a meat alternate or a vegetable, but not as both in the same meal. A ¼ cup roasted soy beans credit as a 1 oz eq meat alternate or a ¼ cup vegetable, but not as both at the same meal. Please note they may be a choking hazard for some populations. When including soy and soy products in menus, you should consider the potential food allergies or intolerances.
Spare Ribs	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. These products contain small amounts of meat and are high in fat.
Surimi, Commercial (Imitation Crab, and Imitation Shellfish))	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. A 3 oz serving of thawed, commercially prepared surimi seafood provides 1 oz eq meat. A 4.4 oz serving of thawed, commercially prepared surimi seafood provides 1.5 oz eq meat. Document surimi products containing higher quantities of fish product, or other creditable ingredients with a Product Formulation Statement or a CN Label.
Sushi (Raw Seafood and Sashimi)			X	Raw sushi is not creditable. Raw fish is a potential health hazard for vulnerable populations.
Tahini (Sesame Seed Butter)	X			Credited as a seed or nut butter. A 2 tablespoon serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. It is suggested that seed and nut butters be served in combination with another meat/meat alternate since the required portion sizes may be too large for preschool children.
Tempeh, Commercial	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the Food Buying Guide. A 1 oz serving of commercially prepared tempeh provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Document meal pattern contribution of tempeh that contains other creditable ingredients (grains, seeds, etc.) with a Product Formulation Statement or a CN Label.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Tofu, Commercial		X		Commercially prepared tofu is creditable. A 2.2 oz (¼ cup) serving of commercially prepared tofu, containing at least 5 g of protein, provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Homemade or noncommercial tofu is not creditable.
Tripe, Beef	X			See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*.
Vienna Sausage		X		Vienna sausage is creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide*. If Vienna sausage contains byproducts, cereals, or binders/extenders it is only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a Product Formulation Statement. Examples of binders/extenders are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. Examples of byproducts are glands, hearts, and other organ meats. The selection of low-fat versions of these types of products is encouraged. Remember to serve Vienna sausage in small pieces for those participants where choking is a potential hazard.
Yogurt, Commercial Plain, Un-Flavored, Flavored, Sweetened		X		A ½ cup or 4 oz provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Must contain no more than 23 g of total sugars per 6 oz See the Meats/Meat Alternates section in the *Food Buying Guide* for additional crediting information. Homemade yogurt is not creditable. There are potential safety concerns with homemade yogurt.
Yogurt, Soy		X		A ½ cup or 4 oz provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Must contain no more than 23 g of total sugars per 6 oz
Yogurt in a Tube		X		A 2.2 oz tube of yogurt provides ½ oz eq meat alternate. Must contain no more than 23 g of total sugars per 6 oz

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Yogurt, Frozen		X		Program operators may credit yogurt that they have frozen. Please note that crediting of meat/meat alternate in this form is discouraged, as it is perceived as a dessert. Commercial frozen yogurt is similar to ice cream and is not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information of commercial frozen yogurt.
"Yogurt," Liquid			X	Liquid "yogurt" is not creditable. This product does not meet the definition of yogurt. However, cultured milk (kefir) would contribute toward the fluid milk requirement.
Yogurt Products (commercial); Frozen Yogurt, Yogurt Bars, Yogurt Flavored Products, Yogurt-Covered Fruits or Nuts, or similar products			X	These products are not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

Meats

1. **Can pizza be credited as a meat/meat alternate?**

   Yes. Meats, cheeses, or other meat alternates on a pizza are creditable toward the meats/meat alternates component. The weights of the sauce, vegetables, and crust may contribute toward the vegetable and grains components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe, CN label, or a Product Formulation Statement.

2. **Chicken nuggets, hot dog nuggets, and fish sticks are very popular in our center. How many nuggets or sticks should we serve to meet requirements?**

   Commercial nuggets and sticks are creditable only if they have (1) a CN label or (2) a Product Formulation Statement. These products vary in size and in the amount of meat and breading or batter in the product. Only the edible meat or meat alternate portion is creditable as a meat/meat alternate. Document the meal pattern contribution of homemade nuggets with a standardized recipe. For breading/batter crediting, see the Grains section in the *Food Buying Guide*.

   Some States or sponsoring organizations may require you to use only CN labeled products. Check with your State agency or sponsoring organization for requirements (see the Resource Section on page 134 for State agency contact information).

Meat Alternates

1. **Why are nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters allowed as meat alternates and how do they credit?**

   Nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters are good sources of protein and other nutrients.

   One ounce of nuts or seeds provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. Nuts and seeds may count toward half (½) of the meat/meat alternate requirement at meals and for the entire meat/meat alternate requirement at snack. For a reimbursable meal, they must be combined with other meats/meat alternates.

   Two tablespoons of nut or seed butter, such as peanut butter and almond butter, provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. They may be used to meet all or a portion of the meats/meat alternates component. For preschool-age children, it is recommended that nut and seed butters be served in combination with another meat/meat alternate since the required portion sizes may be too large.

   Please note that nuts and seeds may be a choking hazard for some populations. Nuts are not recommended for children under 4 years of age and adults at risk for choking. Always supervise participants during meals and snacks. Additionally, some participants may have food intolerances or allergies to nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters.

2. **What types of cheeses are creditable under the CACFP meal pattern requirements?**

   Natural, low-fat, or reduced-fat cheeses, such as Cheddar, Swiss, Colby, and Monterey Jack, as well as cheese foods, cheese spreads, cottage cheese, and ricotta cheese, are examples of creditable cheeses. Products labeled as imitation cheese or cheese products are not creditable. Other examples of non-creditable cheese are cheese whips and cream cheese.

3. **Are grated Romano and Parmesan cheeses creditable?**

   Yes, both Romano and Parmesan cheeses are creditable as a meat alternate.

   Small amounts of cheese, when used as a garnish, a seasoning, or in a breading, may credit toward the meats/meat alternates component if the total amount of meat/meat alternate ingredients in the product provides at least a ¼ ounce equivalent meat/meat alternate per serving. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe, CN label, or a Product Formulation Statement.

4. **Can vegetarian meals be served in the CACFP?**

   Yes. There are a variety of creditable foods within the meats/meat alternates component to allow centers and day care homes to plan vegetarian meals. Examples of creditable vegetarian meat alternates for the CACFP include natural and processed cheese, cheese foods, cheese spreads, cottage cheese, eggs, yogurt (including soy yogurt), tofu, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, or any combination of these foods.

5. **We have several participants that attend our center who cannot eat certain foods because of religious reasons. Can we claim these participants on the food program?**

   Yes. Substitutions may be made to accommodate religious dietary restrictions within existing meal pattern requirements.

6. **Is tofu creditable as a meat/meat alternate in the CACFP?**

   Yes. A 2.2 ounce serving (¼ cup) of commercially-prepared tofu, containing at least 5 grams of protein, is creditable as 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate.

7. **How would you calculate the creditable amount of meat alternate contributed by tofu in a stir-fry using the yield information from the *Food Buying Guide*?**

   For example:

   If you prepare a ½ cup serving of vegetable stir-fry with creditable tofu that contains 1.5 ounces of tofu in the serving, calculate the meal pattern contribution as follows:

   The *Food Buying Guide* yield information for tofu is 2.2 ounces or ¼ cup credits as 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. Therefore 1.50 ounces tofu divided by 2.2 ounces equals 0.68 ounce equals 0.50 ounce equivalent (rounded down to the nearest 0.25 ounce) meat alternate.

   In this example, a ½ cup serving of vegetable stir-fry with tofu provides 0.50 ounce equivalent meat alternate.

8. **How are fresh soybeans (edamame) credited?**

   Fresh soybeans (edamame) may credit as a vegetable or a meat alternate, the same as dry mature beans/peas. These fresh soybeans are the only immature beans/peas that credit the same as mature beans/peas. To credit fresh soybeans, follow the same guidance used for crediting dry beans or peas.

9. Is soy yogurt creditable as a meat/ meat alternate?

Yes. A ½ cup of soy yogurt credits as 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate.

10. Must yogurt be offered in 4 ounce portions in order to be credited?

No. Although ½ cup (4 ounces) of yogurt, including soy yogurt, provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate, this does not mean that programs are limited to offering yogurt in ½ cup (4 ounce) servings. Meal planners may use their discretion to vary the portion sizes offered. In order to credit towards the meat alternates component, a minimum serving size of ⅛ cup (1 ounce) of yogurt is required to provide the minimum 0.25 ounce equivalent meat alternate.

11. Why is there a sugar limit for yogurt of no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces? Does this also apply to soy yogurt?

Yogurt, including soy yogurt, is a great source of calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, and vitamin B-12. However, some yogurt products have significantly more sugar than others. To promote healthy habits from the start, the updated meal patterns limit the amount of total sugars allowed in creditable yogurt and soy yogurts.

Yogurt or soy yogurt may contain up to 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces. As a reminder, soy yogurt is not creditable in the infant meal pattern.

12. What method should be used to determine if a yogurt meets the sugar limit?

There are 3 methods you may use to determine if the yogurt meets the sugar limits. Using the Nutrition Facts labels below, follow the example for each method to determine if the yogurt is creditable.

Method 1

Step 1: What is the serving size, in ounces?

6 ounces.

Step 2: What is the amount of total sugars in grams?

19 grams.

Step 3: Use the chart below to determine if the yogurt meets the sugar limit.

This yogurt is creditable because it has a 6 ounce serving size and 19 grams of sugar.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size **6 oz**

Amount per serving

Calories **125**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	**0%**
Saturated Fat 0g	**0%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	**3%**
Sodium 90mg	**4%**
Total Carbohydrate 23g	**8%**
Dietary Fiber 0g	**0%**
Total Sugars 19g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	**8%**
Protein 3g	

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Table of Yogurt Serving Sizes in Grams and Sugar Limits

Serving Size* (oz)	Serving Size in Grams (g) (Use when the serving size is not listed in ounces)	Sugars (g)
If the serving size is		Sugars cannot be more than
2.25 oz	64 g	9 g
3.5 oz	99 g	13 g
4 oz	113 g	15 g
5.3 oz	150 g	20 g
6 oz	170 g	23 g
8 oz	227 g	31 g

**Serving sizes here refer to those commonly found for store-bought yogurts. Homemade yogurt is not creditable in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Sugar limits are pre-calculated and set forth by the USDA.*

Method 2

Step 1: What is the serving size in ounces?

4.5 ounces.

Step 2: What is the amount of total sugar (in grams)?

16 grams.

Step 3: Divide the total sugars by the serving size. In this example, it would be:

$$\frac{\text{Sugars}}{\text{Serving Size}} = \frac{16}{4.5} = 3.55$$

Step 4: If the number is **3.83 or less**, the yogurt is within the sugar limit. 3.83 is the maximum grams of sugar per 1 ounce of yogurt allowed.

This yogurt is creditable.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size **4.5 oz**

Amount per serving

Calories **140**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2g	**3%**
Saturated Fat 0g	**0%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	**3%**
Sodium 90mg	**4%**
Total Carbohydrate 23g	**8%**
Dietary Fiber 0g	**0%**
Total Sugars 16g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	**8%**
Protein 8g	

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Method 3

Step 1: The serving size is: 170 grams.

Step 2: The amount of total sugar is: 19 grams.

Step 3: Use the chart on page 46 to determine if the yogurt meets the sugar limit. The yogurt has less sugar than the amount listed in the chart. Therefore this yogurt meets the sugar requirement.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size **6 oz (170g)**

Amount per serving

Calories **140**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2g	**3%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	**3%**
Sodium 90mg	**4%**
Total Carbohydrate 23g	**8%**
Dietary Fiber 0g	**0%**
Total Sugars 19g	
Includes 7g Added Sugars	**14%**
Protein 8g	

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

13. How are cups of commercially prepared yogurt containing fruit credited? Does the volume of fruit have to be subtracted from the total weight of the containers?

Commercially prepared yogurt containing fruit receives the full credit towards the meats/meat alternates component. For example, ½ cup (4 ounces) of yogurt provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. It should be noted that the fruit in commercial yogurts cannot be credited toward the fruits component. Fruit may be credited only when the program operator adds sufficient quantities of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit to commercial yogurt.

14. Will yogurt credit if I serve it frozen?

Program operators may credit yogurt that they have frozen. Please note that crediting meat/meat alternate in this form is discouraged as it is perceived as a dessert. Commercial frozen yogurt is similar to ice cream and is not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the *Food Buying Guide* for purchasing information.

15. If I buy regular yogurt and use it in a smoothie, can the yogurt be credited?

Yes. Yogurt may be served in a drinkable form and credit it toward the meat alternates component if you use creditable yogurt in your own standardized smoothie recipe. For more information on smoothies, see the Resource Section on page 133 for the CACFP policy memo on *Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs–Revised*.