

While the new sodium limits are not required until the 2027-2028 School Year, SFAs may find it helpful to begin educating students and parents this year on the coming changes. The Institute of Child Nutrition's [Shake It Up Resource Page](#) offers a plethora of resources for Child Nutrition Professionals that will be helpful in reaching the new sodium limits.

### Menu Planning Flexibilities – Afterschool Snack Meal Pattern

The final rule updates National School Lunch Program afterschool snacks meal pattern requirements for K-12 children to align with Child and Adult Care Food Program snack requirements effective July 1, 2025.

Students must be offered **two of the five components** for an afterschool snack to be reimbursable (fruits and vegetables are now considered separate components, consistent with the National School Lunch Program meal pattern). The five components, along with minimum portion sizes and key changes, are as follows:

Component	Minimum Portion Size	Key Changes & Reminders
Fluid Milk	8 ounces	May serve fat-free, unflavored or flavored milk ~or~ low-fat, unflavored or flavored milk
Meat/Meat Alternate	1 ounce equivalent	
Grain	1 ounce equivalent	-80% of weekly grains served must be whole grain-rich -Grain-based desserts (cookies, donuts, bars, toaster pastries, etc.) are not creditable as grains
Vegetable	¾ cup	Raw leafy greens credit as ½ of the volume served (1/2 cup lettuce = ¼ cup vegetable)
Fruit	¾ cup	-No more than half of the weekly fruit requirement can be in the form of juice -Dried fruit credits as twice the volume (1/4 cup raisins = ½ cup fruit)

SFAs should also note the following when planning afterschool snack menus:

- Consistent with the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program nutrient requirements, added sugars will be limited in breakfast cereals (≤6 grams per dry ounce) and yogurt (≤12 grams per 6 ounces).
- When fluid milk is served as one of the two required components of an afterschool snack, the other required meal component must not be a beverage (ie, milk and juice cannot be served as an afterschool snack).
- Deep-fat fried foods are not reimbursable.
- The portion sizes listed above are **minimum** requirements. Larger portion sizes may be served and are highly encouraged for children ages 13-18.
- SFAs serving afterschool snacks to preschool students who are not comingled must follow the [CACFP Snack Meal Pattern](#).

The School Nutrition Programs Unit will be presenting an Afterschool Snack Webinar Training this summer, which will include the new meal pattern and Afterschool Snack requirements. SFAs may also refer to USDA's [Menu Planning for NSLP Afterschool Snack Service Webinar](#) for additional information.