



**Child Nutrition Programs Regulations Issued April 24, 2024**  
**Effective Date July 1, 2024<sup>1</sup>**  
**Summary of Key Provisions**

On April 24, 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the final rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The rule, for the first time, establishes added sugar limits in school lunch and breakfast programs, including product-based limits for breakfast cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk and a limit on weekly calories from added sugars. Beginning on July 1, 2025, breakfast cereals served in school lunch and breakfast programs will be limited to no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce; yogurt may have no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce; and flavored milk may have no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. In addition, starting on July 1, 2027, added sugars must be less than 10% of calories across the week in school lunch and breakfast programs.

The rule also implements a single sodium reduction in school lunch and breakfast programs. Beginning on July 1, 2027, schools must scale back sodium in lunches by 15% from current limits, and by 10% sodium in breakfast meals. The USDA said it is allowing current sodium standards to remain for the next three years to give schools and manufacturers time to adapt.

The rule maintains the current whole grains requirement that at least 80% of the weekly grains offered in the school lunch and breakfast programs are whole grain-rich. It adds to the current definition of whole grain-rich: “the grain content of a product is between 50% and 100% whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched.”

Additional changes that will be implemented over the next two years include making it easier for schools to accommodate vegetarian diets and the cultural and religious food preferences of students, and to offer healthier proteins at breakfast. Schools will have the ability to phase in the changes, allowing schools to update their school menus gradually.

Nearly 30 million children receive breakfasts and lunches at K-12 schools every school day. While purchasing high quality foods is expensive, the USDA expects the new rules will result in a 1% cost increase over the next 10 years.

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<sup>1</sup> While the rule takes effect July 1, 2024, the USDA is gradually phasing in required changes over time. Program operators are not required to make any changes to their menus until school year 2025-2026 at the earliest.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service**

**7 C.F.R. PARTS 210, 215, 220, 225, 226–Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**  
(released April 25, 2024, effective July 1, 2024)

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1752, 1758(a)(1)(B), 1758(k)(1)(B), 1758(f)(1)(A), and 1758(a)(4)(B).

[Final rule](#)

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[Implementation timeline](#)

[Comparison Chart: 2023 Proposed Standards v. 2024 Final Standards](#)