

Fresh Perspectives Series

Examining common misconceptions surrounding school meals to offer guidance on how to steer the conversations within your community!



Claim: “School Meals are High in Sugar” Let’s Take a Closer Look...

Response: Starting July 1, 2025, School Food Authorities must adhere to revised [nutrition standards](#) for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). These updated standards aim to **reduce the amount of added sugars** in school meals, promoting healthier choices for students. The revisions emphasize the importance of **offering a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins**, while limiting sodium and saturated fats. By prioritizing nutritional balance, the programs strive to support students’ overall well-being and academic performance.

Added Sugars Versus Total Sugars

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, **total sugars** “encompass the sugars that naturally occur in various nutritious foods and beverages, such as milk and fruits, along with any added sugars that might be included in the product.”

Added sugars refer to “sugars incorporated during the food processing, those found in packaged sweeteners, sugars derived from syrups and honey, as well as sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices.”

Final Rule: Added Sugar Limit Updates as of July 1, 2025

- **Breakfast cereals:** no more than **6 grams** of added sugars per dry ounce
- **Yogurt:** no more than **12 grams** of added sugars per 6 ounces
- **Flavored milk:** no more than **10 grams** of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces or, for flavored milk sold as a competitive food for middle and high schools, **15 grams** of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces

Crucial Points to Chat About...

Here are our recommended points to offer during any discussion to effectively **express your commitment and efforts** to serve foods with less sugar at your sites.

- ✿ **Revised School Nutrition Standards:** Guide your community to the [updates to the final rule](#), which include revisions to regulations for added sugar, sodium, and whole grains.
- ✿ **NSLP Products vs Grocery Store Products:** Remind your community that the processed products served at your sites differ from their grocery store counterparts. As an example, [General Mills Honey Cheerios](#) were created exclusively for K-12 schools and contain less sugar, more whole grains, and no nuts!



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