

## PH 4

### **What is the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)?**

CACFP is a federally funded nutrition program that provides reimbursement for healthful meals and snacks served to children in early care and education programs. Participation in CACFP ensures children's nutritional needs are met. The program plays an important role in improving the quality of child care and helps reduce the cost of child care services. CACFP is an entitlement program, which means all eligible early care and education programs and their enrolled children are allowed to participate.

#### **I. Do public school operated UPK programs participate in CACFP?**

Most public school operated UPK programs participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast (NSLP), a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The NSLP has its own meal patterns and nutritional requirements. Specific requirements can be found here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/>

#### **II. What type of early care and education programs are eligible to participate?**

Most licensed and registered early care and education programs are eligible to participate in CACFP, including:

- Child care centers
- Head Start centers
- Pre-K programs
- After school child care sites
- Emergency shelters
- Family and Group Family Day care homes
- Legally exempt, or informal, day care homes

To be eligible, a for profit early care and education center must have at least 25% of their enrollment, or participation, of children from low income families.

#### **III. Who is eligible for CACFP meals?**

All children in an eligible early care and education program can receive CACFP reimbursable meals:

- Children aged 12 and under
- Migrant children age 15 and under
- At-risk youth in eligible programs up to 19 years
- Children and youth in emergency shelters
- Children with disabilities

#### **IV. How do I apply for CACFP?**

It is easy to apply! Call the numbers listed below for the type of early care and education program you have. CACFP State and Sponsor staff will help you complete the application to participate.

Child Care Centers and After School Child Care programs: Call CACFP directly at 1-800-942-3858 and select Option 4. Tell the receptionist that you are a center program interested in signing up for CACFP. A nutritionist will explain the program, estimate your monthly reimbursement, and send you an application.

Registered and Licensed Day Care Homes: Call the Growing Up Healthy Hotline at 1-800-522-5006. Tell the receptionist that you are looking for a CACFP Sponsor of Day Care Homes. The Hotline will give you up to three CACFP Sponsors to call that serve the Zip Code area where your day care home is located. You can also view the list of Sponsors of day care homes on the CACFP website at:  
<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/providers/>

## V. What types of meals can be served?

CACFP participating early care and education programs follow infant and child meal patterns that have been established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS). Each child in care is eligible to receive up to two meals and one snack, or one meal and two snacks, during each day of care. The meal patterns are broken down into food groups called components. The components for meals and snacks are briefly described below.

**Breakfast:** requires a serving of fluid milk\*, a fruit or vegetable, and a bread or grain product (such as cereal, pasta, rice, tortillas, etc).

**Lunch and Supper:** consists of fluid milk, protein item (such as meat, fish, poultry, cheese, beans, etc), two different servings of fruits and/or vegetables, and a bread or grain product.

**Snacks:** includes a choice of items from two of the four components – fluid milk, fruits or vegetables, protein item, or a bread or grain product.

\*Milk substitutes may be allowed.

The infant meal pattern promotes breastfeeding for the first year of life and allows caregivers to claim infants when fed expressed breast milk while in care. The meal pattern is designed to introduce solid foods to infants at developmentally appropriate times and in consultation with the parents. Early care and education programs that care for and support breastfed infants and their mothers can earn a Breastfeeding Friendly recognition. See the links below for more information.

Where we reference CACFP in the Standards we should note in the Resource Guide that public schools participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs that have its own meal patterns and nutritional requirements.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/>

## VI. What are the requirements for participation in CACFP?

All participating early care and education programs are required to maintain daily records of meals served, mealtime attendance, and annual child enrollment forms. Center-base programs are also required to keep food production records when meals are prepared on

site. Participating programs are required to complete an annual training requirement, which may contribute to the required training hours for some caregivers.

## **VII. What are the benefits of participating in CACFP?**

**For the Child:** CACFP offers a lifetime of benefits to children. Proper nutrition during early childhood ensures appropriate development and reduces physical and educational challenges later in life. The toddler and preschool years are when eating patterns and lifestyle habits are established, which may determine the quality of health later in life. Children who attend CACFP participating centers have been shown to have fewer days of illness and receive higher quality and more nutritious meals and snacks.

**For the Parents:** When children attend a CACFP participating program, parents are assured that their children are receiving safe, nutritious meals. It also eliminates the need for money strapped families to pack food for their children to eat while in care. Children gain positive attitudes about healthy meals and habits that can influence eating behaviors at home.

**For Early Care and Education Programs:** Caregivers and staff receive regular training and guidance on a variety of nutrition, mealtime and child development topics. The reimbursement received helps caregivers purchase healthier foods and reduces the cost of child care.

**For the Community:** CACFP is supported by federal tax monies which is returned to the state and invested in the health of the community's children. The added revenue is a means to reduce child care costs of working families. The reimbursement helps caregivers purchase food from local sources, including farmers' markets.

## **RESOURCES**

To learn more about CACFP:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/aboutcacfp.htm>

To view the CACFP Healthy Child Meal Pattern:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-102.pdf>

To view the CACFP Healthy Infant Meal Pattern:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-103.pdf>

Sample Child Menus:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-107.pdf>

Sample Infant Menus:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-109.pdf>

Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Recognition:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/breastfeedingspon.htm>

Easy and Economical Snack Ideas:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/costprojectsnk.pdf>

Cold Lunch Menu Ideas:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/coldlunchmenu.pdf>

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