



FRAC Building Blocks News

A Project to Enhance Education and Child Development with Nutrition Resources

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Meeting Children's Nutritional Needs After School –An Overview

Food is a vital part of any quality afterschool program. Food is key because children are hungry when they arrive at their afterschool program and need a nutritious snack in order to benefit from the educational and enrichment activities offered. The food also acts as a magnet drawing children into the program. Once the decision is made to serve a snack, supper, or both, then the budgetary issue of how to cover the food costs needs to be addressed. Last year, the federal child nutrition programs – the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – provided funds to feed approximately 860,000 children at nearly 20,000 afterschool programs across the country, but many more programs could and should be participating.



The number of afterschool programs participating in either CACFP or NSLP is increasing primarily because the 1998 child nutrition reauthorization law made it easier for afterschool programs to receive funds for feeding the children. The reauthorization reduced paperwork and raised the top

participation age to 18 (19 if the child has his birthday during the school year). Prior to the reauthorization, only children age 12 and under could participate, and there was much more paperwork because the afterschool program had to document the household income of each child in the program. New programs in low-income areas can qualify for all the children they serve without requiring applications. The reauthorization also allows unlicensed afterschool programs to participate by meeting local and state health and safety standards as long as state licensing laws do not require the program to be licensed.

Schools, local government agencies and private non-profits can participate in CACFP, but only school-sponsored afterschool programs can receive funds for their snacks through NSLP. A school-sponsored afterschool program, however, can be operated by another organization such as the local YMCA, and the program does not have to be held on school grounds. Unlike NSLP, CACFP allows programs in certain situations to serve suppers in addition to or instead of snacks. School-sponsored

The Building Blocks Project

Building Blocks is FRAC's campaign to encourage communities to use resources from federally funded nutrition programs as a foundation from which they not only can feed hungry children but can initiate, expand and strengthen services — afterschool, before school, and peer tutoring programs, summer recreation and enrichment programs, child care centers and family day care homes — that enhance the development, learning, safety, and self-esteem of children and youth. The goals of this project are to ensure that millions more children are eating the food they need while becoming engaged in supportive community programs; that these children are ready and able to learn and flourish; and that communities and the organizations based within them become stronger and better able to serve the interests of their families and children.



NSLP in Action

Dade County, Florida

The Dade County School Food Service Authority is feeding approximately 5,100 children an afterschool snack at 74 school-based afterschool programs throughout the county. Seventy-two of the programs are located in low-income areas, and two are not. The county began participating in afterschool snacks last school year (2000-2001). Prior to that, the school food service provided snacks, but charged afterschool programs 50 cents per snack. According to Olga Botero, District Coordinator for Dade County, participating in NSLP snacks has improved the quality of the snack and helped to reduce dramatically the food cost for the afterschool programs. Now the snacks cost between 56 and 58 cents per snack. Most of that is covered by NSLP, and the afterschool program pay 5 cents per snack to cover labor, supplies, and indirect costs –a small portion of what they had been paying for a less substantial snack.

Dade County's participation in NSLP snacks is working well and has been a positive experience for everyone involved. The snacks are prepared by the Food Service Department at the kitchen of each school. The snacks are then left in an agreed-upon area, such as the refrigerator or the milk box, that the afterschool program can access. According to Botero, the keys to success are to put clear guidelines in place before starting and to provide training to the afterschool program staff. Training was provided to ensure that the full snack is served and that the afterschool program takes a proper meal count each day.

Since the children haven't eaten in three or four hours since lunch, they are hungry when they arrive at the afterschool program. When Botero visits the afterschool program, the staff tell her that the snack has to be served first before any other activity. Otherwise, the children have a difficult time participating in educational activities. By giving the children the fuel they need to learn, the snack plays a similar role at the end of the day that School Breakfast plays at the start.

In addition to providing snacks through NSLP to the 74 school-sponsored programs, the Dade County School Food Service is also the vendor for 70 other programs, including the YWCA's, the Family Christian Association, and migrant programs. Many of these programs participate in CACFP to cover the costs of their afterschool snack. *For more information, contact Olga Botero, District Coordinator for Dade County, at (305) 995-3240 or obotero@sbab.dade.k12.fl.us.*

NSLP Snack Basics

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) allows school-sponsored afterschool programs to serve snacks to children age 18 and under. If the program is located in a low-income area (meaning 50 percent or more of the children in a school serving the area are qualified for free or reduced-price school meals), then it receives the highest rate of reimbursement (58 cents) for each snack served to each child in the program. If the program is not located in such a low-income area, then the reimbursement is based upon the household income of the children in the program as determined by individual school meals applications.

The School Food Service Department is fiscally and administratively responsible for operating NSLP. Therefore, the school receives the reimbursement and is ultimately responsible for the paperwork, such as keeping track of the number of snacks served and the menu. In many afterschool programs the school food service department and the afterschool program develop a system of serving the food and filling out the paperwork that meets the needs of both.

They divide up the responsibilities while keeping paperwork to a minimum. For example, in some schools, the school food service workers prepare the afterschool snacks before leaving for the day and leave them for the afterschool program to serve to the children. The employees of the afterschool program not only serve the snacks, but also keep track of the number of students served. *To receive snacks through NSLP, school-sponsored afterschool programs should contact their school food service department. For additional information on NSLP snacks, visit the FRAC website at www.frac.org.*

Somerville, Massachusetts

The Somerville Public Schools Food Service Department feeds snacks to between 350 and 500 children through NSLP. The afterschool programs are located in several area eligible elementary schools and each program is operated by either the school or another organization such as the local Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA. The snacks are usually milk plus fruit, juice, cereal, or a sandwich.



Each day before the school food service staff leave at 3 o'clock, the afterschool program staff goes to the cafeteria to get the snacks. The food service staff pack the right number of snacks in a cooler. The program staff is responsible for handing out the snack and keeping track of the number of kids in the program that eat each day, usually by using an attendance

roster to check off the names of the children who eat.

Henry Biagi, the Director of School Food Service, has gotten positive feedback that programs are happy to have the snacks. According to Biagi, the food is important to the afterschool programs because it keeps the children on task. He participates in the snack program "because it is part of the school lunch program. That is what you do!"

The snack program is a way to bring in more dollars and utilize existing labor, but participation and volume are key. The more snacks that are served, the better, and overhead costs need to be kept down, since the reimbursement covers little more than food costs. Biagi believes that it also is important to use the same items for snacks that are used in school lunch. This makes the program easier and less expensive to run, as well as ensuring the children will eat the snack. The key to success, says Biagi, is to keep things simple and to serve snacks that are easy to eat, not messy, and that the kids will like. *For additional information, contact Henry Biagi, Director of School Food Service, 617-625-6600 X6080.*

Schools Can Share School Meal Eligibility with other Child Nutrition Sponsors

If an afterschool program using CACFP is not in a low-income area or chooses to serve suppers to the children age 12 and under in their program (and is not one of the CACFP At-Risk Supper state), it is reimbursed based upon the household income of the children in the program.

Instead of collecting an application from every family, each child can be qualified for free or reduced-price meals and snacks based upon his school meals application. Since the school meal applications are already on file, requiring a second application often is unnecessary paperwork that burdens both the CACFP sponsor and the families. Schools are not required to share eligibility information. Rather, they have the option of sharing it.

USDA encourages schools and sponsors to have a formal agreement when they share this information. This helps to ensure that the information is only shared with CACFP sponsors and that both parties understand the process and the confidentiality of the information. FRAC believes that it is crucial to have a formal agreement to ensure the protection of family privacy. *For more information, contact Crystal Weedall FitzSimons, (202) 986-2200 Ext. 3006 or cweedall@frac.org.*

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CACFP Afterschool Basics

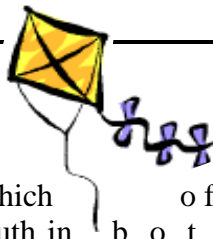
The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) can be used to serve children 18 and under a snack if the afterschool program is located in a low-income area (50 percent or more of the children in a school serving the area are qualified for free or reduced-price school meals). The program then receives the highest rate of reimbursement for snacks (58 cents) it serves to each child in the program. If the program is not located in a low-income area, then only children age 12 and under can participate and the reimbursement is based upon the household income of the children.

Children age 12 and under are eligible for afterschool suppers regardless of the location of the program. (In seven states –Delaware, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania, there is a new expanded supper option, which is explained in detail below.) To serve suppers in all other states, the program documents the household income of the children, which determines the reimbursement rate. As long as there are three hours between serving the snack and the supper, a program can choose to serve both. *To participate in CACFP, an afterschool program should contact the state child nutrition agency that administers the program. Visit www.frac.org for a complete list of state agencies.*

CACFP in Action

Fargo, ND and Moorehead, MN

The Fargo-Moorehead YMCA, which offers programs for children and youth in both Minnesota and North Dakota, participates in CACFP in a variety of ways. Since its two drop-in afterschool programs are located in low-income areas, it feeds the 200 children who attend the program a snack and receives the highest rate of reimbursement. It has been participating since the program first started. Some of the 400 children in its four other “enrolled” programs, which are not located in low-income areas, are individually qualified to receive snacks during the school year. The YMCA also uses CACFP to serve meals and snacks to the 300 children in its child care centers.



In total, the YMCA receives approximately \$50,000 in CACFP reimbursements each year, and, according to Lorrie Thoemke with the YMCA, it gets the reimbursement “without a whole lot of effort.” The YMCA is in the unique situation of serving children in two states, so it has a CACFP contract for each state. This slightly increases the paperwork involved in participating, but the YMCA feels that it is still quite manageable.

The children usually eat their snacks at the start of the afterschool program, because they arrive at the program hungry. Even on field trip days, the children eat first, prior to leaving for the trip. Participating in CACFP has freed up other program dollars and has improved the quality of the snack. The YMCA was able to add protein-rich items, such as peanut butter and cottage cheese, and some days it will serve a full meal. Lorrie has heard from happy parents that the snack is more substantial now, and there is more variety. Even with serving a higher quality snack, the cost is usually right around 60 cents. *For more information, contact Lorrie Thoemke with the Fargo-Moorehead YMCA at (701) 293-9622 or thoemke@fnymca.org.*

The New CACFP Supper Program in Delaware, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania

Recently, seven states were chosen to serve suppers under the same rules as CACFP snacks. Afterschool programs in these states can serve suppers to all children age 18 and under if the program is located in a low-income area where 50 percent or more of the children in one of the schools serving the area are qualified for free or reduced-price school meals. The program receives the highest rate of reimbursement for all the suppers (\$2.14 per child plus, depending on the state, commodities or cash in lieu of commodities, which means an additional 15 cents per meal). The supper can be served at any point during the afterschool program. Many afterschool programs say that the supper is a more substantial afterschool snack. Numerous afterschool programs are already taking advantage of this new opportunity, but many are not.

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In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Braddock Carnegie Library/Community Center feeds between 50 and 100 children Monday through Thursday using CACFP's new supper option. The library has a small kitchen where the meals are prepared by a cook who is assisted by the older children. The younger children set the table each evening. According to Cynthia Elk, the Educational Coordinator, involving the children really helps to foster the community atmosphere at the program. The afterschool program is operated in conjunction with the Woodland School District, which provides staff for the program. It offers tutoring by both certified teachers and peer tutors, library time, and enrichment activities. Since the library is also a community center, it has a gymnasium, which allows the program to offer recreational activities as well. According to Cynthia Elk, participating in CACFP Suppers has helped to ensure the future of their program and has allowed them to serve better and higher quality food. For Cynthia, the greatest thing about CACFP is that the children are drinking their milk. As for paperwork, Cynthia finds CACFP to be a relatively easy reimbursement process each month. *For more information, contact Cynthia Elk at (412) 351-5357 or elkc@einetwork.net.*

CACFP and Nutrition Education

Kids Cafe is a national program of America's Second Harvest and is operated locally by affiliates. A Kids Cafe provides meals to hungry children, usually in partnership with local child and youth serving organizations. When Harvesters, the Community Food Network in Kansas City, Missouri, started its Kids Café last fall, it wanted to include nutrition education as part of its program. Harvesters worked with the University of Missouri/Lincoln University Outreach and Extension Family Nutrition Program, which developed a nutrition education curriculum specifically for the Kids Cafe called Kids in the Kitchen. It's a hands on nutrition education curriculum that runs for eight weeks. During each lesson, the children prepare a snack (or occasionally a meal), which the children get to taste. The goal is to teach children healthy eating habits, while learning basic kitchen skills. According to Kim Johnson, Child Nutrition Coordinator of Harvesters Kids Cafe, many of the children's parents work outside of the home, which makes it extremely

important that the children know how to prepare nutritious food for themselves.

The children receive a nutritious supper each weekday through CACFP, which reinforces the Kids in the Kitchen message about the importance of eating a well balanced meal. The Kids Cafe serves approximately 100 children at two local afterschool programs and expects to add four additional sites. The meals are vended by the Kansas City, Missouri, School District's food service department. *For more information, contact Kim Johnson with Harvesters, the Community Food Network, at 816-231-3173 or kjohnson@harvesters.org.*



Health and Safety Inspections

The 1998 child nutrition reauthorization changed the federal law to allow afterschool programs that are not required by state law to be licensed to participate in the National School Lunch Program or the Child and Adult Care Food Program by meeting state and local health and safety standards. (Previously, they had to meet licensing standards – often more applicable to programs for preschoolers – if licensing was available even if it was not required by state licensing laws.) This change helped to increase the number of eligible afterschool programs, but in many states and localities the health and safety requirements were unclear and the departments with jurisdiction were not used to inspecting afterschool programs. Some localities were enforcing strict restaurant requirements, while other localities stated that there were no requirements that covered afterschool programs and refused to inspect the programs. Last summer, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released new guidance on health and safety inspections to clarify the requirements and make it more possible for programs to meet them.

In the guidance, USDA encourages states to work to ensure that the health and safety requirements are accessible and provides a number of ways that programs can meet these requirements. Programs that have a health and safety inspection to participate in

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the Summer Food Service Program can use that inspection to meet the requirements during the school year as long as the requirements are the same. (An instance when they might not be the same is when meals are bought from a vendor during the summer, but are prepared on-site during the school year.) The guidance also allows occupancy permits that have not been revoked or expired to act as proof of meeting health and safety standards in localities where obtaining an occupancy permit is what is required to comply with such standards. Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program are already required to meet health and safety standards, so schools that also participate in CACFP do not have to get a second inspection.

The guidance also notes that if a jurisdiction does not have any health or safety standards, then the after-school program can participate without permits or approval. The law *does not require or authorize CACFP State agencies to develop health and safety standards for afterschool programs*. In some localities, fire marshals and health departments had refused to inspect afterschool programs, stating that there were no requirements for them, which made it extremely difficult for the program to obtain an inspection. USDA's clarification on this issue should ease this situation. *For more information, contact Crystal Weedall FitzSimons at (202) 986-2200 ext. 3006 or cweedall@frac.org.*