



## Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

### WHY CACFP IS IMPORTANT

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and making it more affordable for many low-income families.
- CACFP provides nutritious meals and snacks to children and adults receiving child care at family child care homes, child care centers, Head Start programs, school-age child care sites, and adult care centers. In Fiscal Year 2003, on an average day CACFP helped feed 2.8 million children in family child care and in Head Start and child care centers.
- CACFP ensures that young children in child care have access to a nutritious diet and improved eating habits through nutrition education. CACFP has also been shown to improve the quality of care.

### PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

- Eligible programs include group or family child care, child care centers, Head Start, recreation centers, and after school programs. For-profit child care centers using Title XX funding to serve 25 percent or more low-income children are also eligible.
- Adult day care facilities that provide structured, comprehensive services to nonresident adults, functionally impaired or age 60 or older, may participate.
- Emergency shelters that provide residential and food services to children in homeless families also may participate.

### PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

- Children age 12 and younger are eligible to receive up to two meals and one snack daily at a child care home or center. Migrant children age 15 and younger, and persons with disabilities of any age, are also eligible for CACFP.
- Afterschool snacks are available to children through age 18.
- Homeless shelters may be reimbursed for up to three meals each day for resident children age 18 and younger.

### PARTICIPATION

- In Fiscal Year 2003, CACFP provided meals to 2.8 million children and 80,000 elderly persons each day.
- CACFP provided more than 1.7 billion meals and snacks during Fiscal Year 2002.

## REIMBURSEMENT AND FUNDING

- In Fiscal Year 2003, USDA reimbursed \$1.7 billion to providers.
- Family child care homes are reimbursed using a two-tiered system. Tier one covers homes in low-income areas, and low-income providers and children. The tier one rates are \$1.04 for breakfast, \$1.92 for lunch or supper, and \$0.57 for snack. Tier two rates are for all other participating child care homes. Tier two rates are \$.039 for breakfast, \$1.16 for lunch or supper, and \$0.15 for snack.
- Child care centers receive payments based on the type of meal served and the income of the child's family. Based on the income, meals are free, reduced-price, or paid. The reimbursement rates for meals served to children eligible for free meals are \$1.23 for breakfast, \$2.24 for lunch or supper, and \$0.61 for snack. Reduced-price meals are reimbursed at \$0.93 for breakfast, \$1.84 for lunch or supper, and \$0.30 for snack. Paid meals are reimbursed at \$0.23 for breakfast, \$0.21 for lunch or supper, and \$0.05 for snack. Centers in most states also receive an average of 17.25 cents in commodities (or cash in lieu of commodities) for each lunch or supper they serve.
- Afterschool care programs in low-income areas, and homeless and domestic violence shelters are reimbursed at the free rate.

## BENEFITS

- Participating programs provide meals according to the nutrition standards set by USDA – ensuring that children and adults in care receive balanced, nutritious meals and snacks.
- Studies show that children in CACFP receive meals that are nutritionally superior to those served to children in child care settings without the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- CACFP can help start good nutrition habits early in life.
- CACFP resources and training supports communities by supporting child care.
- Research cites participation in CACFP as one of the major factors influencing quality care, reporting that 87 percent of the family child care homes considered to be providing good quality child care participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- CACFP is key to good nutrition and quality, affordable child care, which allows children to develop fully, prepares children to enter school ready to learn, and helps working families work.

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