



Healthier CACFP Award Application



Recognizing Excellence in
Nutrition and Physical Activity in Child Care



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General Information

What is it?

The Healthier Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Award is a recognition system that supports the wellness efforts of child care providers, center staff, and home providers (referred to as “caregiver” going forward) participating in CACFP. Caregivers going above and beyond the Program requirements by taking steps to improve the menus, physical activity, caregiver professional development, nutrition and wellness environment and/or infant care can apply to win an award in one or more of these categories. Three award levels are offered: Honors, High Honors and Highest Honors.

Why is it important?

Child caregivers have an opportunity to positively impact children’s healthy development by encouraging children to develop healthy habits at a young age.

Am I eligible to apply?

Participation in the CACFP and compliance with CACFP regulations is required to be eligible for the award. Meeting the award criteria and winning an award does not replace CACFP requirements. Applicants are required to be in good standing with CACFP and as having completed and followed all corrective actions from the previous compliance review and having not been seriously deficient in the past two years, at the time of application. CACFP day care centers, child day care home and home care program are all welcome to apply.

How do I apply?

The program application includes criteria in five categories: Menus, Physical Activity, Caregiver Professional Development, Nutrition and Wellness Environment and Infant Care. Applicants can choose which category(ies) they would like to apply for and at which level. Home caregivers should submit applications to the Home Sponsor for verification (Home Sponsor then sends the completed verification form to the State Agency). Centers should submit applications directly to the State Agency for verification. Applications must include submission of the requested support documentation as listed in the “Evaluation” columns in the application. Instructions should be read carefully in each category to determine which criteria need to be met to achieve the different award levels. It is highly recommended that applicants utilize the Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book, which explains “why” and “how to” for each criterion and provides guidance and tools to assist with implementing the criteria.

How am I recognized?

Winners are recognized with awards issued jointly by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, and State agency that showcase the caregiver’s achievement in the community. Specific awards are based on the award level achieved and include certificates for displaying and letters to parents announcing the high priority of wellness in the childcare environment. At the highest award level, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), officials will send an individualized congratulatory letter to the winners. Contact your State Agency to find out more about the specific awards being offered to Healthier CACFP Award winners.

What is the award time period?

The time period for all awards is two years from the issue date. The caregiver is welcomed and encouraged to reapply when the award expires.



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Application Cover Sheet

Award level applying for:

- Honors High Honors Highest Honors

Application for (check all categories applying for):

- Menus Physical Activity Caregiver Professional Development
 Nutrition and Wellness Environment Infant Care

Type of CACFP Provider:

- Daycare Center Daycare Home At-risk Program

Home Provider/Center Name: _____

Home Provider/Center Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Age range of children in care: _____

Contact Person's Name & Title: _____

Contact Person's Phone Number & Email: _____

Date Submitted to State Agency: _____

State Agency

Approved by State Child Nutrition Director: _____

Signature Date

Regional Office

Reviewed by: _____

Approved by Child Nutrition Director: _____

Signature Date

Award Issue Date: _____ Award Expiration Date: _____ (2 years from issue date)



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General Criteria	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
	Honors	High Honors	Highest Honors	
Caregiver had a review within the last three years and all corrective actions have been completed.	√	√	√	State Agency to verify prior to submitting application to Regional Office
Category 1: Menus	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
MENUS for children over the age of one year				
Reimbursable meals meet the USDA requirements. All meals meet the CACFP meal patterns for one month of submitted menus.	√	√	√	Submit one month menus for meals claimed.
Reviewed menus meet the criteria below:				
Variety of Fruits and Vegetables Served ¹				Identify vegetable subgroups on menu (i.e., may manually write the subgroup on menu)
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables:				
• Fresh vegetables must be served each week at least:	Total 2x/week	Total 3x/week	Total 4x/week	Describe fruit and vegetables on menu as canned, fresh or frozen. (i.e., may manually write "canned", "fresh" or "frozen" on menu)
• Fresh fruit must be served each week at least:	Total 2x/week	Total 3x/week	Total 4x/week	
A different fruit ² is served at each meal/snack over the course of a day.	√	√	√	
Vegetable Subgroups ³ :				
• Dark green vegetables served once per week.	√	√	√	
• Red and/or orange vegetables served once per week.	√	√	√	
• Beans and peas (legumes) served once per week.	√	√	√	
Pre-fried ⁴ , breaded or high fat vegetables (i.e., tater tots, French Fries) are limited to:	≤ 2x/month	≤ 1x/month	Never Served	
If snack is served, at least 1 of the 2 required components is a vegetable or a fruit.	≤ 3x/week	≤ 4x/week	≤ 5x/week	

¹ Fruits and vegetables must be of appropriate texture based on the child's development to prevent choking.

² Fruit may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.

³ Includes but not limited to - Dark Green: broccoli, spinach, raw leafy greens. Red/Orange: carrots, red peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes. Beans and Peas: black beans, kidney beans, lentils, refried beans, pinto beans, navy beans, great northern beans (does not include green beans and green peas). <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs>

⁴ Includes foods that are pre-fried, flash-fried, or par-fried by the manufacturer, such as fried fish sticks or potato wedges. Deep fat-fried foods (cooked by submerging in hot oil or other fat) that are prepared on-site are prohibited. Cooking methods such as sautéing or pan-frying is acceptable.



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100% Juice is limited to:	≤ 2x/week	≤ 1x/week	Never Served	Identify when served on menu
Milk Serve only unflavored milk to <u>ALL</u> participants. Low-fat (1% or less) and/or fat free (skim) are served to participants over 2. Only whole milk is served to participants between the ages 1-2.	√	√	√	Identify type of milk and age groups served on menu.
Grains Whole grain-rich foods ⁵ are served. Sweet crackers (including graham crackers and animal crackers) are limited to $\leq 1x/week$. Grain-based desserts ⁶ are never served as an additional food item that is not contributing to the reimbursement (holidays and birthdays are exempt)	At least 2x/day	At least 2x/day (two different types of whole grain-rich foods must be offered)	All grains served must be whole grain-rich (variety encouraged)	Identify whole grain-rich items on menus. Submit ingredient list for whole grain-rich items. Submit recipe for homemade items.
Meat/Meat Alternates Higher fat meats and entrees that are processed and preserved ⁷ are limited to: Incorporate lean meats ⁸ , nuts/seeds, and/or tofu into menu. Serve only natural cheese and choose low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses.	≤ 1x/week	≤ 2x/month	Never Served	Identify on menu if the items are homemade and baked (i.e., may manually write "homemade" on menu). Identify cheese types on menu (i.e., may manually write "low fat", "natural" or "reduced" on menu).

⁵ Whole grain-rich foods are foods that contain 100 percent whole grains, or that contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grains in the food are enriched.

⁶ Grain-based desserts are those items that are denoted with a superscript 3 or 4 in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Exhibit A. The following foods are considered grain-based desserts: cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies.

⁷ All meat or poultry products preserved by smoking, curing, salting and/or the addition of chemical preservatives. Processed meats and poultry include all types of meat and poultry sausages (bologna, frankfurters, luncheon meats and loaves, sandwich spreads, Viennas, chorizo, kielbasa, pepperoni, salami, and summer sausages), bacon, smoked or cured ham or pork shoulder, corned beef, pastrami, pig's feet, beef jerky, and smoked turkey/chicken products.

⁸ Examples include 95% lean cooked ground beef, beef top round steak or roast, beef tenderloin, pork top loin chop or roast, pork tenderloin, ham or turkey deli slices, skinless chicken breast, and skinless turkey breast. Select some seafood that is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, sardines, anchovies, herring, Pacific oysters, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel. Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as "self-basting" or "contains up to ___% of ___", which mean that a sodium-containing solution has



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been added to the product. Choose unsalted nuts and seeds to keep sodium intake low.

Incorporate seasonally and/or locally produced food into meals.	Total 2x/month	Total 3x/month	Total 4x/month	Identify seasonal and locally produced items on menus. (i.e., may manually write "seasonal" menu).
Non-creditable sweetened foods/beverages are limited ⁸ .	≤ 3x/week	≤ 2x/week	Never Served	Identify when served on menu

⁸ Non-creditable sweetened foods are sources of added sugars, such as sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, syrup), mix in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, or cookie pieces), and sugar sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks or sodas).

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	Honors	High Honors	Highest Honors	
Caregiver had a review within the last three years and all corrective actions have been completed.	√	√	√	State Agency to verify prior to submitting application to Regional Office
<i>Category 2: Physical Activity</i>	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
	Honors	High Honors	Highest Honors	
Television, DVD and video watching and computer use is prohibited for children under the age of 2.	√	√	√	Submit written policy.
For children over two, screen time* of educational/movement material is limited to:	No more than 30 minutes/day	No more than 15 minutes/day	No more than 30 minutes/week	Submit copies of daily schedules.
Moderate to vigorous physical activity is provided during each full day of care (8 to 9 hour day) for at least:	45-60 minutes	60-90 minutes	90-120 minutes	Submit copies of daily schedules.
Periods of inactivity (at one time), excluding nap time and meal times, are limited to:	≤ 30 minutes on 2 occasions/day; or ≤ 60 minutes on 1 occasion/day	≤ 30 minutes on 1 occasion/day	≤ 30 minutes at a time	Submit copies of daily schedules.
The physical activity provided during each full day of care (8-9 hour day) includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Both indoor and outdoor activities, ○ Unstructured physical activity (free play), and ○ Structured physical activity (age appropriate activities guided by the caregiver) 	At least 30 minutes At least 30 minutes	At least 45 minutes At least 45 minutes	At least 60 minutes At least 60 minutes	Submit written policy and indicate the types of activity on daily schedules.
Active play time is not restricted as punishment.	√	√	√	Submit written policy.
Physical activity curriculums, which encourage a variety of basic movement and manipulative skills, are utilized at least weekly.		√	√	Submit copies of physical activity curriculums utilized.
Physical activity ideas and resources are sent home with parents at least monthly.			√	Submit copies of the parent corresp. (e.g., newsletter, email, social media, etc) which contain this information.
Make drinking water freely available, both indoors and outdoors, throughout the day.	√	√	√	Submit written policy.
During outdoor physical activity, children have access to sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher. Follow State guidelines on sunscreen application.	√	√	√	Submit written policy.

*Television, DVD, video watching, cell phone use (playing games) and computer use.



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<i>General Criteria</i>	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
	Honors	High Honors	Highest Honors	
Caregiver had a review within the last three years and all corrective actions have been completed.	√	√	√	State Agency to verify prior to submitting application to Regional Office
<i>Category 3: Caregiver Professional Development</i>	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
	Honors	High Honors	Highest Honors	

Under Development

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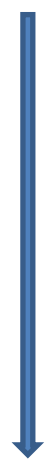


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<i>General Criteria</i>	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
	Honors	High Honors	Highest Honors	
Caregiver had a review within the last three years and all corrective actions have been completed.	√	√	√	State Agency to verify prior to submitting application to Regional Office
<i>Category 4: Nutrition and Wellness Environment</i>	Award Level General Requirements			Evaluation
<i>Directions specific to this section:</i>	Honors Honors	High Honors	Highest	
Create a written policy outlining your commitment to creating a healthy nutrition and wellness environment for all children in your care.	All checked checked plus 6 15 additional	All checked plus 10 additional	All plus	
Complete the Smarter Mealtimes Scorecard at least once per year.	√	√	√	Submit completed scorecard(s).
Written policy is shared with parents and reviewed on an annual basis (or more often as needed)	√	√	√	Submit written nutrition and wellness environment policy containing all of the required elements to meet the specific award level
Implements age appropriate CACFP family style meal service including using size-appropriate serving utensils and the caregiver seated at the table with and eating the same food as the children.				
The daily schedule promotes a relaxed and adequate period for meals and snacks. Children have ample time to eat and practice social interaction skills such as having a conversation.				
Food is not used as incentive or punishment and children are not punished or rewarded for what they choose to eat. Certain food is not withheld as punishment and children are not forced to eat foods as a prerequisite to receiving an item or completing an activity.				
Children are instructed in hand washing techniques and both children and staff wash their hands before and after meals and snack.				

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Menus are available and posted for staff and parents. Children and parents have opportunities to provide input on the food and menus.			
Children are taught developmentally appropriate table manners.			
Nutrition education is woven into activities throughout the day and provided through standardized curriculum (i.e., Team Nutrition, MyPlate or state designed nutrition education curriculum). Visible nutrition education includes posters, books and pictures.			
Parents are encouraged to volunteer/participate in mealtimes and/or nutrition education activities.			
Children are given the opportunity to be involved in mealtime through age appropriate activities such as setting the table, preparing food and cleaning up after meals.			
Screen time is limited to no more than 30 minutes per week for children two and older and zero during meal times. Zero screen time for infants/toddlers under two years old.			
Children have the opportunity to see, identify, taste and enjoy a variety of foods that are culturally significant and/or locally grown.			
The daycare center or home has a fruit, vegetable and/or herb garden (included pots or raised beds) and children get frequent access to working in that garden (e.g., planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, etc).			
Garden-focused nutrition education including hands-on activities (e.g., cooking, food preparation, taste testing, etc) is incorporated into curriculum.			
Parents are encouraged to bring non-food items for celebrations. Holidays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods or with non-food treats (e.g., stickers, crayons, etc).			
Fundraising activities involving children and families support the healthy environment. If foods outside of the program meals/snacks are sold on-site, they are healthy and nutritious.			
Food in vending machines, if present in your facility, are located in areas not visible or accessible to children.			

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Caregiver had a review within the last three years and all corrective actions have been completed.	√	State Agency to verify prior to submitting application to Regional Office

Category 5: Infant Care Directions specific to this section: Create a written policy outlining your commitment to creating a healthy infant care environment.	Award Level General Requirements High Honors	Evaluation
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Breastfeeding is encouraged and supported. Breastfeeding resources are promoted and available to parents.	√	Submit written infant care policy containing all of the required elements 
Infants are offered a variety of solid foods that are the appropriate texture for their developmental readiness.	√	
Infants are always laid down to sleep on their backs.	√	
Breastfeeding mothers are accommodated with a separate area to breastfeed and/or pump breastmilk. The separate area is a quiet, clean and sanitary place that is not a restroom.	√	
Infants are not exposed to screen time at all while in your care (includes television, computer and phone screens).	√	
Infants have an opportunity for “tummy time” multiple times throughout their day. Tummy time is defined as “placing a baby on her stomach while awake and supervised”.	√	
Caregiver reads to infants at least 30 minutes per day.	√	
Infants are taken outside daily (weather permitting) through walks, outdoor play or other activities giving them access to nature.	√	
Infants are included in family style meal service practices either on their own or with other aged children in care.	√	
Infants are fed on demand and not on a strict feeding schedule.	√	

*High Honors is the only award level for the Infant Care section.



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Home Sponsor Application Verification Form

Please read the following and obtain the signatures listed below, as applicable*:

We attest to the accuracy of the information provided in this application. We agree to maintain the nutrition excellence and physical activity standards and procedures indicated in this application in accordance with our certification as Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors awardees. Furthermore, we agree to cooperate with USDA and other organizations upon request to publicize our efforts.

Authorized Representative _____

Board President/Owner _____

Grant Director/Applicant _____

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*If you are unsure which signature(s) must be included, please contact your State agency.

Please submit your completed application and documentation to your State Child Nutrition Agency.

Thank you for applying for the Healthier CACFP Award!





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State Agency Application Verification Form

Please read the following and obtain the signatures listed below, as applicable*:

We attest to the accuracy of the information provided in this application. We agree to maintain the nutrition excellence and physical activity standards and procedures indicated in this application in accordance with our certification as Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors awardees. Furthermore, we agree to cooperate with USDA and other organizations upon request to publicize our efforts.

Authorized Representative _____

Board President/Owner _____

Grant Director/Applicant _____

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Please submit your completed application and documentation to your State Child Nutrition Agency.

Thank you for applying for the Healthier CACFP Award!





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In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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