

GRAB AND GO LESSON

CACFP FAQs for Family Child Care Providers

Administration | Introduction to CACFP

Purpose: This handout addresses some common questions for participating in the CACFP as a family child care provider.

Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as a family child care provider can offer many benefits. The program offers support services for promoting the development of healthy eating habits, starting at an early age. It also provides valuable meal reimbursements for serving nutritious meals to the children in your care.

What is CACFP?

The CACFP is a federally funded subsidy program designed to promote healthy growth and development in young children and maintain good health and wellness in adults. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (USDA, FNS) regulate this program, while State agencies across the country administer the program within their state.

Why is the program provided?

The purpose of the CACFP is to ensure that those attending child care, adult day stay, at-risk afterschool programs, and emergency shelters receive nutritious meals and snacks. The CACFP improves the quality of child care meals and snacks by providing nutritional standards, including minimum serving sizes for all meals and snacks to children ages six weeks to 12 years.

How does the CACFP help?

The program helps family child care providers in three ways:

- Offers nutrition education training for planning, preparing, and serving nutritious meals to young children
- Provides reimbursement for meals and snacks that meet the nutritional standards to help cover meal costs
- Promotes healthy eating habits that may last a lifetime

What is the requirement for participation?

There are three requirements for licensed or approved family child care providers to participate in the CACFP:

- Provide less than 24-hour care
- Agree to have on-site visits from their sponsoring organization, at least three times per year
- Complete an agreement with a sponsoring organization

Implementing the program can be made easy by following these guidelines:

- Inform parents about the benefits of the food program
- Prepare and serve meals that meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements
- Record the foods served at each meal and snack
- Keep meal counts and attendance records for all children in your care
- Attend regular training provided by the sponsoring organization
- Maintain accurate record-keeping

There may be additional requirements for participating in the CACFP. Interested providers should contact their State agency for further information.

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How does reimbursement work?

The CACFP is designed to provide reimbursement for meals and snacks that align with the CACFP meal pattern requirements. To receive reimbursement, accurate and complete record-keeping is required. As a family child care provider, the amount of reimbursement received is based on the location, total household income, or the income of the parents served. Family child care provider's own children are eligible to participate if income guidelines are met.

Need more information?

If you are interested in finding a sponsoring organization, contact your State agency.

References

- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (2012). *Family day care homes monitor handbook: A child and adult care food program handbook*. https://fnsprod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Monitoring_Homes.pdf
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (2020). *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)*. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

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