

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Strategies for Succeeding on the CACFP

Administration | Introduction to CACFP

Purpose: This handout provides strategies for succeeding in the CACFP.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is an excellent resource for early childhood professionals because it provides reimbursement and support services to help meet the nutritional needs of both child and adult participants. Below you will find some daily, weekly, and monthly strategies for succeeding on the CACFP as a family child care provider.

Daily

- Using planned menus, prepare meals and snacks that meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. If you need to substitute any food items, make sure to list the appropriate substitutions on the menu.
- Serve meals that meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements.
- Serve all of the food for a given meal at the same time.
- Record the foods served after each meal or snack. It is easy to forget what was served, and accurate record-keeping is an essential requirement of the program.
- Record accurately the name of each child and the meal the child was served. Attendance, arrival, and departure of children vary throughout the week.

Weekly

- Review menu and meal attendance records to be sure that they are filled in completely and correctly. Leaving something off your menu or attendance records can cost you valuable reimbursement. If you need to make changes to the menus, note these changes on your menus.
- Work with new parents and guardians to complete all required paperwork. Whenever a new child enrolls in your program, ask the parent or guardian to complete the enrollment forms and any other forms required by your sponsor for participating in the CACFP. Parents may only provide one food component for a reimbursable meal or snack. For additional information, refer to the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

Monthly

- Plan or review menus to ensure they align with the CACFP meal standards. Ensure that each food item is creditable, and all menus are reimbursable meals or snacks based on the CACFP meal patterns.
- Send menus, meal attendance records, and new child enrollment forms to your sponsor by the date required. These forms are necessary for you to receive reimbursement. When a parent withdraws a child from your program, let your sponsor know the last date of attendance. The sponsor should know the enrollment and names of children enrolled in your family child care program at all times.
- File copies of your food program records for future reference and tax purposes. Have a special place to keep your records, such as a filing cabinet.

As an early childhood professional, one essential strategy for succeeding in the program is to set standards and work towards them. Standards are great for determining how well you are doing with providing care to the children and implementing the program. Set high standards for your child care program, and this will help to ensure that you are always aiming for success in your program.

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References

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2014). *Independent child care centers: A Child and Adult care food program handbook*. <https://fns.prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/Independent%20Child%20Care%20Centers%20Handbook.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2020). *Child and Adult Care Food Program*. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

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