



Insight

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Job Duties, Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Sponsor Monitors of Family Day Care Homes Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

O Family Day Care Homes (FDCH) operate within the guideline of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federally funded nutrition assistance program designed to provide healthful meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care. The CACFP provides a food and nutrition safety net for children receiving care in thousands of FDCH in the United States. Children living in low-income households are the primary intended beneficiaries of the CACFP. The CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care by providing reimbursement for meals to the FDCH provider, thus making child care more affordable for many low-income families. Sponsoring organizations provide administrative guidance and oversight to FDCH providers through a monitoring system. It is the responsibility of sponsoring organizations, which are answerable to the state agency, to ensure that FDCH providers fulfill their obligation to serve nutritious meals that meet the meal patterns of the CACFP, while fulfilling regulations and policies of the program and the sponsoring organization. Sponsoring organizations rely upon the sponsor monitor to provide a first-hand accounting of the FDCH providers under their sponsorship.

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) Applied Research Division embarked upon a three-phase research study to identify job duties, competencies, knowledge, and skills of sponsor monitors. During Phase I, perceived job duties and training needs of sponsor monitors were identified with input from state child nutrition program directors and sponsoring organization directors. During Phase II, sponsoring organization directors and sponsor monitors were surveyed to validate job duties and training needs of sponsor monitors. Competencies, knowledge, and skills of sponsor monitors were identified and validated in Phase III. Informed consent procedures established by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee of the University of Southern Mississippi were followed throughout each phase of the research.

METHODS:

Identification of Job Duties of Sponsor Monitors

Phase I: Survey Instrument Development

- State agency child nutrition directors were asked to provide a listing of sponsoring organizations. Thirty-two states responded with 521 sponsoring organizations.
- Ninety-four sponsoring organizations were randomly selected to provide job descriptions for sponsor monitors.
- NFSMI researchers reviewed the job descriptions and identified 82 job duties performed by sponsor monitors.
- A CACFP expert panel was convened to validate the job duties, training needs, and demographic questions identified in the two preliminary survey instruments.

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Phase II: Survey Implementation

- State agency child nutrition directors were asked to provide an updated listing of sponsoring organizations. Fifty states, Washington D.C., and three U.S. territories responded with 1045 sponsoring organizations.
- Survey instruments were mailed to all 1045 sponsoring organization directors. Sponsoring organization directors were asked to complete the director survey and to distribute sponsor monitor survey instruments to two sponsor monitors in their organization.
- Survey participants were asked to react to “frequency performed,” and “importance” of each job duty, and the “perceived importance” of each training need.
- A second CACFP expert panel reviewed the results of the factor analysis of the survey responses and determined any redundancies and/or commonalities in the job duties.

Phase III: Development of Knowledge and Skill Statements

- Researchers wrote knowledge and skill statements for job duties.
- A modified Delphi technique was used to obtain reactions from 85 CACFP child care professionals to the proposed knowledge and skill statements.
- Participants provided suggestions that were modified by researchers and were reflected in the final version of the knowledge and skill statements.
- Researchers developed competency statements to reflect the revised knowledge and skill statements.
- Phase II CACFP expert panel members were reconvened to react to the competency statements in a two-step modified Delphi process.

PHASE I: ***Survey Development Results***

Job duties of sponsor monitors were identified using job descriptions provided by sponsoring organization directors. Two survey instruments were developed to determine the agreement between sponsoring organization directors and



sponsor monitors and to identify program/personal characteristics for each group surveyed. The final survey instruments contained 94 job duties and 50 training needs. Part I of each survey addressed the frequency and importance of each job duty as perceived by survey participants. Part II directed the survey participants to identify the top five training needs of sponsor monitors. Part III was designed to capture the demographic characteristics and comments of sponsoring organization directors and sponsor monitors completing the survey.

PHASE II: ***Survey Implementation Results***

All states participated and submitted current listings of 1045 sponsoring organizations. Survey instruments were mailed to all sponsoring organization directors. Sponsoring organization directors were asked to distribute sponsor monitor survey instruments to two sponsor monitors. When sponsoring organization directors performed the role of the monitor, they were asked to complete the director survey instrument only. Three hundred and forty-nine sponsoring organization directors and 499 sponsor monitors returned a completed survey. Researchers expected that sponsoring organization directors and sponsor monitors would differ in their level of agreement on the importance of sponsor monitor training needs and job duties and how often job tasks were performed. However, both groups recorded similar responses to job duties and training needs of effective sponsor monitors.

Factor analysis of survey results revealed four job functional areas and 50 job functions. There was 96% agreement between directors and monitors on the top 50 job duties. There was agreement of the top five job duties for sponsor monitors between the two groups surveyed; however, the order varied slightly.

Top five job duties as perceived by sponsoring organization directors:

- Communicate with providers in an ethical, respectful, and caring manner.
- Comply with sponsoring organization’s policies and procedures.
- Follow federal, state, and local regulations.
- Maintain standards of ethics and promote agency’s interests.
- Maintain current knowledge of CACFP regulations.

Top five job duties as perceived by sponsor monitors:

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- Follow federal, state, and local regulations.
- Comply with sponsoring organization’s policies and procedures.
- Maintain standards of ethics and promote agency’s interests.
- Maintain current knowledge of CACFP regulations.

Expert Panel

A CACFP expert panel was convened to review the results of the national survey. These same child nutrition professionals participated in the modified Delphi process during Phase III.

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SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION - Sponsor Monitor

Sponsoring organizations provide oversight of FDCH providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in the areas of program accountability and nutrition integrity. The sponsor monitor serves as the link between the sponsoring organization and the FDCH provider to assure that the FDCH provider operates within the guidelines of the CACFP, a federally funded child nutrition assistance program designed to provide healthful meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care. Effective sponsor monitors demonstrate competency when performing the following job duties:

Training and Technical Assistance

- Train providers on CACFP policies and procedures.
- Train providers on nutritional program practices.
- Provide individual training to providers.
- Train providers on creditable and non-creditable foods.
- Communicate CACFP procedures to provider.
- Provide individualized technical assistance on record keeping and programmatic errors with provider.

Meal Services

- Perform mandatory onsite visits to providers.
- Review age-specific meal pattern requirements with provider.
- Review infant feeding program with provider.
- Monitor meal schedules by observing service of all FDCH meal types.

Administrative Duties

- A. Record Keeping
- Maintain files of required records for each provider.
 - Communicate provider issues with sponsor.
 - Comply with sponsoring organization's policies and procedures.

- Verify license/certification/registration capacity of FDCH.
 - Maintain written reports and monitoring activities to sponsoring agency.
- B. Marketing/Outreach
- Recruit new providers.
 - Enroll new providers.
 - Provide preliminary enrollment and training of providers.
- C. Reporting
- Maintain appropriate documentation of corrective action with a problem provider.
 - Report allegations of CACFP child care abuse, child neglect, and non-compliance issues.
- D. General Clerical
- Distribute appropriate provider reporting forms.
 - Perform central office duties.
 - Perform field office duties.
 - Approve eligibility of children to participate.
 - Plan and maintain all monitoring schedule, activity, and expense records.

Professional Behavior and Development

- Maintain knowledge of current CACFP regulations through staff meetings.
- Communicate with providers in an ethical, respectful, and caring manner.
- Follow federal, state, and local regulations.
- Support the mission of child care associations.
- Maintain standards of ethics and promote agency's interests.

Sponsor monitors effectively performing the above job duties demonstrate these competencies:

Training and Technical Assistance

- 1.1 Communicates with FDCH providers and determines training needs.
- 1.2 Assists in developing a systematic training program to ensure that FDCH providers are familiar with program requirements.
- 1.3 Conducts orientation and training on all aspects of CACFP participation, including policies and procedures of the sponsoring organization.
- 1.4 Reviews performance of FDCH providers in CACFP implementation and provides appropriate feedback.
- 1.5 Adapts training to provide technical assistance on an individualized and as-needed basis.

Meal Service

- 2.1 Reviews the meal pattern requirements to ensure proper implementation by the FDCH provider.
- 2.2 Reviews meal service to ensure proper implementation of the meal patterns and a positive mealtime environment.
- 2.3 Reviews the menu to ensure good menu planning is followed for development of healthful eating behaviors.
- 2.4 Assures the proper interpretation and implementation of the infant meal pattern.

- 2.5 Maintains a regular onsite visitation schedule of CACFP participants to ensure proper implementation of the CACFP and a healthy eating environment.

Administrative Duties

- 3.1 Follows a system for maintaining and reporting all monitoring activities to the sponsoring organization.
- 3.2 Implements procedures needed to verify that FDCH providers meet all federal, state, and local requirements for participation in the CACFP.
- 3.3 Serves as the liaison between the sponsoring organization and the FDCH provider.

Professional Behavior and Development

- 4.1 Participates in continuing education activities such as seminars, workshops, professional conferences, and college courses.
- 4.2 Networks with other child care professionals.
- 4.3 Participates actively in professional organizations.
- 4.4 Reads current trade, technical, and professional publications and applies appropriate new information in performance of monitoring duties.
- 4.5 Maintains a plan for continuing self-development and education.
- 4.6 Performs all duties and responsibilities in an ethical manner.

In the final version, four functional areas were associated with 30 remaining job duties and are presented in the sample Job Description included in this issue of *Insight*.

PHASE III:

Identification of Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Sponsor Monitors Results

Identification of Knowledge and Skill Statements

Knowledge and skill statements were written to fit the duties of sponsor monitors, and a survey instrument was developed. A Delphi panel of CACFP experts received the survey. Twenty-six of the 85 CACFP child care professionals who were randomly contacted to participate in the modified Delphi technique returned the completed survey. The survey participants were provided three options for each knowledge and skill statement, they were: "accept," "accept with modification" or "delete" each of the proposed statements. All statements met the predetermined agreement level of 80% for retention in the first round of the Delphi agreement process. Due to the high level of agreement, no further Delphi steps were necessary. Some statements were combined or restated for greater clarity. Comments by the Delphi participants resulted in the addition of several knowledge and skill statements.

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"I enjoy my work as a monitor and the interaction with FDCH providers."

"I am impressed by how many children and FDCH providers benefit from the CACFP."

"I hope this survey will help with our staff development. I feel we need more on-going training opportunities that are conveniently located."

"The CACFP is a very valuable program. Not only is it a resource that helps to hold down the cost for families, it teaches good nutrition habits."



Top Five Training Needs of Sponsor Monitors

The top five training needs for sponsor monitors as perceived by sponsoring organization directors in descending order were:

- Program regulations/requirements,
- Dealing with problem providers,
- Record keeping/documentation,
- Techniques for recruiting new providers, and
- Meal pattern requirements.

The top five training needs for sponsor monitors as perceived by sponsor monitors in descending order were:

- Program regulations/requirements,
- Dealing with problem providers,
- Record keeping/documentation,
- Creditable and non-creditable foods, and
- Meal pattern requirements.

FACT FINDER

- 80** ...Percent of sponsoring organization directors reported that they are employed in private, nonprofit organizations.
- 51** ...Percent of directors reported having one to two monitors employed by the sponsoring organization.
- 65** ...Percent of monitors reported oversight of 100 or fewer FCDH providers.
- 50** ...Percent of sponsoring organizations were associated with 142 providers or less.
- 34** ...Percent of directors reported having a baccalaureate degree or higher.
- 32** ...Percent of monitors reported having a baccalaureate degree or higher.
- 19** ...Percent of monitors reported their area of study was in early childhood education, family child studies, or child development.
- 71** ...Percent of directors reported having more than 10 years of experience in the child care business.
- 51** ...Percent of directors reported having worked with the CACFP 10 years or more.
- 40** ...Percent of monitors reported having worked with the CACFP one to five years.
- 58** ...Percent of monitors reported earning an hourly wage of \$10.00 or greater.
- 51** ...Percent of monitors reported they were employed 40 hours or more per week.
- 73** ...Percent of monitors reported working in the child care business for six years or more.
- 80** ...Percent of monitors reported they received benefits with their job and health insurance was the number one benefit.
- 47** ...Percent of monitors reported an age range of 41-55 years.
- 84** ...Percent of monitors reported attending CACFP state offered training.

Development of Competency Statements

Competence was defined as the ability to perform beyond the beginner level without supervision, but not at the expert level. Competency statements are intended to encompass the knowledge and skills determined for each job duty identified in Phase II and I. The expert panel that served in Phase II was asked to validate the competencies in Phase III because of their expertise and understanding of the research objectives. A modified Delphi technique was also used to finalize the acceptance, rejection, or modification of the competencies for sponsor monitors. A Likert-type scale was used to record the level of agreement. An 80% agreement was considered an appropriate level to support a decision to retain competencies.

A follow-up conference call involving the expert panel was conducted to clarify any comments made by the panel, and to allow participants a second opportunity to react to competency statements for which agreement was dependent upon recommended modifications and/or additional competencies. The final competency statements identified for sponsor monitors are presented in this issue of *Insight* as part of the sample Job Description.

Practical Use of This Information

Participation in the CACFP is one excellent way to impact the overall quality of care offered by FDCH providers. Sponsor monitors play a key role in the success of the FDCH provider. Well-defined job duties, competencies, knowledge, and skills of sponsor monitors are tools necessary for an effective monitoring process. Sponsoring organizations may develop job descriptions and responsibilities based on the result of this study. Sponsoring organizations may use the competency, knowledge, and skill statements in the selection and training of sponsor monitors. Sponsor monitors should find the competencies, knowledge, and skills useful tools for self-assessment of their training and professional development needs. These tools will also provide the foundation for NFSMI training materials that meet the needs of sponsor monitors. Other interested parties such as the USDA, state agency child nutrition programs, and CACFP training consultants may find the information beneficial and worthy of consideration. A sample job description incorporating the job duties, competencies, knowledge, and skills of sponsor monitors identified in this study may be helpful in establishing a consistent standard for the monitoring process nationally.

For More Information

RESOURCES:

The American Dietetic Association. (1999). Dietary guidance for healthy children aged 2 to 11 years—Position of ADA. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 99, 93-101.

The American Dietetic Association. (1999). Nutrition standards for child-care program—Position of ADA. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 99, 981-988.

The American School Food Service Association. (1995). *Keys to excellence: Standards of practice for nutrition integrity*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Maternal and Child Health Bureau. (1992). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards—guidelines for out-of-home child care programs*. Arlington, VA: Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

National Food Service Management Institute. (1995). *Competencies, knowledge and skills of effective school nutrition managers* (NFSMI-R16-95). Hattiesburg, MS: Author.

National Food Service Management Institute. (1996). *Competencies, knowledge, and skills of effective district school nutrition directors/supervisors* (NFSMI-R23-96). Hattiesburg, MS: Author.



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