

# CARE Connection

## Introduction to CACFP Grab and Go Lesson

# How Day Care Home Providers Can Participate in the CACFP

### What is the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is administered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and offered through a state agency or sponsor. Licensed child care home providers who meet certain requirements can receive reimbursement each month to help pay for the meals and snacks they serve to children in their care. As a home provider, the amount of reimbursement you receive is based on the location of your home, total household income, or the income of the parents you serve. Your own children are eligible to participate if you meet the income guidelines.

### Why is this program provided?

The purpose of the CACFP is to improve the quality of child care for low-income families by providing assistance in offering nutritious meals and snacks served to children in child care.

The CACFP can improve the nutritional quality of child care meals and snacks in three ways.

1. The program provides required guidelines, including portions to be served, for meals and snacks to children ages 6 weeks to 12 years.
2. The program provides monetary (reimbursement) assistance to eligible child care providers to help pay for meals that meet USDA requirements.
3. The CACFP requires training and monitoring by state agencies and sponsors.



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This program helps ensure that the growing number of infants, toddlers, and young children in child care receive healthful, nutritious meals and snacks.

#### How can the CACFP help me?

- Helps pay for the meals served to children in your care.
- Teaches you how to plan and serve meals that meet nutritional standards.
- Lets parents know that children have adequate, nutritious meals at child care.
- Provides training that will help you run your home-based business.

Remember, the reimbursement is to help pay for the meals and snacks you serve. Not all family day care home providers are able to cover the entire cost of the meals they serve with the reimbursement money they receive through CACFP.

*CACFP helps  
children,  
parents, and  
providers.*

#### How can the CACFP help parents?

When parents leave a child in your care they want to feel confident that the child receives the best care. By participating in the CACFP you can assure parents that their child

- receives nutritious meals.
- receives meals based on USDA nutritional standards for young children.
- learns about food and eating to help develop healthful eating habits.

#### How can I participate in the CACFP?

If you would like to participate in the CACFP contact your state agency. You must sign up with a state-approved sponsor of the CACFP and agree to follow the program rules. The sponsor will help you review your application to determine the level of your eligibility.

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#### What are the requirements?

##### Basic USDA Requirements for Licensed or Approved Day Care Home Providers

- Prepare and serve meals that meet the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements. The requirements include serving certain groups of foods in amounts appropriate to a child's age.
- Keep records of daily menus.
- Record the number of children served at each meal.
- Maintain good sanitation so the food served is safe.
- Participate in required training. Your sponsor will provide training to help you get started in the CACFP.
- Follow record keeping requirements.
- Promote the safety and well-being of the children in your care.



The sponsor will provide you with more detailed information about requirements of the program.

#### How does a day care home provider receive the monthly reimbursement?

The USDA requires that providers keep daily records of meals and foods served and number of children served. The sponsoring agency collects information from these records each month and sends a report to the state agency which administers the CACFP. The state agency reviews the sponsor's report and sends payment to each sponsor. The sponsor issues the payment to the day care home provider.

#### I have other questions. How can I get answers?

If you have questions contact your sponsor or your state agency. You can find a list of state agencies on the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Web site at [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov) where you can also find more information and resources about the CACFP.