

---

# Food Insecurity in ECE Settings During COVID: The Importance of Healthy Food Access & Food Skills Education

A solid green horizontal bar at the bottom of the slide.

# Kicking Things Off

---

**Who are you?**

**Share your name, location and  
role in your state in the “chat”  
feature**

# No Kid Hungry & Cooking Matters

---

No Kid Hungry and Cooking Matters believe every child between the ages of 0-5 should have the healthy food they need for their best and brightest start in life and we reach these families by meeting them where there are, including through childcare





# Food Insecurity and COVID

Census data shows that 14 million kids are now missing meals – this is nearly 18% of all kids

This rate is 5.6 times higher than pre-pandemic and 2.7 times higher than during the height of the great recession.

28% of families with children are now food insecure (Brookings). This means that the number of American children at risk of hunger has surged from 1 in 7 to 1 in 4.



According to the World Health Organization, “Early childhood is the most intensive period of brain development during the lifespan. Adequate stimulation and nutrition are essential for development during the first three years of life.”

Children living in households experiencing food insecurity are at greater risk of fair or poor health and hospitalizations, developmental delays, cognitive impairment, poor academic performance, abnormal weight and body mass index, and decreased social skills.

Three of the five most costly adult diseases (cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression which cost \$582b annually) are associated with early life adversity, like food insecurity, according to the American Heart Association.



# Healthy Food Access: Federal Programs

With COVID, more families now eligible for federal programs, many are first time users

- Enrollment and eligibility challenges

Communication opportunities & innovative partnerships to address school food

- School meals
- P-EBT
- WIC



**FREE GRAB & GO MEALS for ANYONE 18 & UNDER!**

Meals provided Monday - Friday  
on each school days only

You do NOT need to be a SCH student to enjoy these free meals!

**Bus\* Stop Sites:**  
\*small white buses only

- Turner Park Apartments (10:30-12:15)
- Georgetown Apartments (10:30-11:15)
- Kennedy Crossings Apts. (11:30-12:15)
- Renaissance Towers (10:30-12:15)
- Optimist Baseball Field (10:30-12:15)
- MLK Park (11:30-12:15)
- Pulaski Park (10:30-11:15)
- Hermit Park (11:30-11:15)
- Phrommer Park (10:30-12:15)
- Caldwell Baseball Field (11:30-12:15)
- Ash & Gostin (10:30-11:15)
- Lafayette Elem Parking Lot (10:30-11:15)
- Kerwood Elem Parking Lot (11:30-12:15)
- Columbia Elem Back Parking Lot (11:30-12:15)

**School Sites:**  
10:45am-12:15pm

- Edison (Door B)
- Eggers (Door F)
- Franklin (Door C)
- Gavitt (Door E)
- Harding (Door B)
- Irving (Door A)
- Lincoln (Door A)
- Maywood (Door A)
- Morton Elem (Door A)
- O'Bannon (Door A)
- Scott (Door C)

For most up-to-date info & updates go to [www.SCHLunch.com](http://www.SCHLunch.com) or [facebook.com/SCHLunch](https://www.facebook.com/SCHLunch)

You can walk up to the sites - you don't have to drive/have a car!

Children do not need to be present for meal pick up. If children are not present you will need to provide child name, school name (even if not SCH school), + grade (if child is too young for school just provide name + birthday)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Have you tried any new partnerships or programs related to WIC, school food or anything else?

# Healthy Food Access: Charitable Programs

---

- Access challenges and charitable programs
  - Increased need on nights and weekends (ie, when children aren't in programs)
  - Availability of food (real or feared)
  - Long wait times and “last mile” access challenges more difficult during COVID





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Has your state tried new programs or worked in new ways with local charitable partners? What has worked? What hasn't?



# Cooking Matters Colorado Case Study



# Cooking Matters for Childcare Professionals



## Description of CMCCP Online Lessons

Title	Description	Duration	Competencies	Intended Audience
<b>Creating Positive Mealtime Attitudes</b>	Positive early childhood experiences surrounding food and the social environment are critical for shaping healthy eating behaviors later in life. In this training, childcare providers will recognize their role in establishing healthy attitudes and behaviors towards food among the children in their care.	2 hours	Child Growth, Development and Learning	All ECE providers and staff
<b>Safe Cooking with Confidence</b>	Childcare providers learn to safely prepare more scratch-cooked meals for the children in their care. This training includes an overview of food skills and safety as well as examples of CACFP approved recipes.	1 hour	Health, Safety and Nutrition	ECE providers and staff who prepare or serve snacks and/or meals to children
<b>Choosing Healthy Foods for Kids</b>	Childcare providers play a crucial role in ensuring that children in their care get the nutrients they need to grow and be healthy. In this training, providers learn to make smart choices about the foods they serve to kids through hands-on nutrition based activities.	2 hour	Health, Safety and Nutrition	All ECE providers and staff
<b>Meal Appeal</b>	Early childhood is an ideal time to instill an appreciation for consuming a variety of healthy foods. In this training, providers will take part in hands-on activities that will show them various ways to encourage acceptance of healthy foods among children in their care.	1 hour	Health, Safety, and Nutrition	ECE providers and staff who prepare or serve snacks and/or meals to children
<b>Menu Management on a Budget</b>	In this training, providers will discuss menu planning and shopping strategies they can use to make the most of their food dollars.	1 hour	Health, Safety, and Nutrition	ECE providers and staff planning menus and purchasing food
<b>Partnering with Parents</b>	Children are more likely to learn healthy eating behaviors when they receive similar messages at home, in school or child care, and in the community. This training provides tips and tools for communicating with parents and staff about best practices for feeding children and how to sustain those practices through setting healthy food policies.	1 hour	Family and Community Partnerships	All ECE providers and staff
<b>Cooking Matters at the Store</b>	This training teaches providers how to get the most nutrition within their budget by engaging them to practice food shopping skills to make healthy and affordable choices at the supermarket	1 hour	Health, Safety and Nutrition	ECE providers and staff planning menus and purchasing food

# Cooking Matters for Childcare Professionals

78% are offering more vegetables, 68% are offering more fruits, and 68% more whole grains;

“It has made me more aware of what healthy options are and gives me confidence to swap out foods and adjust recipes.”

“I wasn't aware that if I do family style meals, the kids have the options to really only eat what they want.”

“It has encouraged me to cook even better than I was before and has encouraged me to let the kids help more and now they serve their own food.”

# Cooking Matters at Home

## Online Programs for Families

Kids Say Yes to Fruits & Veggies	Discuss pros and cons of using different forms of fruits and vegetables, prepare meals and snacks that help kids eat more fruits and vegetables and share ideas for helping kids enjoy more fruits and vegetables.
Making Recipes Work For You	Discuss how to substitute ingredients in recipes, practice using recipe frameworks, and share meal ideas that allow each family member to choose the toppings or ingredients that they enjoy.
No More Mealtime Madness	Introduce fundamentals of maintaining a basic pantry and discuss ways to involve kids in the meal planning to create more buy-in at mealtime.
Hack Your Snack	Share tips for saving time when buying and preparing healthy snacks, practice making healthy, homemade snacks, and practice reading food labels and identifying healthier choices when choosing prepackaged snacks, and practice comparing unit prices to save money.
The Family Kitchen	Work together with kids in their care to discuss safe, age-appropriate tasks for kids in the kitchen, practice preparing meals or snacks with child-friendly steps and make healthy meals and snacks that everyone will enjoy.
Money-Saver Alert	Discuss how to use everything that you have (or have access to), practice using 'hard to utilize' ingredients in a variety of recipes, and discuss how to save foods that you can't use right away and how to limit food waste with children while still introducing new foods.
Drink To Your Health	Discuss how sugary drinks impact health and make and taste a variety of healthy beverages at home.
Feeding in the First Year	Discuss infant feeding options including the safe introduction of solid foods, introduce food preparation methods that can be adapted for infants at different developmental stages and practice preparing age-appropriate infant foods alongside recipes for the whole family.
Cooking Matters at the Store: Shopping on a Budget	Discuss how to buy fruits and vegetables on a budget, practice comparing unit prices and reading food labels, and reading ingredient labels to find whole grains.

## Online Resources

Cooking Matters Facebook page and Facebook Live  
Thursdays at 2 (English) & 2:30 (Spanish) EST

Cooking Matters YouTube channel

Cooking Matters at Home – Activities for Kids  
<https://cookingmatters.org/cooking-matters-home>

Exploring Foods Together toolkit  
<http://cookingmatters.org/node/2218#>

Recipes in English and Spanish:  
[www.co.cookingmatters.org](http://www.co.cookingmatters.org)



For more information, please contact us

**Caron Gremont**

**[cgremont@strength.org](mailto:cgremont@strength.org)**

**Leslie Levine**

**[llevine@strength.org](mailto:llevine@strength.org)**