



Child and Adult Care Food Program: CACFP

Founded in 1968, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides federal funds for meals and snacks to licensed public and nonprofit child care

centers and family group child care homes for preschool children. Funds are also provided for meals and snacks served at after-school programs for school-aged children and to adult day care centers serving chronically impaired adults over age 60. In addition to providing key financial support, CACFP provides ongoing training in the nutritional needs of children and food safety and onsite assistance in meeting the program's strong nutritional requirements.

CACFP is administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The State Department of Education of Child Nutrition administers the program at the state level to child care centers and through local sponsoring organizations to family child care providers. CACFP is a federal entitlement program which means all eligible children can participate.

Child and Adult Care Food Program Wins

CACFP is a well-documented success benefiting children and adults alike. The Families and Work Institute's *Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care* found participation in CACFP as a major factor influencing quality care. The study found that 87% of the family child care homes considered to be providing good quality child care participated in CACFP.

Promoting Quality in Family Child Care, a report published by the U.S. General Accounting Office, said, "Because of its unique combination of resources, training and oversight, experts believe the food program is one of the most effective vehicles for reaching family child care providers and enhancing the care they provide."

A study comparing the intake of children at a participating CACFP center and a non-participating center found that children at the CACFP center had

significantly higher intakes of key nutrients. They consumed more servings of milk and vegetables and ate fewer servings of fats and sweets.

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in CACFP, sponsors must be licensed or approved child care providers or public or nonprofit private schools which provide organized child care programs for school children during off-school hours. Programs eligible for participation include:

- Non-residential child or adult-care institutions (group or family child care, child or adult care centers, Head Start, recreation centers, settlement houses and after-school programs)
- For-profit child care centers using Title XX funding to serve 25% or more low-income children

CACFP child care providers must be licensed in order to participate. The licensing requirement provides a way for parents to find reliable child care. Participation in CACFP is widely seen as a key indicator of the quality of child care. In addition, licensing allows for state agencies to regulate child care standards.

The Role of Local CACFP Sponsors

Sponsors are nonprofits that recruit, train, monitor and support family child care homes for CAF in a particular area. Sponsors provide an important local relationship to a government program. CACFP works through the sponsors to provide reimbursement for food and meal preparation costs, ongoing training in nutrition and food safety, and onsite technical assistance at meeting nutrition requirements. Sponsors also help family child care homes with the details of program record keeping.

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Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes

...are eligible to receive reimbursement for up to two meals and one snack a day for each preschool child participating. Centers and homes serving low-income children receive a higher level of reimbursement.

- A child care center serving 25 mostly low-income children could be eligible to receive up to \$21,000 a year for meals and snacks served.
- A family child care provider serving six low-income children would receive as much as \$4,500 a year for meals and snacks served.

USDA After-school Snacks

After-school Programs

CACFP can provide an important source of revenue for after-school programs that provide meals and snacks. This reimbursement can free up program funds to improve or expand educational programs. According to the Food Research Action Center, "The average size after-school program, 35 children, can receive a substantial reimbursement. An after-school program in a low-income area using CACFP to serve snacks can receive reimbursements of approximately \$400 each month for 35 children, adding up to over \$3,600 for each school year."

As with other federal food programs, family income factors into eligibility:

- After-school programs in low to moderate income areas can be reimbursed for serving snacks to school-aged children up to age 19. All participating children in these areas qualify for the highest reimbursement levels without individual applications.
- Programs in other areas are eligible to receive reimbursements for snacks served to low-income children up to the age of 12. Reimbursements are based on individual applications.

The Child & Adult Care Food Program Sponsor's Association (TSA)

Founded in 1986, TSA's mission is to serve as a national voice for, and provide education and support to, organizations who administer the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. TSA offers a quarterly newsletter, Resource Library, annual conferences, coordination of National CACFP Week, a State Contact Network, and one-on-one communication with members. To learn more about TSA call (704) 375-3938 or visit www.cacfp.org.

Contact Information

Please direct questions regarding the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the After-school Snacks Program to:

Family Nutrition Programs
State Department of South Carolina
Landmark Building II, Suite 300
3700 Forest Drive, P.O. Box 300
Columbia, SC 29201
1-800-768-5700

After school hours—from 3 pm to 5 pm—are a critical time when children and youth are most at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior. A quality after-school program that participates in CACFP not only offers children and teenagers a healthy, nutritious snack, but it engages them in educationally enriching activities.



Eligibility Requirements

To participate in this reimbursement program, your after-school program must:

- Be located in a low-income area where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free and reduced price school meals.
- Offer educational or enrichment activities.
- Meet state or local licensing requirements.
- Meet state or local health & safety requirements.

Reimbursements Rates

Your organization will be reimbursed at the highest level of reimbursement which is currently 60 cents a snack per child per day.

Snack Details

After-school snacks can be served to all children through age 18 and must be offered free of charge. To meet reimbursement requirements, each snack must include at least two of the following four items:

- A serving of fluid milk
- A serving of meat or meat alternate
- A serving of vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full strength vegetable or fruit juice
- A serving of whole grain or enriched bread or cereal

Examples of reimbursable snacks:

- String cheese and 100% apple juice
- An apple and a carton of milk



Contact Information

1-800-734-9527

