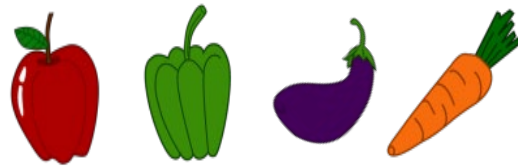
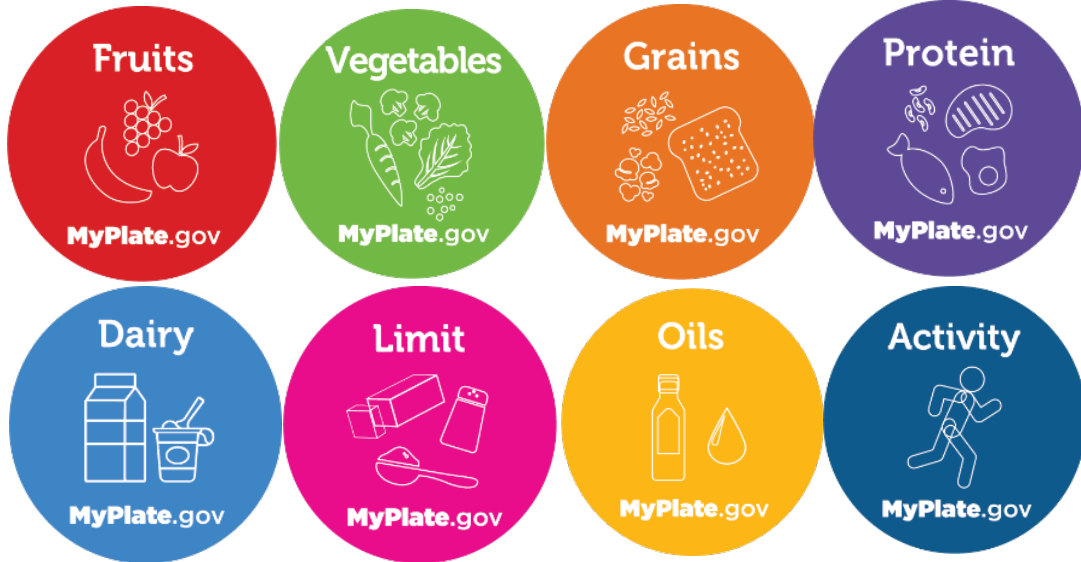


Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book



CACFP

Child & Adult Care Food Program



Revision April 2024



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in
Adult and Child Care

Table of Contents

General Criteria pg. 3

Category 1: Menus Criteriapg. 4-7

Category 2: Physical Activity Criteria pg. 8-10

Category 3: Professional Development Criteriapg. 11

Category 4: Nutrition and Wellness Environment Criteria pg. 12-17

Category 5: Infant Care Criteria.....pg. 18-20

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement pg.21



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

General Criteria

Criterion	All corrective actions from the most recent compliance review have been completed and implemented. Program has not been seriously deficient in the past two program years.
Why	Caregivers applying for award must be in good standing with the State agency (and Sponsor, if applicable) and compliant with all Program regulations. The award recognizes caregivers that go above and beyond Federal requirements (7 CFR PART 226).
Tips & Tools	<p>The State agency will verify program compliance and sign the Application Cover Sheet prior to submitting the completed application to Mountain Plains Regional Office for final review and approval. Home Sponsoring Organizations must verify program compliance and complete the Home Sponsor Organization Verification Form, located on page 17 of the Application, prior to sending the application and documentation to the State agency. The State agency may request additional documentation from the Home Sponsoring Organization or caregiver to verify Program compliance.</p> <p>Refer to your State agency for training and resources on Program requirements.</p> <p>Electronic Code of Federal Regulation, Title 7, Part 226 Child and Adult Care Food Program: eCFR :: 7 CFR Part 226 -- Child and Adult Care Food Program</p> <p>USDA, Food and Nutrition Service CACFP Policy Memos: FNS Documents & Resources Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)</p>

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Category 1: Menu Criteria

GOAL - To strengthen the nutritional quality of CACFP meals

Criterion	Reimbursable meals meet the USDA requirements. All menus and meals meet the CACFP meal patterns.
Why	The CACFP meal patterns lay the foundation for a healthy eating pattern for children.
Tips & Tools	Refer to your State agency for training and resources on meal pattern requirements. USDA FNS Meal Pattern Resources: Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov) Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Resources: ICN Home - Institute of Child Nutrition (theicn.org)

Criterion	<p>Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh fruit and vegetables must be served each week.• A different fruit is served at each meal/snack over the course of a day.• Vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, bean/peas/legumes) incorporated into menu every week. <p>Limit pre-fried, breaded vegetables (i.e., tater tots, French fries, onion rings)</p> <p>Fruit or vegetables are served as a snack component.</p>
Why	Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables ensures that a broad range of vitamins and minerals are consumed. Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables tend to have less sugar and/or sodium than canned and may provide more nutrients. Pre-fried vegetables contain extra sodium and calories.
Tips & Tools	<p>Fruits and vegetables must be of appropriate size and texture based on the child's development to prevent choking.</p> <p>Fruit may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.</p> <p>Vegetable subgroups include but not limited to - Dark Green: broccoli, spinach, raw leafy greens. Red/Orange: carrots, red peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes. Beans and Peas: black beans, kidney beans, lentils, refried beans, pinto beans, navy beans, great northern beans (does not include green beans and green peas).</p> <p>USDA/ FNS Resources: Vegetables MyPlate Fruits MyPlate Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs USDA-FNS</p>

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Criterion	100% fruit juice is limited.
Why	Too much fruit juice can provide extra sugar and calories. Children tend to fill up on juice and may not eat much during meals or snacks. Drinking juice throughout the day has been associated with tooth decay.
Tips & Tools	Offer whole fruits and vegetables which provide more fiber and less sugar than 100% fruit juice. When children are thirsty, the best drink to offer them is unflavored water. USDA/ FNS Resources: Q&As: Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in CACFP USDA-FNS

Criterion	Only unflavored low-fat (1% or less) and/or fat-free (skim) milk are served to all participants over age two. Flavored milk can have added sugars which are not necessary for children. Only whole milk is served to participants between the ages 1 and 2.
Why	Whole and 2% milk provide extra calories and saturated fat for children over the age of two. It is recommended that children ages 1-2 receive whole milk to supply adequate fat and calories for the rapid brain development that occurs during this age.
Tips & Tools	USDA/ FNS Resources: Serving Milk in the CACFP (azureedge.net)

Criterion	Whole grain-rich foods are served. Sweet crackers (including graham crackers and animal crackers) are limited. Grain-based desserts are never served as an additional food item that is not contributing to the reimbursable meal (holidays and birthdays are exempt).
Why	Whole grain-rich foods provide more fiber and other nutrients than refined grains. Eating more whole grains is associated with reduced risk of several chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and obesity. Limiting sweet crackers will reduce the amount of added sugar which, as a percent of calories, is particularly high in children. The Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting the consumption of added sugars and solid fats as part of a healthy eating pattern and identify grain-based desserts as sources of added sugars and saturated fats.

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Tips & Tools

Foods that meet the whole grain-rich criteria contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grains in the food are enriched or are 100 percent whole grain. Whole grain-rich foods may be evaluated using any of the six options for determining if the product meets the whole grain-rich criteria:

- 1) check to see if the product is part of the WIC food package,
- 2) look for an FDA whole wheat Standard of Identity (as for pasta),
- 3) look for an FDA whole grain health claim,
- 4) consider if the product meets the NSLP whole grain-rich,
- 5) use the *Rule of Three* (which requires considering any additional ingredients), or
- 6) request whole grain information from the manufacturer or a standardized recipe.

Serving a variety of whole grain rich foods is highly encouraged. Different types of whole grain rich foods include whole-wheat bread, whole-wheat rolls, whole-wheat tortillas, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, whole cornmeal, quinoa, or oatmeal. Serving whole wheat-bread, whole-wheat rolls, and brown rice throughout the week is considered three different types of whole grain-rich foods.

Grain-based desserts are those items that are denoted with a superscript 3 or 4 in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Exhibit A. The following foods are considered grain-based desserts: cookies, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies.

USDA/ FNS, Resources:

[Calculating Ounce Equivalents of Grains in the CACFP | USDA-FNS](#)

[CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers \(azureedge.net\)](#)

[Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program \(azureedge.net\)](#)

[Adding Whole Grains to Your Child and Adult Care Food Program Menu \(azureedge.net\)](#)

Criterion

Higher fat meats and entrees that are processed and preserved are limited

Incorporate lean meats, nuts/seeds, and/or tofu and other meat alternatives into menu.

Serve only natural cheese and choose low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses.

Why

Processed and preserved meats and entrees contain extra sodium and cured meats provide nitrates. Too much sodium is associated with high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease. Higher fat meat and entrees usually provide extra saturated fat and calories.

Incorporating meat alternatives such as nuts/seeds, fish, beans, and tofu can diversify menus and better meet the dietary needs of vegetarians and culturally diverse groups. Additionally, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans note that consumption of a balanced variety of protein foods, including plant-based protein sources can contribute to improved nutrient intake and health benefits.

Natural cheeses typically have lower sodium content, and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends caregivers choose products lower in sodium. Choosing low-fat/reduced-fat cheese will limit the amount of fat and saturated fat.

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Tips & Tools	<p>Limit meat or poultry products preserved by smoking, curing, salting and/or the addition of chemical preservatives. Processed meats and poultry include all types of meat and poultry sausages (bologna, frankfurters, luncheon meats and loaves, sandwich spreads, Vienna, chorizo, kielbasa, pepperoni, salami, and summer sausages), bacon, smoked or cured ham or pork shoulder, corned beef, pastrami, pig's feet, beef jerky, and smoked turkey/chicken products.</p> <p>Examples of lean meats include 95% lean cooked ground beef, beef top round steak or roast, beef tenderloin, pork top loin chop or roast, pork tenderloin, ham or turkey deli slices, skinless chicken breast, and skinless turkey breast.</p> <p>Choose unsalted nuts and seeds to keep sodium intake low.</p> <p>USDA/FNS Resources: Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Breakfast USDA-FNS Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Lunch and Supper in the USDA CACFP USDA-FNS</p>
-------------------------	--

Criterion	Incorporate locally produced foods into meals.
Why	Purchasing seasonal and/or locally grown or produced foods supports the local economy and can improve the quality of the meal. Serving local foods and offering related hands-on activities can increase children's willingness to try new foods. In-season foods are usually fresh and often cost less than when purchased out of season.
Tips & Tools	USDA/FNS Resources: CACFP11_2015os.pdf (azureedge.net) Farm to Preschool USDA-FNS Procuring Local Foods Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

Criterion	Non-creditable sweetened foods are limited.	
Why	Non-creditable sweetened foods are sources of added sugars, such as sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, syrup), mix in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, or cookie pieces).	
Tips & Tools	Caregivers are encouraged to explore healthier alternatives for toppings, such as fruit or yogurt. Minimizing sweet toppings will help reduce children's consumption of added sugars.	Resources: Added Sugars on the New Nutrition Facts Label FDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Category 2: Physical Activity Criteria

GOAL - To provide a care environment that promotes physical activity, movement and play over screen time and inactivity

Criterion	Television, DVD, and video watching, and computer use is limited or not available for infants/children under the age of two.
Why	Children’s brains and bodies grow at an amazing rate in the first few years of life. When a young child is watching a screen, he/she is missing out on other important neural stimulation as well as fine and gross motor development skills. In addition, watching television in infancy and toddlerhood can lead to a shortened attention span.
Tips & Tools	Caregivers are encouraged to limit or not make available screen time for children under the age of two. Resources: Media Aware in Early Learning Nutritional Sciences Program (uw.edu) Why to Avoid TV for Infants & Toddlers - HealthyChildren.org

Criterion	For children over two, screen use of educational and/or movement information is limited to the maximum minutes allowed in each award category.
Why	Limited educational screen use can be constructive in child development. However, excessive use can inhibit physical movement and the development of social or cognitive skills.
Tips & Tools	Plan each day to include more physical activity, learning activities and movement and limit screen time. Resources: Limit screen time among kids, experts caution American Heart Association Screen time and children: How to guide your child - Mayo Clinic Limit Screen Time - Action for Healthy Kids

Criterion	Moderate to vigorous physical activity is provided during each full day of care.
Why	Children need an outlet for their abundant energy! When children can develop their gross motor skills through vigorous play, they are calmer and able to focus on learning during educational times.
Tips & Tools	Plan each day to include more physical activity that includes gross motor skills and vigorous play. Resources: Exercise and Fitness Nutrition.gov Helping Children in Child Care Be Physically Active – eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Criterion	Periods of inactivity (at one time), excluding nap time, are limited.
Why	Children need an outlet for their abundant energy! When children can develop their gross motor skills through vigorous play, they are calmer and able to focus on learning during educational times.
Tips & Tools	Limit periods of inactivity such as sitting or lying down. Resources: President's Council health.gov

Criterion	The physical activity provided includes: Both indoor and outdoor activities, Unstructured physical activity (free play), and structured physical activity (age appropriate activities guided by the caregiver)
Why	A mix of physical activity settings means that children have opportunities to use their imagination and initiative during free play and ensures they develop gross motor and social skills (sharing, waiting your turn, the joy of team-work) during structured play and sport.
Tips & Tools	Include indoor and outdoor activity settings and structured and unstructured activity. Resources: President's Council health.gov

Criterion	Active play time is not restricted as punishment.
Why	In many children, restricting activity to punish leads to yet more misbehavior. It is important to find other ways to motivate children rather than using restriction of play time as a punishment.
Tips & Tools	Do not limit physical activity as punishment in the child care setting. Resources: Prohibited Caregiver/Teacher Behaviors ECLKC (hhs.gov)

Criterion	Physical activity curriculums, which encourage a variety of basic movement and manipulative skills, are utilized at least weekly.
Why	A consistent physical activity curriculum ensures children's gross motor development in a variety of areas and school physical education readiness.

Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Adult and Child Care

Tips & Tools	Plan your physical activity curriculum to include a variety of basic movement on a weekly basis. Resources: SHAPE America Teacher's Toolbox: FREE Physical Education Tools and Activities
-------------------------	---

Criterion	Physical activity ideas and resources are sent home with parents at least monthly.
Why	Caregivers can be role models for parents and increase the chances that education received while in child care is reinforced at home.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children USDA-FNS Make Family Time Active Time, Get Active, NHLBI, NIH

Criterion	Make drinking water freely available, both indoors and outdoors, throughout the day.
Why	Adults and children need to stay hydrated throughout the day and not just at mealtimes. This practice also helps develop a lifetime habit of drinking water. Water plays a vital role in health and body function.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Water Requirements_CACFPMealPattern (azureedge.net) Water and Healthier Drinks Healthy Weight, Nutrition, and Physical Activity CDC

Criterion	During outdoor activity, children have access to sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.
Why	Children should be protected from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and “broad-spectrum” sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA-ray protection of SPF 15 or higher, with permission from parents or guardians.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Success Story: Shading Children from the Sun's Harmful Rays CDC Play It Safe In the Sun: A Guide for Parents Brochure (cdc.gov)



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

Category 3: Professional Development Criteria

GOAL – To promote nutrition-related continuing education for CACFP staff to support competency and motivation for children’s health and development

Criterion	<p>Director or Authorized Representative attended an online or in-person CACFP Meal Pattern training in the past year provided by a State agency, Sponsoring Organization, or Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN).</p> <p>Director or Authorized Representative and Lead Teachers and Other Staff must complete online, or in-person trainings provided by USDA Food and Nutrition Service, USDA SNAP-Ed, State agency, Sponsoring Organization, State Extension programs, ICN and/or Professional Organizations. Training topics may include child wellness, nutrition, food safety and/or food allergies</p> <p>Director or Authorized Representative is defined as the person who is the authorized to receive reimbursement for the CACFP. This includes a Daycare Home Provider. Lead Teachers and Other Staff are defined as staff specifically involved in child wellness, including planning, preparing, and serving the CACFP meals.</p>
Why	Continuing education supports the CACFP staff competency and motivation for supporting children’s healthy development.
Tips & Tools	<p>Examples of online wellness training opportunities that may be used to meet criteria (this is not an all-inclusive list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays Training Webinar Series: https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/halftime-cacfp-thirty-thursdays-training-webinar-series (30 minutes each) • ICN Online Trainings: https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food Safety in Child Care: (4 hours) - Care Connection - Planning Cycle Menus in Child Care: (2 hours) - CARE Connection - Planning Snacks as an Education Activity: (1 hour) - CARE Connection - Serving Nutritious Foods in Child Care: (2 hours) - CARE Connection - Step-by-step Menu Planning in Child Care: (4 hours) - Family Child Care FUNdamentals: (7 hours) - Food Allergies in SNPs: (1hour) • Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment – Calendar with training information, online resources, and training materials. CACFP Training/Online Resources Department of Public Health & Environment (colorado.gov) • Kansas Department of Education - Online Classes A current list of online training classes is posted at https://learning.ksde.org/ • Iowa Department of Education – CACFP Wellness Courses: CACFP Online Trainings Iowa Department of Education (educateiowa.gov) • National Smarter Mealtimes for Child Care Settings Scorecard : SMM-Scorecard-v4 (cacfp.org)



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

Category 4: Nutrition and Wellness Environment Criteria

GOAL - To provide a care environment that incorporates nutrition, health, and wellness into policy

Directions specific to this section: Create a written policy outlining your commitment to creating a healthy nutrition and wellness environment for all children in your care. The policy will include the following elements (dependent on the level for which you are applying).

Criterion	Complete the National Smarter Mealtimes for Child Care Settings Scorecard at least once per year.
Why	The National Smarter Mealtimes for Child Care Settings Scorecard is a list of simple, inexpensive strategies to promote healthy eating in half- or full-day programs that serve young children. These strategies work in childcare centers, Head Start programs, and family homecare settings.
Tips & Tools	Resources: National Smarter Mealtimes for Child Care Settings Scorecard website: Smarter Mealtimes for Early Childhood Education Settings: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice for Young Children – Healthy Food Choices in Schools (extension.org) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Smarter Mealtimes for Child Care Settings Scorecard : SMM-Scorecard-v4 (cacfp.org)

Criterion	Create a written policy outlining your commitment to creating a healthy nutrition and wellness environment for all children in your care. Written policy is shared with parents and reviewed on an annual basis (or more often as needed).
Why	Putting policies in writing signifies its importance within your organization. A written policy will also help to communicate to parents what their child will experience throughout the day while in your care.
Tips & Tools	Resources: cacfp_improving_nutrition_report.pdf (frac.org)

Criterion	Implements CACFP family style meal service including using child size-appropriate serving utensils and the caregiver(s) seated at the table with and eating the same foods as the children.
Why	Family style meals allow children control over how much they eat and, therefore, allows them to eat based on their hunger and fullness cues, develop independence, build self-esteem and confidence, and may result in them trying new foods.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals - National CACFP Sponsors Association Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Supplement E: Support Family Style Meals (azureedge.net)



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

	The daily schedule promotes a relaxed and adequate period for meals and snacks. Children have ample time to eat and practice social interaction skills such as having conversations.
	Children need to have enough time to practice table skills. Younger children tend to need a longer amount of time to eat a meal. They are less coordinated and are still developing the fine motor skills that help them use silverware effectively. If they feel rushed, they may be less likely to eat well.
	While every child is different and care givers should individualize based on children’s needs, <u>at least</u> 10 minutes for a snack and <u>at least</u> 20 minutes for a meal should be an appropriate amount of time for most children. Resources: Mealtimes With Toddlers in the CACFP USDA-FNS
	Food is not used as incentive or punishment and children are not punished or rewarded for what they choose to eat. Food is not withheld as punishment and children are not forced to eat foods as a prerequisite to receiving an item or completing an activity.
	Offering food to encourage or reward behavior places unnecessary importance on food and may have negative effects. This action teaches children to eat when they are not hungry and can alter their internal hunger and fullness cues. Foods commonly used to encourage positive behavior, such as candy or cookies, are often high in fat or sugars with little nutrients. These foods offer little to support proper growth and development. As children become older, rewarding them with food may lead to emotional overeating and excessive weight gain.
	Resources: Mealtimes with Toddlers in the CACFP USDA-FNS Why Parents Shouldn’t Use Food as Reward or Punishment - Health Encyclopedia - University of Rochester Medical Center
	Children are instructed in hand washing techniques and both children and staff wash their hands before and after meals and snack.
	Keeping hands clean is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness. Washing hands before meals is especially important since hands will come into contact with the mouth and with food that will be consumed.
	Making learning about handwashing fun with educational activities and hand on learning. Resources: Discover MyPlate Nutrition Education for Kindergarten: Student Workbook (azureedge.net) When and How to Wash Your Hands Handwashing CDC ICN Resource Search - Institute of Child Nutrition (theicn.org)



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

	Menus are available and shared for staff and parents. Children and parents have opportunities to provide input on the food and menus.
	Families should know what their children are eating in child care and have the chance to make suggestions about what is served. Families can also plan their home meals better if they know what is on the menu at child care.
	Resources: Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

	Children are taught developmentally appropriate table manners by trained staff at each meal and snack.
	A child's eating environment may be as important as the foods he or she eats. Child care caregivers can promote a positive attitude toward mealtimes and food by role modeling good table manners, leading positive meal time conversations and a willingness to try new foods.
	Resources: Step-by-step guide to teaching table manners for kids WOW Parenting Helping Children with Manners (childdevelopmentinfo.com)

	Nutrition education is woven into activities throughout the day and provided through standardized curriculum (i.e., Team Nutrition, MyPlate, State designed nutrition education curriculum). Visible nutrition education includes posters, books, and pictures.
	Learning to enjoy healthy foods is a critical life skill that caregivers are uniquely positioned to support. Food and eating can also provide familiar, hands-on, contexts for teaching a variety of early academic skills.
	Resources: Team Nutrition USDA-FNS Kids MyPlate

	Parents are encouraged to volunteer/participate in mealtimes and/or nutrition education activities.
	Including parents in mealtimes reinforces a positive attitude toward food and mealtimes, and promotes continuity between home and child care.
	USDA, FNS, Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Supplement D: Create a Positive Meal Environment Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Supplement D: Create a Positive Meal Environment (azureedge.net)



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

	Children are given the opportunity to be involved in mealtime through age appropriate activities such as setting the table, preparing food, and cleaning up after meals.
	While food nourishes children’s bodies physically, mealtime serves as emotional nourishment. Positive interactions and patience are important, as is an engaging eating experience. Child care caregivers can promote positive attitudes toward food and create a friendly eating environment to help children form lifelong healthy eating habits.
	Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Supplement D: Create a Positive Meal Environment (azureedge.net)

	Screen time is limited to no more than 30 minutes per week for children two and older and never during mealtimes. Zero screen time for infants/toddlers under two years old.
	Limited educational screen use can be constructive in child development. However, excessive use can inhibit physical movement and the development of social or cognitive skills.
	Screen Time Use - SNAP-Ed (msu.edu)

	Children have the opportunity to see, identify, taste, and enjoy a variety of foods that are culturally significant and/or locally grown.
	Food provides an ideal context for teaching important cultural concepts and for promoting children’s pride in their community.
	Encourage opportunities for children to experience locally grown foods by doing field trips, cooking recipes, and tasting fresh fruits and vegetables. Resources: Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate USDA-FNS CACFP Recipes for Child Care Homes and Adult Day Care USDA-FNS Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings USDA-FNS



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

	<p>The childcare facility or home has a garden (including pots or raised beds) and children get frequent access to working in that garden (e.g., planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, etc.).</p>
	<p>Early childhood is the ideal time to establish healthy eating habits. Farm to preschool works to connect early child care and education settings to local food producers with the objectives of serving locally grown, healthy foods to young children, providing related nutrition education, and improving child nutrition. Farm to preschool activities can increase children’s willingness to try new foods and help them become familiar with local foods they will see in school.</p>
	<p>Even a small garden will provide a valuable teaching experience with children.</p> <p>Resources: Team Nutrition Garden Resources USDA-FNS Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings USDA-FNS</p>
	<p>Garden-focused nutrition education including hands-on activities (e.g., cooking, food preparation, taste testing, etc.) is incorporated into the curriculum on a regular basis.</p>
	<p>Early childhood is the ideal time to establish healthy eating habits. Farm to preschool works to connect early child care and education settings to local food producers with the objectives of serving locally grown, healthy foods to young children, providing related nutrition education, and improving child nutrition. Farm to preschool activities can increase children’s willingness to try new foods and help them become familiar with local foods they will see in school.</p>
	<p>Resources: Team Nutrition Garden Resources USDA-FNS Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings USDA-FNS Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate USDA-FNS</p>
	<p>Participate in Farm to School or other farm to early childhood grant activities. Arrange site visits to local farms, community gardens or ranches.</p>
	<p>Early childhood is the ideal time to establish healthy eating habits. Farm to preschool works to connect early child care and education settings to local food producers with the objectives of serving locally grown, healthy foods to young children, providing related nutrition education, and improving child nutrition. Grant programs offer unique funding opportunities to expand gardens, site visits and center or home garden activities</p>
	<p>Resources: Farm to Early Care and Education Initiatives - ASPHN Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings USDA-FNS The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)</p>





Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

	Parents are encouraged to bring non-food items for celebrations. Holidays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods or with non-food treats, such as stickers, crayons, pencils, stickers.
	A healthy nutrition environment is created by serving nutritious foods during regular meals and snacks as well as at special occasions. Typical celebrations usually include calorie dense foods of limited nutritional value, such as cookies, cake, and candy. On occasion, this may not pose a problem, but it sends a message to children that eating such foods is the only way to celebrate.
	<p>This criterion encourages facilities to celebrate with mostly healthy foods (facility provided) or in non-food ways. Child care facilities can let parents know gently but firmly that the facility supports a healthier approach to celebrations. This can be done by including the facility policy in your parent handbook. Offer a suggested snack list for parents to decide what special snack will be served on their child’s birthday.</p> <p>Resources: Action for Healthy Kids, Healthy and Active Classroom Parties Healthy & Active Parties - Action for Healthy Kids</p>

	Fundraising activities involving children and families support the healthy environment. If foods outside the CACFP meals and snacks are served or sold on-site they are healthy and nutritious.
	Fundraising is a common practice for many child care facilities. Even if the money raised is used to support things the facility really needs, the message becomes unclear when sales of unhealthy food items are used to raise funds. Also remember that families and staff buy much of the food that is sold. Having extra candy and sweets around the house makes it that much harder to encourage healthier eating for children.
	<p>Resources: Healthy-Fundraisers-Tip-Sheet.pdf (actionforhealthykids.org)</p>

	Food and vending machines, if present in your facility, are located in areas not visible or accessible to children.
	Vending machines provide opportunities for staff to buy soda, other sweetened beverages, and foods often high in fat and sugar. Having them on-site increases the likelihood that staff will eat and drink these items in front of children in the facility. Vending machines on-site, especially if located in a public area, also send a message to families that these foods and beverages are “okay” for children to consume.
	If vending machines are in your building, place them in areas that are not visible or accessible to the children. In addition, if the vending machine must be on-site, you may want to work with the vendor to offer healthier items.



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

Category 5: Infant Care Criteria

GOAL - To provide a care environment that promotes the unique health, nutrition and wellness needs of infants

Directions specific to this section: Create a written policy outlining your commitment to creating a healthy infant care environment.

NOTE: High Honors is the only award level for the Infant Care section.

Criterion	Breastfeeding is encouraged and supported. Breastfeeding resources are promoted and available to parents.
Why	Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for infants. It is the only food healthy infants need for about the first 6 months of their life. Breastmilk is easy to digest and helps keep infants healthy by boosting the immune system. A mother's breastmilk is made for her infant and contains just the right amounts of nutrients. As the infant grows and changes, the mother's breastmilk also changes and provides the nutrients her infant needs to stay healthy and grow. As a child care caregiver, you are in a unique position to support breastfeeding mothers meet their breastfeeding goals.
Tips & Tools	Breastfeeding should be encouraged and supported in the child care setting. Resources: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program USDA-FNS Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers (azureedge.net) Homepage WIC Breastfeeding (usda.gov)

Criterion	Infants are offered a variety of solid foods that are the appropriate texture for their developmental readiness.
Why	Feeding infants a variety of foods – different colors, textures, temperatures – helps them build healthy relationships with food and contributes to a healthy diet.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program USDA-FNS Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks USDA-FNS

Criterion	Breastfeeding mothers are accommodated with a separate area to breastfeed and/or pump breast milk. The separate area is a quiet, clean, and sanitary place that is not a restroom.
-----------	--



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

Why	Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for infants. It is the only food healthy infants need for about the first 6 months of their life. Breastmilk is easy to digest and helps keep infants healthy by boosting the immune system. A mother’s breastmilk is made for her infant and contains just the right amounts of nutrients. As the infant grows and changes, the mother’s breastmilk also changes and provides the nutrients he or she needs to stay healthy and grow. As a child care caregiver, you are in a unique position to support breastfeeding mothers meet their breastfeeding goals.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program USDA-FNS Infant Feeding in the CACFP - Revised USDA-FNS Homepage WIC Breastfeeding (usda.gov)

Criterion	Infants are not exposed to screen time at all (includes television, computer, and phone screens).
Why	The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends caregivers prioritize creative, unplugged playtime for infants and toddlers.
Tips & Tools	Resources: Media use in childhood: Evidence-based recommendations for caregivers (apa.org)

Criterion	Infants have an opportunity for “tummy time” multiple times throughout their day. Tummy time is defined as “Placing the baby on her stomach while awake and supervised”.
Why	Tummy time is important because it helps prevent flat spots on the back of an infant’s head, makes neck and shoulder muscles stronger so baby can start to sit up, crawl, and walk and improves an infant’s motor skills (using muscles to move and complete an action).
Tips & Tools	Resources: Homepage Safe to Sleep (nih.gov) Establishing Tummy Time Routines to Enhance Your Baby’s Development - AOTA

Criterion	Infants are taken outside daily (weather permitting) through walks, outdoor play or other activities giving them access to nature.
Why	During the first few years of life, infants and toddlers are trying to make sense of their world. One of the ways they do this is by soaking up every sensory experience they have. These new experiences are not only enjoyable but are critical for their cognitive development.
Tips & Tools	Resources: 6 reasons children need to play outside - Harvard Health



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

	Infants are fed on-demand rather than on a strict, universal feeding schedule.
	Feeding on-demand means feeding a baby when he or she show signs of being hungry. Babies may get hungry at times outside of typical mealtimes. They may need to eat more or less often than older children. Babies may also eat smaller or larger amounts from day to day. For this reason, physicians and dietitians recommend that babies be fed on-demand, which means feeding them when they show signs of being hungry. Babies should be offered food when they are hungry even if that is not during the regular meal schedule at your child care site.
	Resources: Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program USDA-FNS



Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Wellness Excellence in Child Care

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.