

Monthly Update

Child & Adult Care Food Program



March 2, 2026

Distributed to CACFP Authorized Representatives and Home Sponsors via Listserv and posted at <https://cnw.ksde.gov>, CACFP, CACFP Monthly Updates

Important Updates, Reminders, & Deadlines

National CACFP Week: March 15-21

The KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team appreciates each of you and your work to create healthy habits for a lifetime through the CACFP. Do you have plans ready to celebrate National CACFP Week? Check out the [National CACFP Week resources](#) from the National CACFP Association, and **be sure to share your activities by using #FuelingKSKids!** Not on social media? Don't hesitate to email pictures of the great meals, snacks, and activities being offered in your programs to anyone on the Child Nutrition & Wellness team.

Celebrate National Nutrition Month in March!

National Nutrition Month®, celebrated each year during March, focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits. This year's theme is "Discover the Power of Nutrition." Nutrition has the power to help individuals and communities thrive. More information, resources, and ideas to celebrate during March are available at [National Nutrition Month®](#).

Email Security Requirements

Due to a rise in phishing and scam emails, the KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team requests that all emails include a subject line and a brief description of any attachments. Emails sent without a subject line or without a written message will be considered potential phishing or scam attempts and will be reported to KSDE IT Security and deleted.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Summer meal programs aim to bridge the nutrition gap during summer and ensure children receive the nutritious meals they need. Contact our Topeka office at (785) 296-2276 or your child nutrition consultant to discuss options for summer 2026. Multiple summer meal training opportunities are available – see details under the "Professional Development & Training" section below.

SUN Bucks 2026

SUN Bucks, also known as Summer EBT, is a program to help families buy food for their school-aged children during the summer. SUN Bucks auto-enrollment was completed on February 21 and 22, and notices have been sent to those households. If a child's household did not receive a letter from the Department for Children and Families (DCF) regarding SUN Bucks eligibility, they can apply through the DCF Self-Service Portal at dcfapp.kees.ks.gov. SUN Bucks benefits will be issued in summer 2026. Updates about the distribution timeline will be shared as details become available. More information and FAQs can be found on the SUN Bucks webpage at SUNBucks.dcf.ks.gov.



USDA Updates

SP 02-2026 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 – Eat Real Food

On January 7, 2026, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 (Guidelines)* accessible at <https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf>. These Guidelines place real food, defined as whole, nutrient-dense and naturally occurring, back at the center of our diets. Find out more about the *Guidelines* and the *New Pyramid* at <https://realfood.gov/>.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service has issued a memorandum to Child Nutrition Program Regional Office and State Agency Directors: *SP 02-2026, CACFP 01-2026, SFSP 01-2026: "Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 – Eat Real Food."* This memorandum and its attachments provide information and guidance on the updated *Guidelines*.

SP 03-2026 Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Program Meals

USDA Food and Nutrition Service is pleased to share the *SP 03-2026, CACFP 02-2026, SFSP 02-2026, Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Program Meals* memorandum. This memorandum provides helpful resources and strategies for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators and ranchers to incorporate local beef into school meals. Resource topics cover procurement, funding resources, food safety, crediting, and technical assistance contacts from the Farm to School Program. This memorandum is in support of Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins' commitment to American beef and the recently published *USDA Plan to Fortify the American Beef Industry*.

Professional Development & Training

Training Opportunities

Many opportunities for learning are available to CACFP sponsors. Go to <https://cnw.ksde.gov>, Training, CNW Calendar to access the schedule of live classes with dates, times, and links or registration information. Upcoming trainings include:

- **Introduction to SFSP** on March 3 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Civil Rights Compliance & Confidentiality in CNPs** on March 4 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Food Safety Basics** on March 11 from 2-5 p.m.
- **SFSP Renewal Training** on March 12 from 2-3 p.m.
- **SFSP Annual Administrative Training** on March 31 from 1-4 p.m.
- **Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas** on April 1 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Summer Meals: Best Practices in Non-Congregate Meal Service** on April 2 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Request to Use Electronic Transactions** on April 7 from 9-11 a.m.
- **CACFP Jump Start for Centers** on April 7 in Topeka

On-demand training is offered 24/7 on the KSDE Training Portal. Create an account at <https://learning.ksde.org>. For detailed instructions on creating an account, go to <https://cnw.ksde.gov>, Training. On-demand training is also available from the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) at <https://theicn.org>, Training, *iLearn*. **New to the KSDE Training Portal:**

- **Introduction to Yeast Breads** (1 hour) – under General Classes
- **Stress Management for the Superhero** (1 hour) – under General Classes
- **2026 Wellness Wednesdays: Seed Oils** (1 hour) – under General Classes
- **Summer Meals: Best Practices for Serving Up Success** (1 hour) – under Summer Meals



If you would like to schedule an in-service, culinary coach session, or have questions about professional development, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

Culinary Coaches Training Program

This training opportunity allows sponsors to request in-person, hands-on culinary training conducted at their site. **Sponsors can choose from five training topics: Critical Culinary Skills, Knife Basics, Cooking Basics, and Baking Basics: Quick Breads or Yeast Breads.** The sessions are led by trained culinary coaches and focus on developing culinary skills that will better enable child nutrition program sponsors to prepare scratch and speed scratch recipes. If interested in scheduling a culinary coach session, please contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

Introduction to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) – March 3

Is your sponsor interested in operating the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) this year? Join KSDE for an Introduction to SFSP training on March 3 from 2 to 3 p.m. This training will provide a high-level overview of SFSP operations including sponsor responsibilities, meal planning and documentation, claiming and reimbursement, and resources available. The training link is available at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under Training, [CNW Calendar](#).

Civil Rights Compliance & Confidentiality in Child Nutrition Programs – March 4

Meeting USDA civil rights requirements and protecting confidential information are important responsibilities of child nutrition program operators. Join KSDE on March 4 from 2-3 p.m. to learn about these requirements and explore resources and information available to assist in carrying out these responsibilities. Free and reduced price meal applications and what information may or may not be disclosed will also be discussed. The training link is available at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under Training, [CNW Calendar](#).

Request to Use Electronic Transactions – April 7

Sponsors who wish to use an online application, an online enrollment & income eligibility form, or accept electronic signatures on any child nutrition form, including the Consent for Disclosure, must complete the Request to Use Electronic Transactions in Child Nutrition Programs form located on the Checklist tab in KN-CLAIM. This training will explain the requirements of online systems and how to complete the online system review process with KSDE. It will be held on Tuesday, April 7 from 9-11 a.m., and the training link is available at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under Training, [CNW Calendar](#).

CACFP Jump Start for Centers – April 7

Join KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness for this free six-hour training on April 7 in Topeka.

- **The Business of CACFP** will be held from **9 a.m. to 12 p.m.** and provide information on enrollment and income eligibility forms, meal counts, and claims.
- **Meal Planning for CACFP** will be held from **1 to 4 p.m.** and provide information on recordkeeping requirements for menu planning and meal documentation. Individuals can register for the morning, afternoon, or both sessions.

Both sessions are recommended for new authorized representatives of centers and for new support staff who provide assistance to the authorized representative. For more information or to register, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.



New Resources

Deadline Extended! 2026 Farm to School & Early Childhood Education (ECE) Institute

The application deadline for the 2026 Heartland Farm to School and Early Care and Education (ECE) Institute has been extended until March 31st! The year-long Institute kicks off June 2026 with a retreat where teams will engage in action planning to set programmatic goals with the assistance of a coach and learn through educational sessions. Following the retreat, teams will implement their Farm to Plate action plans with the support of the Institute network consisting of their coach, organizations across the three states, and the cohort of participating teams. The Institute aims to promote the **three tenets of Farm to School** (Procurement, School Gardens, and Education) as well as the **Three C's** (Classrooms, Cafeterias, and Communities) through School-led Farm to Plate initiatives.

Participation in the Institute is free, and travel expenses are covered as part of the program. The Heartland Farm to School and ECE Institute application can be found on the Child Nutrition and Wellness website at cnw.ksde.gov under Farm to Plate, [What's New](#).

For more information or questions regarding the Institute, contact Eryn Davis at eryn.davis@ksde.gov or (785) 296-5060.

“How to Support Breastfeeding Mothers & Families” – Training Available

This two-hour child care provider training is offered monthly at no cost through Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) on their Cape portal. Learn basic information developed in collaboration with the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition about support for families of breastfed infants. The course will cover proper handling and storing of breastmilk, breastfed babies' behaviors, and breastfeeding benefits for the infant, mother, and community. This course is appropriate for people who work with infants in center-based and family child care settings. Take this course and earn two clock hours toward the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Child Care Center Infant Lead Teacher training requirements. Registration for the English course is available [HERE](#). The training is also available in Spanish from March 5-12. Registration for the Spanish course is available [HERE](#).

Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN)

The Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN), a division of the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), offers a wide range of resources and training opportunities designed to strengthen culinary skills within child nutrition programs. Their offerings include training programs, recipes, monthly webinars, and instructional videos covering baking techniques, basic kitchen equipment, knife skills, and much more. Explore all the CICN resources at <https://theicn.org/cicn>.

As always, if you have questions or need technical assistance, please contact your Child Nutrition Consultant or the Topeka office at (785) 296-2276.



For more information, contact:

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