

Child Development Centers

3 Steps to Saving Money on Food Costs

Child development centers can save money and provide healthy meals and snacks for participating children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Participating in CACFP can help save thousands of dollars each year in food costs.

Step 1: Learn about CACFP

What is CACFP?

CACFP is the **C**hild and **A**dult **C**are **F**ood **P**rogram. The program provides federal funds for healthy meals and snacks to be served in child care centers and family child care homes. Centers can either prepare the meals on site or have the meals delivered.

Participating in CACFP provides:

- monthly financial support to help with the cost of meals
- training and technical assistance
- nutrition education and food safety information

Do you qualify?

All licensed public or private nonprofit child care centers may participate in CACFP. For-profit centers serving 25 percent of more low-income children are also eligible. Head Start programs are automatically eligible to receive the highest reimbursement for all the children they serve.

What can CACFP save for you?

Breakfast: Glass of Milk, Banana slices, Oatmeal
Minimum Savings: \$74 Daily, \$1,602 Monthly

Lunch: Milk, Apple, Turkey Sandwich, Carrots
Minimum Savings: \$136 Daily, \$2,944 Monthly

Snack: Peanut butter, Crackers
Minimum Savings: \$37 Daily, \$801 Monthly

Total Minimum Monthly Savings:
\$5,347

*Reimbursement rates are based upon family income, so the amount may vary.

To enroll in CACFP: Contact, the Office of State Superintendent of Education, Wellness & Nutrition Services at (202) 727-6436 or visit www.osse.dc.gov.

How does it work?

CACFP is administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Wellness & Nutrition Services.

An organization can enroll in CACFP through a sponsor or the center can enroll as an independent center. Working with a CACFP sponsor will allow you to concentrate on your work as a child care provider. With your help, the sponsor will oversee many of the administrative responsibilities involved in CACFP participation.

If your center has the staffing to maintain the program's forms and the financial capacity to support the upfront purchase of meals, you could enroll as an independent center.

Step 2: Enroll and start serving nutritious meals

In order to enroll with a sponsor for the CACFP program, you will need to provide the center's child care license and information regarding the children's income eligibility. Your sponsor or D.C. Hunger Solutions can help in this process.

CACFP can fund up to two meals and a snack for each child per day. To participate in CACFP your center must serve balanced meals that can include a variety of healthy options. There are easy-to-follow guidelines for you to use when planning meals.

Step 3: Count

To take advantage of funding for meals, you need to:

- Keep a daily count of the number of meals that you serve
- Maintain a daily attendance record
- Save your daily menus for each month and ensure they meet the meal pattern requirements
- Save delivery tickets, receipts and invoices

The detail of these forms is critical to receiving the full reimbursement for the meals that you serve. Fortunately, your sponsor or D.C. Hunger Solutions is available to offer training and assistance to ensure the meals and children are properly counted.

Updated: August 2011

For more information or assistance, contact D.C. Hunger Solutions at (202) 986-2200 or email kroberts@dchunger.org.