



United States
Department of
Agriculture

May 17, 2002

Food and
Nutrition
Service

SUBJECT: Obligations of Child Care Centers and Day Care Homes to Offer Infant Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

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Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

TO: Regional Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

This memorandum clarifies that child care centers and family day care homes participating in CACFP must offer program meals to all eligible children who are enrolled for care in their facilities. We are providing this explanation to ensure that all children, including infants, who are enrolled for child care have access to CACFP meals.

A facility may not avoid this obligation by stating that the infants are not “enrolled” in CACFP, or by citing some logistical or cost barrier to offering an infant meal. Decisions on offering program meals must be based on whether the child is enrolled for care, not whether the child is enrolled for CACFP. Section 226.2 of the CACFP regulations defines an enrolled child as “a child whose parent or guardian has submitted to an institution a signed document which indicates that the child is enrolled for child care.”

As long as the infant is in care during the meal service period, the facility must offer the infant a meal that complies with program requirements. As with all children in CACFP facilities, an infant’s parent or guardian may decline what is offered, and supply the infant’s meals instead. The key factor is that the infant must be provided access to CACFP meals.

We are aware that there are States that are not currently following this policy. Please advise State agencies to ensure that their CACFP institutions and facilities come into compliance within a reasonable amount of time. If you have additional questions about this issue, please contact Melissa Rothstein or Susan Ponemon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stanley C. Garnett".

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division