

FRAC FACT SHEET

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

WHY CACFP IS IMPORTANT

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and making it more affordable for many low-income families.
- CACFP provides nutritious meals and snacks to children and adults receiving child care at family child care homes, child care centers, Head Start programs, afterschool programs, and adult care centers.
- CACFP ensures that young children in child care receive a nutritious diet and learn good eating habits through nutrition education. CACFP has also been shown to improve the quality of care.

PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

- Eligible programs include group or family child care, child care centers, Head Start, recreation centers, and after school programs. For-profit child care centers are also eligible if at least 25 percent of their children come from families with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty level.
- Adult day care facilities that provide structured, comprehensive services to nonresident adults, functionally impaired or age 60 or older, may participate.
- Emergency shelters that provide residential and food services to children in homeless families also may participate.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

- Children age 12 and younger are eligible to receive up to two meals and one snack daily at a child care home or center. Migrant children age 15 and younger, and persons with disabilities of any age, are also eligible for CACFP.
- Afterschool meals and snacks are available to children through age 18.
- Homeless shelters may be reimbursed for up to three meals each day for resident children age 18 and younger.

PARTICIPATION

- In Fiscal Year 2013, CACFP provided meals to 3.5 million children and 116,000 elderly or disabled adults each day.
- CACFP provided 1.96 billion total meals and snacks during Fiscal Year 2013.

REIMBURSEMENT AND FUNDING

- In Fiscal Year 2013, USDA reimbursed \$2.6 billion to providers.
- Family child care homes are reimbursed using a two-tiered system. Tier I covers homes in low income areas, low-income providers, and children from low-income homes.
- Child care centers receive payments based on the type of meal served and the income of the child's family. Based on parental income, meals are reimbursed as free, reduced-price, or paid.
- Afterschool care programs in low-income areas and homeless and domestic violence shelters are reimbursed at the free rate.
- 2013-2014 reimbursement rates can be found at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/CACFP-ratetables_13-14.pdf

BENEFITS

- Participating programs provide meals according to the nutrition standards set by USDA ensuring that children and adults in care receive balanced, nutritious meals and snacks.
- Studies show that children in CACFP receive meals that are nutritionally superior to those served to children in comparable child care settings without the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- CACFP can help start good nutrition habits early in life.
- CACFP resources and training support communities by supporting child care.
- Research cites participation in CACFP as one of the major factors influencing quality care, reporting that 87 percent of the family child care homes considered to be providing good quality child care participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- CACFP is key to good nutrition and quality, affordable child care, which allows children to develop fully and maintain a healthy weight, prepares children to enter school ready to learn, and helps working families work.