



We Need Your Help to Feed Kids in Child Care!

Cosponsor the Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act

"I grew up in poverty. It was a thing of pride to not rely on public health benefits. [My] mother had 3-4 jobs. I grew up hungry. Growing up in the environment really brought home healthy eating...As a parent and program owner, I have had to go to the food bank, for myself and for my business... It's important to me to ensure I'm serving kids healthy, locally sourced and organic food as much as I can afford it. Make sure that it is fresh. In the past two years, food prices have doubled. Families come to me in tears saying they weren't able to eat dinner last night" – Brianne, Family Child Care Provider, Montana

The early childhood workforce in family child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, and child care centers is working tirelessly to ensure children have opportunities to learn and grow, including providing meals and snacks so children do not go hungry. At the same time, one out of three child care providers themselves is worried about having enough food at the end of the month.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), created by Congress in 1968, is an essential federal support for young children of working families. Each day, more than 4.2 million children receive nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP. Good nutrition in the first years of life is essential for early brain development, and research indicates that meals and snacks served in CACFP-participating child care programs are of higher quality than in non-CACFP programs. Home-based family child care providers are proud of the healthy meals they serve, and too often pay too much out of pocket to make this possible.

"In family child care, we are nurturing everything about those children. Zero to three is the most important time for child development. If they aren't getting healthy meals and snacks, there's no way they can go into a school system and think and learn." – Susan, Family Child Care Provider, Arizona

How does CACFP work?

- Participating child care providers receive partial reimbursement for up to two meals and one snack (or one meal and two snacks) served to children each day.
- Currently, family child care programs receive differing partial reimbursement rates through a complex and often burdensome system. Reimbursements are inadequate to cover rising food costs. This tiered system was first created in law in 1996, and since that time, family child care

participation in CACFP has dropped by 60%. In comparison, Head Start and center-based participation has increased nearly 82%.¹

- State agencies, in partnership with trusted sponsoring non-profit organizations, provide support and oversight including through monitoring and training and support on the importance of good nutrition

"We are setting the foundation for healthy eating. Family style meals, serving sizes, listening to your body's signals of hunger, being involved in cooking. If not for my CACFP sponsor, I wouldn't have the knowledge I have today." – Brianne, Family Child Care Provider, Montana

The Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act will:

- Provide a 10 cent increase for all eligible meals and snacks in all CACFP-participating Head Start, child care centers, and family child care programs.
- Adjust the process so that family child care programs are paid one rate.
- Ensure that if a family child care provider's own child is enrolled in her program, meals and snacks served to her own child during the program operation can be submitted for reimbursement along with the claims for the other children.



"It helps, but the rest comes out of my pocket, and it also requires additional paperwork and monitoring time for which I'm not compensated. I'm also not able to claim meal reimbursements for my own son, which doesn't seem fair because of course you still have to feed your own child when he's part of your program." – Shalicia, Family Child Care Provider, North Carolina

Urgent action needed

Child care in our country is in crisis. Programs are closing their doors at an alarming rate, undercompensated providers are burned out, and families are paying the consequences. For many family child care providers, the changes made by the Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act will help make the difference that allows them to keep their doors open.

Without quick passage of the Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act, we will undoubtedly see an increase in young children and even providers themselves going to bed hungry. We will also see more burdens placed on working families. Child care programs are struggling to feed the children during a time when access to quality, affordable child care is already threatened. We can not stand by and allow this to happen. **We urge you to cosponsor the Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act to help accomplish our shared goal of keeping kids fed.**

Please contact Chris Dalton, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Representative Greg Landsman.

¹ Food Research and Action Center analysis of USDA data, 2022