



Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program Management Manual for Day Care Homes

Revised November 2015



For more information, please visit our website at:
www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov



Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Management Manual for Day Care Homes

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Addendum: CACFP Meal Pattern Chart (attached; separate document)

This manual was developed by the state agency in conjunction with the Sponsoring Organization of Day Care Homes Network. It is intended to assist day care homes to successfully operate the CACFP. If you have questions about the CACFP or content in this manual, please contact your sponsoring organization.

Welcome to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The CACFP is federally funded by the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In Montana, the CACFP is administered by the Department of Public Health and Human Services (state agency), Early Childhood Services Bureau. Montana's Early Childhood Services Bureau is dedicated to helping children and families succeed by increasing the affordability, accessibility, and quality of early care and education. The CACFP plays a vital role in assuring the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served to children and makes nutritious food more affordable for many low-income families. The program provides federal cash assistance to participating day care homes serving meals that meet certain nutritional requirements.

You are, or will be, participating in the program under a local sponsoring organization of day care homes that has an agreement with the State agency to administer the CACFP in day care homes. A list of sponsoring organizations can be found on the CACFP website at www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov or contact the state agency for more information at 1-888-307-9333.

To participate in the CACFP you must meet certain requirements. Once you choose a sponsoring organization, you will participate in a pre-approval visit to learn about the CACFP requirements. Specific requirements are defined in the Sponsor/Provider Agreement, which must be completed before you begin participating in the CACFP. To assure that you meet CACFP requirements and receive correct reimbursement, the sponsoring organization will perform on-site monitoring visits. The sponsoring organization staff members will work with you to operate the program.

By participating in the CACFP, you are agreeing to allow entry of program representatives to monitor your day care home. Program representatives include sponsoring organization staff, state agency staff, federal staff, and auditors.

We hope that this manual will provide you with the necessary guidance to operate the CACFP program. Cooperating with your sponsoring organization will assure you are meeting CACFP responsibilities and allow you to receive the full financial benefits and support for providing nutritious food to the children in your care. We wish you well in your operation of the CACFP.

For the purpose of this document:

- **State agency** refers to the State of Montana DPHHS, which administers the program at the state level
- **Sponsoring organizations** refers to Sponsoring Organizations of Day Care Homes

CIVIL RIGHTS

The CACFP is a federal program and all participants must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Your sponsoring organization is required to annually report racial/ethnic data of enrolled children. This data is summarized on the child enrollment forms. Asking parents to complete the enrollment form, including the race/ethnic data, will assist in this process and assure accurate reporting.

Please Note: Sponsoring organizations are required to maintain confidentiality of all CACFP information and will not make income information or tier status of specific children available to day care homes. Sponsoring organizations will otherwise limit the use of such information to persons directly connected with the sponsoring organizations administration and enforcement of the program.

REGULATIONS

Federal Regulation § 7 CFR Part 226, the Administrative Rules of Montana and state policies govern CACFP participation. Additional manuals, references, and resources are provided by the state agency. Sponsoring organizations provide guidance on program compliance and regulations. Day care home providers who participate in the CACFP must comply with these regulations. Many of the requirements are in the [CACFP Sponsor/Provider Agreement](#). Please refer to this agreement and/or contact your sponsoring organization when you have any questions regarding CACFP administration.

REQUIREMENTS

New Applicant Requirements
Obtain license from the Quality Assurance Division (QAD), Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS).
Complete a pre-approval visit with your sponsoring organization.
Read, complete, and sign the <u>CACFP Sponsor/Provider Agreement</u> .
Assure that all parents / legal guardians: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Complete a child enrollment form to enroll them in CACFP.○ Receive information about the CACFP.
To claim your own children for reimbursement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Your household income must be within the Income Eligibility Guidelines and qualify for Tier I reimbursement.○ You must complete an <u>Income Eligibility Form</u> and submit it to your sponsoring organization for approval.○ For more information, refer to Definitions and Clarifications – Authorized Capacity, Provider’s Own Children
Cooperate with your sponsoring organization to receive Tier status <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sponsoring organizations will assess if you can be classified Tier I by school, census or income.○ If needed, provide documentation of household income to your sponsoring organization if you wish to be classified as Tier I by income.○ New providers with zero income may be classified as Tier I for 45 days, and then must be re-evaluated every 45 days as long as they have zero income.
If you are a Tier II day care home provider, choose how you want income eligibility determined for the children in your care (refer to Definitions and Clarifications – Income Eligibility Forms).
Comply with all CACFP requirements.

REQUIREMENTS (continued)

(1) Daily Requirements

- Prepare and serve meals which meet CACFP meal requirements.
- Notify your sponsoring organization if you will not be present or if your day care home is closed during a regularly scheduled meal service.
- Record the meals by type (i.e. breakfast, AM snack, lunch, PM snack, supper, evening snack – as applicable) served to each child.
- Prepare and date menus for the current week and post the dated menus in an area easily visible to parents and program personnel.
- If the menu changes during the week (even if one food item is substituted for another), note the changes on the posted menu before the meal is served.
- Maintain a daily attendance record (sign-in/sign-out sheets) to verify attendance of children present at meal times, including the provider's own children if they are being claimed for meal reimbursement. Parent signatures are required daily.

(2) Monthly Requirements

- Claims for reimbursement must be submitted monthly to your sponsoring organization on or before the date specified in your Sponsor/Provider Agreement. Submit complete and accurate menus and meal count/attendance records as part of the claim documentation.
- Submit enrollment forms for new children enrolled in your program and/or new enrollment forms for children whose forms have expired (enrollment information must be updated annually). *Current enrollment forms must be on file for meal reimbursement.*
- Inform your sponsor about any changes in the number of children enrolled for care or any changes in the status of your license.

(3) Annual Requirements

- Obtain your license from the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) and send a copy to your sponsor.
- Review the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsor/Provider Agreement.
- Participate in home monitoring visits by the sponsoring organization at least three (3) times per year.
- Attend four (4) hours annual training.

REQUIREMENTS (continued)

(4) Recordkeeping Requirements

To ensure that you are receiving proper reimbursement you must keep complete and accurate records. All records must be kept for three years beyond the current year. All records must be kept confidential and appropriate documents must be under lock and key. The original application and reasons for termination, pre-approval agreements, and Sponsor/Provider agreements are permanent documents, and must be kept indefinitely, and easy to access for periodic reviews. Records are used to justify your receipt of federal funds. Failure to keep accurate documentation or deliberate misrepresentation of information may result in corrective action, serious deficiency, termination from CACFP, and placement on the National Disqualification List.

(5) Other Requirements

- Cooperate with your sponsoring organization during household contacts / parent surveys.
- Do not charge parents for children's meals.
- If infants are enrolled, maintain a current Infant Feeding Schedule for each infant.
- When children have an allergy or food intolerance that changes the meal pattern, obtain from parents a statement from a recognized medical authority (physician, physician assistant) which identifies the allergy and includes a list of substitute foods.
- Retain protected health information in accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.
- Maintain working thermometers in all refrigerators and freezers used for food for CACFP meals.
- **The person named first on the license must be on site and** present for all CACFP meals served. The sponsoring organization must be notified in advance if this person is to be absent.
- The license and Sponsor/Provider agreement must be in the same name. The reimbursement check must be issued to the person who signed the Sponsor/Provider Agreement and that person's name must be listed first on the license.

DEFINITIONS AND FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS (listed in alphabetical order)

Attendance

Attendance is a daily record of the names of the children and the times the children are in your care. Parents are required to sign children in and out daily [including their own], noting the time each child arrives and the time each child leaves care.

Authorized Licensed Capacity

The number of children that may be cared for at any one time is listed on your Child Care License. It includes provider's own children under the age of six and authorized overlap.

Authorized Licensed Capacity includes caring for:

- A maximum of 6 children in a family day care home.
- A maximum of 12 children in a group day care home.

Excess of Authorized Capacity

You may not claim meals for children in excess of your Authorized Licensed Capacity unless you have children coming and going, and at no time have more children in attendance than your authorized capacity. If you are found to be caring for more children than authorized, you will be reported to the State agency. Caring for children in excess of Authorized Licensed Capacity is a violation of licensing regulations and may result in the termination of your license and/or participation in the CACFP if the problem is not corrected. You may not claim meals for children in care during days and/or hours not approved by Licensing and on the Sponsor/Provider Agreement.

Overlap

Meals served to the children present during overlap time(s) may be claimed for reimbursement if:

- The child is enrolled in the CACFP and participating in day care.
- You are within your Authorized Licensed Capacity.

Changes in Meal Pattern

A change in the meal pattern occurs when an entire food component is removed from the meal, such as milk or fruit/vegetables. Except for documented food allergies or intolerances that change the meal pattern, all children must be offered the same foods for the meal to be claimed for reimbursement (see Food Allergies or Intolerances).

No Charges for Meals

As a day care home participating in the CACFP, you are **not allowed** to:

- Charge parents for the meals their children receive while in your care.
- Charge a different rate based on reimbursement classification (Tier 1 or Tier 2 rates).
- Require any children to bring their own food for meals (for exceptions, see Infants and Food Allergies or Intolerances).

Children

Children means (a) persons 12 years of age and under, (b) children or migrant workers 15 years of age and under, and (c) persons with mental or physical handicaps, as defined by the State, enrolled in an institution or a child care facility serving a majority of persons 18 years of age and under. Reference: [CFR 226.2] Definitions.

Claims

Claims for reimbursement must be submitted monthly to your sponsoring organization on or before the date specified. Enrollment forms must be completed and submitted to the sponsoring organization, for each child, before meals are reimbursed. Claim documentation consists of:

- Daily records of the food items served.
- Daily records of each child in attendance and the meals served to those children.
- Signed parent documentation of holiday care with parent/guardian's signature.

These records must be complete and accurate. Incomplete or inaccurate records may cause a delay, non-payment of your reimbursement or meal disallowances. If there are issues with your claim, your sponsoring organization will contact you. Your sponsoring organization will provide feedback and explain how to complete the claim forms.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality means keeping information private, secure, and limiting its use. Confidential information must be kept under lock and key. Some examples of confidential information are Income Eligibility Forms, Special Dietary Needs Statements, and Immunization Records (refer to definitions of Food Allergies and Intolerances, Income Eligibility Forms, and HIPAA). All Income Eligibility Forms are confidential and are sent to the sponsoring organization directly from the parent or guardian. There is to be no identification of children by tier qualification in day care homes in which meals are reimbursed at both Tier I and Tier II reimbursement rates. Sponsoring organizations are required to maintain confidentiality of all CACFP information and will not make income information or tier status of specific children available to day care homes, and will otherwise limit the use of such information to persons directly connected with the sponsoring organization's administration and enforcement of the program.

Corrective Action Plan

Sponsoring organizations may require you to complete a Corrective Action Plan when you are not meeting one or more of the CACFP requirements. The sponsoring organization will provide technical assistance and instructions to meet the requirement. Cooperating with the sponsoring organization to complete a Corrective Action Plan is required. Failure to respond or complete a Corrective Action Plan can lead to Seriously Deficient status (refer to Serious Deficiency for further information) and possibly termination from CACFP participation.

Creditable Foods

Creditable foods refer to foods counted toward the meal pattern components and can be served

to meet the requirements for a reimbursable meal. These foods meet the CACFP nutritional criteria for reimbursable foods. Refer to the USDA Creditable Food Guidance with the Montana Addendum to the Creditable Food Guide located on the CACFP website.

Enrollment Forms

All children must be enrolled in CACFP and then re-enrolled annually to receive program benefits. Parents/guardians must complete the enrollment form, which includes the child's name, address, phone number, typical days and times the child is in care, and the parent/guardian's signature. You must also complete this form to enroll your own children. Sponsoring organizations will provide the enrollment forms and cannot process meal reimbursements for children who are not enrolled.

Special Meals and/or Accommodations

If a child has a food allergy and/or intolerance, the parent must obtain documentation of the food allergy and/or intolerance from a recognized medical authority (physician, physician's assistant, registered dietitian, or public health nurse), and a list of substitute foods. Documentation must be maintained in accordance with HIPAA regulations. The specific food allergy and/or intolerance information must be posted in a confidential place, not visible to the public, but where all staff can locate it (i.e. inside the cupboard door). Make sure the posted information is current at all times. The child care business must provide the substitute foods. The exception for providing the substitute food is when acquiring the food causes an undue hardship. Contact your sponsoring organization for guidance.

Food Safety

Food safety encompasses food handling, food preparation, and food storage which must be conducted in a safe manner to prevent food borne illness. A food borne illness is an illness resulting from the consumption of contaminated food. Food safety includes, but is not limited to: hand washing, glove use, cooking temperatures, maintaining refrigerator and freezer temperatures daily, and storing cleaning supplies and other harmful substances away from food and out of the reach of children.

- Refrigerator temperatures must be maintained at 40°F or below
- Freezer temperatures must be maintained at 0°F or below.

Contact your local health department or extension services for questions and resources. Refer to 37.95.708 (8) Licensing requirements for Family and Group Day Care Homes.

Sanitation

Sanitation refers to hygienic measures for ensuring food safety. Providers and children are expected to wash hands thoroughly before preparing food and eating. The provider is expected to wash and sanitize the table before and after eating, and should not place food on the bare table of a high chair tray. The kitchen and dining areas must always be clean and safe for children. *Contact your local health department or extension services for questions and resources. 37.95.708 (8) Licensing requirements for Family and Group Day Care Homes.*

Fraud

A deliberate misrepresentation of records or information to obtain an unearned reimbursement is fraud under applicable state or federal laws. Fraud may lead to a declaration of serious deficiency and result in immediate termination and the inability to participate in the CACFP for seven years from the date of termination, or longer if money is owed to the CACFP. Please refer to the CACFP Sponsor/Provider Agreement for information regarding the termination of providers from the Montana CACFP.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

This federal legislation requires all Protected Health Information (PHI) to be kept confidential. Providers must adhere to their sponsoring organizations HIPAA policy. Parents must be given a copy of your PHI policy. An example of PHI is a doctor's statement regarding a food allergy or information regarding a child's special needs.

Holidays

Reimbursement for meals provided to children on the legal holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day) will be made only when the provider submits written notice to the sponsoring organization, signed by the parent or guardian, stating their child was in care on the specific holiday. Written documentation must be attached to the appropriate monthly claim.

Income Eligibility Forms (IEFs)

IEFs are used to determine tiering of a day care home. IEFs collect a variety of information, including categorical eligibility information, or for others, names, social security numbers, and income for all household members. IEFs determine Tier status by income, the eligibility of providers' own children enrolled and participating in CACFP, and the reimbursement rate of families in Tier II day care homes.

It is important to know that providers and families participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formally known as Food Stamps, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), qualify for the Tier I reimbursement rate. **Best Beginnings Scholarship Program recipients often but not always qualify at this rate also. This is called categorical eligibility.** There is a place on the IEF to supply this information.

Your sponsoring organization will distribute and collect IEFs for all providers and families. IEFs distributed to parents for completion are confidential and must be returned to the provider or to the sponsoring organization from the parent/guardian.

Income Eligibility Guidelines

Income Eligibility Guidelines are published every year by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service for determining Tiering classifications. Income Eligibility Guidelines are provided by the sponsoring organization.

Infants

Day care homes participating in CACFP must offer meals to all infants enrolled in care.

Breastfeeding is encouraged for all infants. Breast-fed infants are welcome in the CACFP. Breast milk is considered infant milk in the CACFP meal pattern for infants.

Infant Cereal is any *iron-fortified* dry cereal specially formulated as cereal for infants. It is routinely mixed with formula or milk prior to consumption. Cereal is to be served separately and fed with a spoon. Cereal is not to be added to a bottle.

Infant Formula is any approved *iron-fortified* formula intended as a sole source of food for normal healthy infants served using the manufacturer's recommended dilution. Providers must offer at least one type of standard iron-fortified infant formula that would satisfy one or more of the infants in care. Providers may offer more than one type, but it is not required. Parents can accept the formula the provider offers, or they may decline it in writing and supply the type of formula they want their infant to receive. In this case, the parents pay for the formula and provide it to the day care home.

Infant Meal Reimbursement requires a complete developmentally appropriate meal be served (*see the CACFP Meal Pattern for more information*) for day care homes to receive reimbursement. In recognition of the non-food cost of serving meals, CACFP reimburses for meals and snacks containing only breast milk or iron-fortified formula, whether supplied by the provider or the parent/guardian. From the age the infant begins solid foods, the day care home must supply at least one food component of each meal and/or snack for meal reimbursement.

Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations

A MEDICAL STATEMENT TO REQUEST SPECIAL MEALS AND/OR ACCOMMODATIONS must be on file for meals served that do not meet the CACFP Meal Pattern and for special milk.

Meal Counts/Meal Participation Record

A daily record of the children, first and last names, who attend the meal service and a daily record of the meals they received each day must be kept of file. This record is submitted as a part of your monthly claim/menu and must be accurate.

Meal Pattern

The CACFP Meal Pattern is a set of required food components with the required minimum quantities noted for breakfast, supplement (snack), lunch, and supper for a specific age group of children, including infants. The CACFP Meal Pattern is the minimum quantities of food to serve children. It is not the correct, the actual, the sufficient, or the right quantity of food. More food than the minimum quantities noted on the CACFP Meal Pattern is needed to meet the appetites and energy needs of most children. It is essential to provide enough food to meet appetites and energy and nutrient needs. Copies of the CACFP Meal Pattern are provided by your sponsoring organization or can be found on the CACFP website at www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov.

Meal Requirements

All meals served must follow the CACFP Meal Pattern minimum requirements and guidelines to be reimbursed. Day care homes may be reimbursed for two meals and one snack or one meal

and two snacks per child per day. Meals may only be reimbursed for children who attend the day care home, who are enrolled in the CACFP, and who attend the meal service. For more information, refer to the CACFP Meal Pattern.

Meal Service

Family-style meal service is required.

Family-style dining means that the children and at least one adult are seated at the table and sharing the same food. Infants in high chairs are brought up to the dining table and included in the meal event.

Maintaining Ellyn Satter's "Division of Responsibility" in Feeding is essential to a successful meal service for children. Providers provide structure, support and opportunities. Providers are responsible for *what*, *when*, *where* and create a setting that supports pleasant and positive mealtimes. Children are responsible for *how much* and *whether*. Refer to Ellyn Satter's website for more information at www.ellynsatter.com. The January 2010, Family Meal Focus Newsletter #41, *The Division of Responsibility in the Trenches* is a great resource to assist in maintaining the Division of Responsibility in Feeding.

In-home

CACFP meals must be eaten in the day care home to be reimbursable. Uneaten meals or snacks "to go" are not reimbursable. Meals eaten on a field trip with the provider, such as on a picnic in the park, are reimbursable if they meet the CACFP meal pattern.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Children are welcome to attend and consume meals offered by the USDA Summer Food Service Program. SFSP meals cannot be claimed to the CACFP. If a day care home claims for meals not provided by the day care, it is double claiming and is not allowed.

Menus

A daily record of the foods served must be maintained and posted where it is viewable by parents. Menus must be prepared and dated for each week. Weekly menus must be kept on file for three years, plus the current fiscal year (Oct.1st - Sept.30th). Menu information is submitted as part of your monthly claim/menu (see Claims).

Menu Planning

For menu planning assistance and resources contact your sponsoring organization or visit the CACFP website at www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov. All menus must contain the required meal components and the meal components must be identifiable on the menu.

Menu substitutions

Menu substitutions are to be noted on the current dated and posted menu as changes are made. The CACFP recommends that you plan to make substitutions/changes ahead of time to take advantage of specials or include foods for special celebrations. *For example, if strawberries are on sale, purchase them and change your posted menu to include strawberries, etc.*

Combination Foods

When serving combination foods, be sure to serve enough to meet the CACFP Meal Pattern required serving sizes for the age group being served. Only one fruit/vegetable can be counted as part of the combination food and the other fruit/vegetable must be served on the side, whether it goes with the combination food item or not.

Juice

100% fruit and/or vegetable juice is reimbursable by CACFP when limited to once a week. CACFP recommends that milk or water be offered with snacks.

Milk

In the CACFP, milk is defined as pasteurized, fluid whole milk, 2% milk, 1% milk, and skim milk. When children between the ages of one and two years old are no longer receiving breast milk or formula, whole milk must be served.

In the CACFP, milk refers to fluid milk (i.e. served in a cup or a bowl with cereal). It's not considered milk if it's used as an ingredient in cooking. Milk is a separate food component that must be served with all meals (breakfast, lunch, and supper) to meet the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Minute Menu

Minute Menu Systems, LLC, is a software company that provides child care management software. All sponsoring organizations use Minute Menu software. Electronic filing is required. Your sponsoring organization will provide training and Minute Menu forms for your use.

Monitoring Visits

Your sponsoring organization is required to perform on-site reviews of your day care home to view daily operations of CACFP and meal service. A monitoring staff member will visit your day care home at least three times per year, and possibly more frequently. The visits may be by appointment (announced) or not by appointment (unannounced). The majority of these visits will be unannounced. These visits determine if you are complying with CACFP regulations, provide assistance in complying with regulations and offer technical assistance to you. The monitoring visit will involve the completion of a monitoring form which will provide suggestions and recommendations for corrective action, if needed.

A monitoring visit usually consists of:

- A review of your records to determine if they are complete and current.
- A meal service observation.
- A review of food storage and overall sanitation and food safety.
- A review of attendance records for five days during a prior claiming period. Attendance records will be compared to your claim.
- A discussion of any concerns/problems identified by your sponsoring organization prior to or during the visit.
- A discussion of any questions or concerns that you may have.

- A follow-up monitoring visit may be warranted with further training and technical assistance, if needed.

Please Note: You are required to inform your sponsoring organization, in advance, if you will not be home, or if children will not be present during your stated business hours.

In addition to monitoring visits by your sponsoring organization, the state agency, USDA staff, and Auditors for the Office of the Inspector General may perform monitoring visits of CACFP operations at your day care home. You are required to allow these representatives to conduct monitoring visits. If you are not familiar with the person, you should request to see photo identification. Refusal to admit a program authority, such as a sponsoring organization or state agency monitor during your posted business hours will result in corrective action and possible termination from CACFP.

Montana Food List

The Montana Food List in Minute Menu allows you to view all creditable foods. Creditable foods refer to foods counted toward the meal pattern components, and assist you with menu planning. The Montana Creditable Food Addendum is also a resource that you can use. This can be found on the CACFP website.

Non-Creditable Foods

Non-creditable foods refer to foods that do not count as meal components or meet the meal pattern requirements. Non-creditable foods are not reimbursable because they do not meet CACFP nutritional criteria.

Parent Survey / Household Contact / Household Survey

(Verification of Attendance and Meal Participations)

To assure program integrity, quality, and to gain parental input for the CACFP, parents may be contacted periodically to verify attendance of their children at your day care and to verify when their children are present and what meals they are being served. Sponsoring organizations contact parents by phone or by mail. Please encourage parents to respond to the surveys, so your sponsoring organization can continue to improve and gain feedback about the parents' desires, satisfactions, and concerns.

Participation is Voluntary

Participation in the CACFP is voluntary. Day care homes are not required to participate in the CACFP, or to participate in it for any specific length of time. Any day care home is able to begin or end their participation in the program voluntarily at any time. Please notify your sponsoring organization of your decision to no longer participate, so that arrangements can be made according to your wishes.

Pre-Enrollment Visit

The sponsoring organization you select will conduct a pre-enrollment visit to your home before enrolling your day care home in the CACFP. The purpose of this visit is to:

- Provide initial technical assistance in CACFP operations and requirements.

- Assure and verify the proposed food service meets the needs of participants.
- Review and complete the pre-enrollment form and the Sponsor/Provider Application and Agreement.
- Allow you to begin participating in the CACFP.

Upon relocation, the provider may continue participation; however another pre-enrollment visit must be conducted within 10 business days of the change, and the new location must meet child care registration and CACFP standards. Please contact your sponsoring organization immediately if you intend to relocate so that there is no break in your meal reimbursements.

Business Practices

Creating business systems will streamline your child care business, allow you to focus on the children, and help you obtain the greatest benefit from CACFP. Meal reimbursements are important program income. Like the operation of any small business, recordkeeping takes a great deal of time. Careful planning and preparation are required to meet your responsibilities. Your sponsoring organization has knowledge of successful business systems used by providers if you are interested.

Provider's Own Children

Your children (provider's own) are eligible for reimbursement if the following criteria are met:

- Your day care home meets the income guidelines for Tier I meals by income, you have submitted a qualifying Income Eligibility Form, and you have submitted verification of income to your sponsoring organization.

Or,

- You are eligible for Tier I reimbursements by school, census, or because your family income falls at or below the standards established by CACFP for Tier I. You must submit an Income Eligibility Form and verification of income or program participation in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

And,

- Other children are enrolled, in attendance, and are participating in the meal service.
- You are caring for children within your Authorized Licensed Capacity.
- Your child is enrolled in CACFP, participating in day care, and signed-in daily.

Records Storage

All required CACFP forms supplied by your sponsoring organization and other CACFP forms including, but not limited to menus, attendance records signed daily by parents (with in/out times), enrollment forms, and posted menus must be kept for three years beyond the current fiscal year (Oct. 1st - Sept. 30th). All records for the current fiscal year and the previous year must be stored on-site, while the prior two years can be stored off-site but must be easy to reference at any time within a reasonable timeframe. The Pre-Approval Application, the original and subsequent Sponsor/Provider Agreement and the original Application and Termination Agreements are permanent records, must be kept indefinitely, and must be accessible at all times.

License

The Child Care License is the approval from the DPHHS Quality Assurance Division, Child Care Licensing Bureau, Military Base Licensing Department, or from a Tribal government. This license authorizes you to legally operate a day care home. You must provide a child care license document to your sponsoring organization to be eligible for CACFP meal reimbursement.

Reimbursable Foods

Reimbursable foods are those foods that may be counted toward meeting the requirements for a reimbursable meal. Foods are determined to be reimbursable by USDA based on the following factors: (1) nutrient content; (2) customary function in a meal; (3) whether they meet regulations governing the Child Nutrition Programs (on quantity requirements and/or by definition); (4) whether they meet FSA's Standards of Identity; (5) whether they meet the USDA's standards for meat and meat products; and (6) agreement with administrative policy decisions on the crediting of particular foods.

Reimbursable Meals

A meal is reimbursable if it meets the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements, providing the minimum serving size for each enrolled and participating child, and contains all of the required food components, as specified in Meal Requirements § 7 CFR 226.20, state agency policies, and program resources.

Reimbursement

Reimbursement is based on the number and type of meals you serve to enrolled and participating children. The reimbursement rates are set annually on or about July 1st, by the USDA. After you have submitted your monthly claim, the sponsoring organization will review and verify the claim. The sponsoring organization will process claims for all providers by submitting information to the state agency. The state agency will then issue a payment check to your sponsoring organization. Your sponsoring organization has five days from the date the state agency issues the check to them to distribute your reimbursement.

Serious Deficiency

This is a term used in federal statute that refers to a day care home that has been determined to be non-compliant in one or more aspects of its CACFP operation. If a serious deficiency is not corrected within the timeframe specified, your sponsoring organization will issue a notice of intent to terminate. If you are terminated from CACFP due to a serious deficiency, you will not be eligible to participate for seven years or until CACFP determines that you have completely and permanently corrected the serious deficiency. Any funds owed to CACFP must be repaid before you may resume participation.

Sponsoring Organization

A sponsoring organization is a local non-profit organization which has an agreement with the DPHHS Early Childhood Services Bureau CACFP to administer the CACFP in day care homes. Sponsoring organizations are located across the state of Montana. There are sponsoring

organizations located in Resource and Referral Agencies as well as independent non-profit businesses. The sponsoring organization's responsibility is to assure that your day care home is in compliance with Federal and State Regulations, and to provide you with necessary assistance in your operation of CACFP. If you have any questions concerning the CACFP, please contact your sponsoring organization.

Contacting a Sponsoring Organization:

Sponsoring organizations determine their own service area within the state. Most sponsoring organizations define and limit their geographic service area; some serve wider areas than others. The CACFP regulations and standards apply to all day care homes and sponsoring organizations; however, there may be some variation in the way daily operations are followed by sponsoring organizations, such as menu due dates or how training is delivered. You may contact any sponsoring organization to inquire about their interest in or their ability to serve your day care home. A list of sponsoring organizations can be found on the CACFP website at www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov.

Illegal Recruitment

Sponsoring organizations compete to serve day care homes. The state agency strictly regulates recruitment practices. Once you have selected a sponsoring organization, competing sponsoring organizations are not allowed to solicit you to change sponsoring organizations. If a sponsoring organization has attempted to recruit you to switch to their sponsorship, you may register a complaint with the state agency by calling at 1-888-307-9333.

Switching Sponsors

Day care homes may switch sponsoring organizations once per year, but not more than once per year. Day care homes under corrective action or in Seriously Deficient status may not switch sponsoring organizations until their corrective action is closed and/or the Seriously Deficient status is closed and they have operated the CACFP in good standing with their current sponsoring organization for a minimum of one full calendar month since those circumstances were closed.

Day care homes must complete and submit the Changing Sponsors Form to initiate this process. You may contact your existing or new sponsoring organization for this form. Participation with the new sponsoring organization would begin effective the first day of the next month.

At any time of their choosing, a day care home provider can notify their current sponsor of their intent to end their participation in the CACFP under that sponsorship. A provider cannot enter into an agreement with a new sponsor until the next month after their agreement and participation has ended with their current sponsor. A day care home provider can participate in the CACFP under only one sponsor in any one month. A day care home provider cannot have an agreement to operate the CACFP with two different sponsors in the same month.

Sponsor/Provider Agreement

The Sponsor/Provider Agreement explains the rights and responsibilities of the provider and the sponsoring organization. Upon program enrollment, the sponsoring organization will review the agreement with you. If you wish to participate then you must sign the agreement. The Sponsor/Provider Agreement must be reviewed together annually thereafter along with any addendums as are currently required by the state agency. Providers who move, have a legal name change, or change their meal times must notify their sponsoring organization and complete a "Change in Information" form within ten (10) business days. Change of Information forms are available from your sponsor or on the State agency website. The change forms become part of your Sponsor/Provider Agreement and are permanent documents.

Tax Records

As a business, you are required by IRS to keep certain records. Contact your accountant or local IRS office for further information.

Termination for Convenience

You or your sponsoring organization can terminate your participation due to considerations unrelated to performance of CACFP responsibilities. If you are terminated for convenience, you will not be disqualified from CACFP and may request service from another sponsoring organization. Termination for convenience cannot be appealed.

Termination for Cause

If violations/problems are identified in your operation of CACFP, you may be terminated for cause. You will be given an opportunity to correct the problem. The steps necessary will be outlined in a Corrective Action Plan. If you do not comply with the Corrective Action Plan, and fully and permanently correct the violations/problems, you may be determined to be Seriously Deficient. If there is a serious health and safety violation, you may be determined to be Seriously Deficient and immediately suspended. Being Seriously Deficient and failing to correct the serious deficiency could result in being placed on the National and State Disqualified List and terminated from the CACFP for seven years, or longer if any money owed to CACFP is not repaid.

Tiering

Tiering classification is used to establish meal reimbursement rates. Tiering is an annual requirement of CACFP. Sponsoring organizations assist day care homes to receive classification. Sponsoring organizations notify you of your classification and gather and classify Income Eligibility Forms, if needed.

Tier I day care homes qualify for the high reimbursement rate. Any day care home located in either (1) A census block area where 50% or more of the households are at or below 185% of poverty, or (2) An elementary school area where 50% or more of the enrolled students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. If a provider lives in one of these areas, or his/her household income is at or below 185% of poverty, the home qualifies for Tier I rates.

Tier II day care homes qualify for the lower reimbursement rates. Any day care home located outside the eligible census or school areas (as defined above) and the provider's household income is above 185% of poverty. Individual families within Tier II homes may be asked by their day care provider to supply income information to the sponsoring organization. Enrolled children from families whose income is at or below 185% of poverty would qualify for the higher (Tier I) rates.

Tier II High: A day care home is located outside of a poverty area and all enrolled children qualify for the higher (Tier I) rates based on family eligibility.

Tier II Low: A day care home is located outside of a poverty area and none of the enrolled children qualify for the higher (Tier I) rates.

Tier II Mixed: A day care home is located outside of a poverty area and some enrolled children qualify for the higher (Tier I) rates and some children qualify for the lower (Tier II) rates.

Annual Training

Training is an important aspect of the CACFP. As a participating provider, you are required to attend a minimum of four hours of training specific to the CACFP per year. The annual training is offered by your sponsoring organization at no charge.

A minimum of two hours each year will address CACFP Program Management. The CACFP Program Management includes information on administrations, regulations, and Civil Rights. These two hours of required annual CACFP Program Management training are approved by the Early Childhood Project/MSU Bozeman and are available to be counted in the eight hours of annual training required by the Child Care Licensing to maintain your day care home license. (NOTE: Training hours will be changing due to Federal Regulations in the Child Care Development Fund).

A minimum of two additional hours of training must be in the area of Nutrition, Health and Safety, and must be approved by the Early Childhood Project/MSU Bozeman. These trainings must be approved by the sponsoring organization prior to the provider taking them. Topics may be nutrition, meal service, food safety, sanitation, menu planning, child nutrient needs, or other subjects specifically linked to food service for children.

Sponsoring organizations may offer training in a variety of formats including workshops, online training, or on-site training. If no documented emergency or unforeseen circumstances prevented your completion of these required hours of annual training, you will receive a corrective action plan. Your sponsoring organization is responsible for providing CACFP Program Management and Nutrition training to you. For the sponsoring organization's training schedule and additional information about these trainings, contact your sponsoring organization.

Training may be part of a corrective action plan to assist in addressing a program performance problem. This would be in addition to the four hours of required annual training.