

# CACFP

## The Child and Adult Care Food Program

### FAQs

### For Childcare Centers

CACFP is a federally funded nutrition assistance program that reimburses childcare centers for serving nutritious meals and snacks to the children in their care. Throughout New York State (NYS) more than 3,500 childcare centers participate in CACFP. The NYS Department of Health administers CACFP in our state.

#### How does CACFP help children?

Quality nutrition is vital for healthy development, yet many children go without the consistent nourishment they need to reach their full potential. CACFP works to ensure children receive healthy meals and snacks while in child care, helping to alleviate food insecurity, support children’s wellbeing, and establish healthy eating habits.

#### How does CACFP help childcare centers?

Through CACFP, centers receive reimbursement to offset the cost of buying and serving nutritious meals and snacks to children in their care. In addition to this funding, centers receive training and support to improve the nutritional quality of the food they serve

#### Who is eligible to participate in CACFP?

Childcare centers are eligible to participate in CACFP if they:

- Are licensed or approved by a federal, state, or local authority.
- Are public or non-profit OR for-profit, if at least 25% of enrolled children either receive tuition subsidies or are eligible for free or reduced-price meal reimbursements.

The NYS Department of Health’s CACFP prescreening tool can help centers determine if they may be eligible for CACFP.

#### How and when do centers receive reimbursement?

Participating childcare centers submit monthly claims for reimbursement to the NYS Department of Health showing the number and types of meals served the previous month. When the claim is approved, the center receives payment. Processing time varies, but centers typically receive reimbursement 7-10 days after submitting a completed claim.

#### How much are the CACFP meal and snack reimbursements?

CACFP reimburses centers for each creditable meal or snack served, up to two meals and one snack per child per day. The current reimbursement rates for childcare centers are listed below. There are three different rates – free, reduced-price, or paid – based on the household income of participating children. For more information about CACFP reimbursement rates, contact the NYS Department of Health.

	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch/Supper</b>	<b>Snack</b>
<b>Free</b>	\$1.71	\$3.16	\$0.86
<b>Reduced-Price</b>	\$1.41	\$2.76	\$0.43
<b>Paid</b>	\$0.29	\$0.30	\$0.07

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CACFP reimbursements can make a big difference in centers’ food budgets. For example, a center might serve 100 children, with 30 children qualifying for the free reimbursement rate, 30 qualifying for reduced-price, and 40 qualifying for paid meal reimbursements. If the center served all 100 children a breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack 20 days per month, CACFP could reimburse up to \$7,186 per month.

#### What kinds of food can centers serve?

Meals reimbursed through CACFP must meet meal pattern requirements to ensure children are receiving complete, high-quality nutrition. In general, meals for children one year of age or older must include fruits and vegetables, grains, meat or meat alternates, and milk. Snacks must include at least two of the meal components—for example, a vegetable and a grain—plus water if no other beverage is provided.

[more →](#)

## **Can meals or snacks be modified to accommodate dietary needs and/or cultural considerations?**

Yes. As long as a meal or snack meets the CACFP meal pattern requirements, centers can be flexible to meet the needs of the children and families they serve. Nutritionists from the NYS Department of Health can help centers adapt menus to meet dietary needs and other considerations within the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

## **How does CACFP work for infants who are breastfeeding?**

From birth through 7 months of age, CACFP will reimburse centers for a breastfed infant's meals and snacks, even if the child is only consuming breastmilk and/or the infant's feeding schedule does not align with typical meal and snack times. From 8 months of age to the infant's first birthday, or as soon as the infant begins taking solid foods, the center must supply at least one component of each meal or snack to claim reimbursement. Centers can contact the NYS Department of Health for more information.

## **What are the recordkeeping requirements?**

Centers must keep records of attendance, meal counts, menus, and financial information to be eligible for payment. Centers also need to maintain documentation related to CACFP eligibility and program compliance. NYS CACFP offers training and technical assistance to support centers with recordkeeping requirements.

## **How is CACFP funded?**

CACFP is federally funded through the United States Department of Agriculture. The program is administered at the state level by the NYS Department of Health.

## **Who do I contact for more information and how do I apply?**

To learn more about the program, visit the NYS CACFP website at [health.ny.gov/CACFP](http://health.ny.gov/CACFP) or contact NYS CACFP at 518-402-7400 or 800-942-3858. The potential new sponsor online prescreening tool is available at [pns.health.ny.gov](http://pns.health.ny.gov).

To apply for CACFP, contact a public health nutritionist by calling 518-402-7400 or 800-942-3858 or emailing [cacfp@health.ny.gov](mailto:cacfp@health.ny.gov) using the subject line "Outreach Coordinator." Applications are free and accepted at any time.

Centers may also contact the Early Care and Learning Council for more information.

*CACFP is also available for home-based childcare providers and afterschool programs.  
To access additional information and resources, visit [ChildCareMealsNY.org](http://ChildCareMealsNY.org).*

ChildcareMealsNY.org



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