



Children's Defense Fund

CACFP: Child and Adult Care Food Program FACT SHEET

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a federally funded program, similar to the school lunch and breakfast programs, that provides subsidies for meals served to eligible. Children must be enrolled in one of the following programs to be eligible: day care, family day care, or after-school programs.

Day care and after-school programs must be licensed public or private nonprofit organizations. Day care homes must also be licensed or approved and operate under the auspices of a sponsoring public or private nonprofit organization.

Who is Eligible?

Children enrolled in participating day care centers and family day care homes (up to age 13) can get meals free, at reduced price, or paid, depending on family income. Children do not pay for meals, although some day care programs include the cost of food in their overall fees.

Children through age 18 enrolled in after-school programs can get free snacks or suppers if they live in low-income communities (where 50 percent of school children are eligible for free/reduced price school meals).

Can Immigrants Participate?

All enrolled children are eligible, regardless of legal residency or citizenship status. Although meal applications ask for the social security number of the adult signing the application, if the adult does not have one, it is allowable to write in the word "none" or indicate that there is no social security number. *No further attempt is made to collect this information.*

Where does the Program Operate?

Eligible CACFP sites enroll in the program through the New York State Department of Health. Eligible programs include: organizations that care for children, such as center-based sites, including Head Start; home-based family day care; and after-school programs in schools or community locations. All sites must meet local licensing laws. In New York City, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene approves all sites for safety, access, sanitation, equipment, and appropriate staffing.

What are the Benefits?

Children in all-day care can get two meals and a snack, or three meals and a snack if they are in care for 8 hours or more. Children in after-school sites can get a snack and a meal (supper) if 2.5 hours elapse between each meal service.

Meals follow the same component guidelines as school lunch and breakfast. There are separate meal requirements for infants and pre-school age children.

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