

Proposed CACFP Meal Pattern Rule: What Californians Need to Know to Comment

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The Opportunity

Children need nutritious diets to support a healthy start. Having access to healthy foods early in life helps children develop long-term, healthy eating habits. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides reimbursements for meals and snacks served to children in child care facilities, after-school programs, and emergency shelters. Each day, an average of 475,000 children in California are benefitting from the nutrition resources provided through CACFP.¹

CACFP Meal Pattern Rule Basics

WHAT: The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* required the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to update the CACFP meal pattern and better align it with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Under the proposed rule, meals served to children in child care and after-school programs will include a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, more whole grains, and less sugar and fat. This proposal is the first major update of the CACFP meal patterns since the program's inception in 1968.

- ➔ Read the proposed CACFP meal pattern rule. [PDF](#)
- ➔ Review the USDA-developed summary of the proposed rule. [PDF](#)

WHY: California has more than 3 million children between the ages of 0 and 5, of which more than 25% live in poverty.² Early childhood is a critical time of development. Nutrition habits and preferences are developed within the first 5 years of life. Young children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of food insecurity, with poor nutrition affecting a young child's ability to learn and grow. CACFP is an essential component of our child care system. Not only does the program ensure young children in child care receive adequate and healthful foods, but it also supports the overall quality of child care.^{3,4}

WHO: Due to a state law that requires all child care centers to follow the CACFP meal pattern, the proposed revisions reach well beyond the 475,000 California children receiving CACFP snacks and meals in child care facilities each day. CFPA encourages all early childhood stakeholders to comment on the proposed rule. This is a unique opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas that benefit our youngest children in California and across the nation.

How to Comment on the Proposed CACFP Meal Pattern Rule

- ➔ Regulations are [posted](#) and open for public comment until **May 27, 2015**.
- ➔ Comments should be submitted to USDA directly, either:
 - Online: [link](#)
 - Or via postal mail at: Docket No. FNS-2011-0029
Attention: Tina Namian, Branch Chief
Policy and Program Development Division, Child Nutrition Programs
Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture
Post Office Box 66874
St. Louis, Missouri 63166
- ➔ In your comments, include your **name and address**, identify the docket number for this rulemaking (**FNS-2011-0029**), indicate the **specific section** (when possible) of this document to which each comment applies, and **give the reason** for each comment.
- ➔ Your comments will be included in the record and reviewed by the USDA.

Citations and Additional Resources

¹ Data source: The California Department of Education (CDE), Child and Adult Care Food Program 2012-13 County Profile, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/documents/coprochild1213.xls>

² Data source: As cited on KidsData.org. King, M. et al. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 3.0. [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. Accessed at <http://cps.ipums.org/cps/index.shtml> (Dec. 2013).

³ U.S. General Accounting Office, Health, Education and Human Services Division. (1994). Child care: Promoting quality in family child care (B-257209, GAO/HEHS-95-36). Washington, DC: General Accounting Office. Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/230/220606.pdf>. Accessed January 28, 2010.

⁴ Edwards, C., Knoche, L., Raikes, A., Raikes, H., Torquati, J., Wilcox, B., & Christensen, L. (2002). Child care characteristics and quality in Nebraska. Prepared for the Midwest Child Care Research Consortium. Available at: http://ccfl.unl.edu/projects_outreach/projects/current/ecp/pdf/finalNeReport.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2010.

Proposed rule on CACFP meal pattern revisions:

http://cfpa.net/ChildNutrition/ChildNutrition_Federal/USDA-CACFPMealPatternRule-2015.pdf

USDA-developed summary of proposed CACFP meal pattern revisions:

http://cfpa.net/ChildNutrition/ChildNutrition_Federal/USDA-CACFPSummary-2015.pdf

Submit comments on CACFP meal pattern proposed rule:

<http://www.regulations.gov/#!submitComment;D=FNS-2011-0029-0001>

Learn more about early childhood nutrition in California: <http://cfpa.net/child-care-nutrition>