

#FundFoodwithCare

The Impact on Providers



Their parents are working, going to school, and getting subsidized care... they need an additional meal. But how are we going to have the funding to do that?

Nadia, Child Care Resource Center in San Fernando Valley

The Opportunity

For over 35 years, California offered financial support to help providers serve healthy meals to low-income children in child care by supplementing the federal reimbursement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). But in 2012, following the recession, that funding was cut and 85% of child care providers that served healthy meals to children through CACFP lost state funding.

Child care providers want to do what is best for the children in their care, so when they don't have adequate funding for food they pull from other parts of their already limited budgets to put healthy food on the table. In the wake of the cut, child care providers were forced to make a tough choice: shoulder the cost of the lost funds and run huge deficits, or cut the meal programs altogether.

California has some of the country's highest costs of living, yet the federal assistance offered by CACFP is the same for California as it is for all other, less expensive states. This disparity makes California's supplemental funding crucial to the program. Child care providers need state funding in order to provide quality care and healthy meals to low-income children. Half of the state's child care providers would benefit from a reinstatement of the funding.

The Ask



Allocate \$16.7 million for serving healthy meals to children in child care in the 2018-2019 state budget. Doing so will support the financial viability of the child care centers and family child care homes who serve low-income children.

FAQ: IMPACT ON PROVIDERS

What is the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is an important, but often unrecognized, component of child care. At its core, it is a federally-funded nutrition program that provides funding for serving healthy food to low-income children in child care. Similar to school meals, providers of the meal program are required to meet nutrition guidelines for the food served and are reimbursed per meal and per snack.

How much money do child care providers and centers get reimbursed for participating in the food program?

Child care centers and family child care homes that participate in CACFP are reimbursed for meals at different federal rates, depending on the household incomes of the children they serve, the family child care home provider's income, and regional poverty. Even though California has one of the highest costs of living in the nation, the federal reimbursement remains the same across state lines. Supplemental state funding is crucial for California providers to keep up with California's high costs. Even a small investment can go a long way. For example, a child care center that serves a breakfast to Eli, the son of a single mother who works full time, but only earns minimum wage, will only get reimbursed \$1.41 for serving breakfast. With a state supplemental reimbursement of just 23 cents, the state can help bump up the reimbursement by 16%.

How much money did child care providers lose when the state stopped supplementing the cost of serving healthy meals in child care?

After the state cut funding for CACFP, 85% of child care centers and family child care homes that served healthy meals to children through CACFP lost state funding. In the year following the budget cut, child care centers reported losing an average of over \$8,000 from their annual budgets.

Why does the state supplement the cost of school meals, but not meals in child care?

"The Governor's budget priorities." There really is no better answer. The funding for healthy meals in child care was first cut in the height of the recession when the state was facing a financial crisis. Since then, the state's financial picture has dramatically improved, but funding for food in child care continues to be left out of the state's budget.

How does not funding food in child care hurt the state's efforts to raise program participation and fund child care as a whole?

Since the recession, our state has been making strategic investments to build back up our child care system, but funding for food has continued to be ignored. When our child care providers and centers don't have adequate funds for food they pull from other parts of their already limited budgets and we undermine our own efforts to support children in critical developmental years and their early education.