



Bits & Bites

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CACFP Nutrition and Program Updates for Colorado's Child Care Centers

The Cost of Convenience

Making Healthful Choices for the Least Cost

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, obesity is the single greatest public health threat to the nation. In fact, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are the second leading preventable causes of death in the U.S. and Colorado. Although Colorado is among the leanest states, the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Colorado is rising in concert with national rates, which increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension and asthma for a large portion of the population.

Administrators, directors, and early childhood educators are gatekeepers of the food items available to children while in childcare, where they may receive approximately 2/3 of their daily nutrition needs. For some children, the time spent in childcare might be the only chance to experience healthful foods they might not otherwise receive at home. Early childhood is a critical time to shape food preferences. If their exposure to foods is limited to convenience foods as young children, chances are, their choices as adults may be similar.

Providing healthy food choices is one of many ways to fight childhood obesity and prevent associated diseases. The consequences of overweight and obesity are a huge cost to society; therefore, taking the time to plan healthy menus is a wise investment. Serving meals in childcare involves a great deal of decision-making: what to serve, how to prepare it, which recipe to select, what food to buy, and what brand to stick with. And, factors such as cost, preparation time, and nutritional quality may or may not drive these decisions.

Generally, fresh foods such as dairy products, fresh produce, fresh meats, and bakery products can be found along the outside walls of the supermarket. As consumers stray from the perimeter of the supermarket, convenience food choices become abundant. These choices can be attractive to some childcare administrators because their preparation can be a "one step does all" process. And, many of these foods, such as chicken nuggets, fish sticks, hot dogs, and other processed meat/meat alternates are unfortunately considered by adults to be "kid foods", and foods that no child should go without.

Compare and Decide:

To the surprise of many, the cost of convenience foods, both to the pocket book and the health of the children may make these products less attractive. The table on the next page shows the differences in cost between some popular convenience foods served in childcare settings and their more healthful, lower cost alternatives. The non-convenience choices, highlighted in bold print, are less expensive per serving than the convenience choices. Some of the fresher options may seem more expensive than convenience choices until actual costs per serving are compared.

Whether the food item is a convenience, processed item or a fresher option, the CACFP Meal Pattern requires 1 oz of meat/meat alternate at lunch for children 1-2 years, 1.5 ounces of meat/meat alternate at lunch for children 3-6 years, and 2 ounces for children age 6 and older. Not all of the breaded meat product can be counted toward this weight. The quantity of some breaded meat products that would meet this requirement not only increases the cost of the meal, but may not be an appropriate serving size for small children.

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Power Panther is the mascot for the Food and Nutrition Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and will now be the mascot for Child and Adult Care Food Program Bits and Bites Newsletter.

USDA's **EAT SMART, PLAY HARD** campaign targets children with motivational messages about healthy eating and the importance of physical activity.

Visit: <http://www.powerpanther.org/> to learn more about him and obtain Power Panther materials.

The Cost of Convenience

(Continued from page 1)

One might argue that labor costs to prepare non-convenience entrees outweigh the difference in the cost of the foods themselves. If this is the case, it is time to explore a good childcare recipes reference and invest some time to identify some easy preparation entrees that do not use convenience foods. Nutritious recipes are available that are not labor intensive. The CACFP has developed new cycle menus, which are available on the CACFP website at <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/cacfp/index.html>. Recipes will be added to the site soon and production records will also be available. The menus are designed to provide a nutritious variety of foods that children like, are simple to prepare with any size staff, and are balanced in cost. Very few convenience and processed foods are used. Another resource is the USDA Childcare Recipes, which can be accessed on the USDA website at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/childcare_recipes.html.

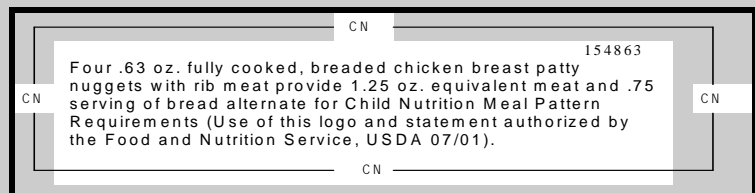
The CACFP recommends limiting processed foods on the menus, which tend to be higher in fats that are not considered healthy fats, and sodium, than non-processed alternatives. Take the challenge to plan healthier menus, get creative, and invest in the health of the children in care and their future lives as adults.

	Cost for 25	
	1 oz svgs	1 1/2 oz svgs
Chicken Nuggets	\$8.93	\$11.90
Chicken boneless breast	\$6.46	\$9.63
Chicken boneless thighs	\$5.02	\$7.48
Processed Cheese Food	\$12.25	\$18.38
Non-imitation Cheeses, assorted	\$3.28	\$4.95
Fish Sticks, breaded	\$8.82	\$13.22
Tuna, 6 oz can	\$2.60	\$3.90
Tuna, canned (66 oz cans)	\$2.77	\$4.16
Fish fillets, unbreaded	\$6.70	\$10.05
Beans, dried, pinto, northern, etc	\$1.19	\$1.79
Beans, canned 15-16 oz. pinto	\$2.27	\$3.41
Eggs, dozen (1 egg = 2 oz meat)	\$1.43	\$1.90
Ground Beef, 80% lean	\$5.06	\$7.57
Ground Turkey	\$4.44	\$6.67
Ham, boneless, pork	\$4.29	\$4.29
Ham, boneless, turkey	\$5.58	\$8.38

All About The Child Nutrition (CN) Label

The Child Nutrition labeling program is a voluntary federal labeling program for Child Nutrition Programs, which allows manufacturers to state a product's contribution to the meal pattern requirements on product labels. Consumers may find CN labels on main dish products that contribute significantly to the meat/meat alternate or bread/bread alternate components. Examples include chicken nuggets, beef patties, pizzas, burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. A CN label will always contain the following:

- The CN logo, which has a distinct border
- The meal pattern contribution statement
- A 6-digit product identification number
- USDA/FNS authorization
- The month and year of approval



Based upon the information provided on the CN label, the center must determine the quantity of food to prepare and serve to each child to meet the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements. Many centers are not meeting this requirement.

If a commercial product containing meat or meat alternates does not bear a CN label, the center must obtain information from the manufacturer specifying the number of ounces of creditable meat or meat alternate in a measurable serving of the product. The center must keep all product specifications on file for review purposes.

With the CN label information, the center must determine if the quantity of the product needed for each child to meet the minimum CACFP Meal Pattern requirements is a reasonable portion size for young children. Be aware of this! For example: To meet the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements for the meat/meat alternate component, approximately 9 fish sticks of a one particular CN labeled brand are required for children age 3-5 and even more for children over the age of 6!!

CACFP Trainings

Join the CACFP staff for one of the upcoming trainings! Remember: You can register yourself and others for trainings using the CACFP Web-based System at <http://co.cnpexpress.com>.

- ◆ **Thursday, October 4 - 4330**
Cherry Creek Drive South, Bldg A, Denver Emergency Operations Center on the first floor.
- ◆ **Thursday, November 1 - 4330**
Cherry Creek Drive South, Bldg A, Denver Emergency Operations Center on the first floor.

Bidding a Fond Farewell:

The staff of the Child and Adult Care Food Program would like to congratulate Mary McNeill, Fiscal Officer for the CACFP program. She will be retiring August 31, 2007 after 32 years of service for the State of Colorado, all of which were served in the Prevention Services Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.



Mary McNeill

When Mary was asked what she plans to do after retirement she replied, "I am looking forward to spending more time with family and friends. I must take care of my wanderlust and go back to school. Generally, just enjoy life and all it has to offer."

Congratulations and Good Luck Mary!

Keep It Covered

Personal cleanliness is the gold standard to prevent the transfer of food borne hazards to food. Bacteria can be transferred to food from dirty clothes, dirty aprons, dirty fingernails, hair and other sources. A question often asked in childcare is: "Are hairnets required?". The following is the requirement for the use of hair restraints according to the Department of Public Health and Environment, Consumer Protection Division. Keep in mind that hair is not the only vehicle for microbes to enter the food. Frequent hand washing is the first, easiest, and most cost effective way to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

6CCR1010-2

State Board of Health, Colorado Retail Food Establishment, Rules and Regulations

2-5 Hygienic Practices

2-503 Hair Restraints

- Except as provided under paragraph B of this section, employees engaged in food preparation shall wear hair restraints, such as hats, hair coverings, nets, or other effective means, to effectively keep hair from contacting exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens and unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.
- This section does not apply to employees such as counter staff who serve only beverages and wrapped or package foods, or hostess and wait staff who present a minimal risk of contaminating exposed foods, clean equipment, utensils, linens, and unwrapped single-service and single-use articles.

In the childcare setting, staff members working in the kitchen preparing the food for the meals are expected to wear a hair restraint/covering. The hair restraint rule does not apply to staff members supervising the meal service.

Resources to find more food safety information:

USDA web site

<http://www.foodsafety.gov>

Foodborne Illness Education Information Center:

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodborne/foodborn.htm>

Fight BAC! Education Campaign

<http://www.fightbac.org>

Bits and Bites is published three times a year by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment—Child and Adult Care Food Program. Your comments and questions are encouraged.

Tracy Miller, MSPH, RD, *Editor*

Corina Landeros, *Desktop Publishing Editor*

We're on the web:

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/cacfp/>

Souper Wheelies

A fun soup for fall! Serve with a whole grain roll, a second fruit or vegetable serving, and milk for a creditable lunch.

2 14-ounce cans Italian-style stewed tomatoes, un-drained
24 ounces lean ground beef or ground turkey
1 ½ cups wagon wheel macaroni (rotelle pasta)
2 small onions, chopped
2 14-ounce cans beef broth
3 cups water
2 cups frozen whole kernel corn
2 cups frozen cut green beans
2 teaspoons dried basil, crushed
1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed



1. In a large saucepan, cook meat and onion over medium-high heat until meat is no longer pink. Drain.
2. Add broth and the water to meat mixture. Bring mixture to boiling over high heat. Add macaroni. Reduce heat to medium-high. Cook for 12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add un-drained tomatoes, corn, beans, basil, and oregano. Return to boiling; reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, covered, about 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender

Recipe provides 1.5 ounces of the meat/meat alternate component and ¼ cup (one variety) of the fruit/vegetable component at lunch for sixteen children, ages 3 through 5. Remember, the center must serve at least 2 ounces of meat/meat alternate and ¾ cup total (one variety from this soup and the second additional variety) to children ages 6 and older at lunch.

Recipe from the 2007 Better Homes and Gardens Special Interest Publication, "Kids' Parties".

2007-2008 Renewal Reminder!!

The instructions to complete the Fiscal Year 2008 renewal application for participation from October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008 have been mailed to all participating Institutions. This year, **the deadline for the renewal application is Friday, September 14, 2007.** All Institutions must submit the 2008 online Application Packet and mail all supporting paper documents by this date.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment-Child and Adult Care Food Program staff looks forward to working with your organization throughout the upcoming year.



COPAN EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!

The 2007-2008 grant applications offered by the Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program, Early Childhood Task Force are available once again! These grant dollars are awarded to organizations to implement nutrition and physical activity programs in child care settings. Visit <http://www.livewellcolorado.com/roadmap.php> to download the grant application and learn more about these valuable opportunities. The deadline for applications will be September 14, 2007.



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