

CACFP ACT NOW



NATIONAL
CACFP
FORUM



Equitable Access to Meal Reimbursement in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

There is an opportunity to improve the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to enhance equity in provider participation and access for children. Contact your U.S. Senators and Representatives and ask them to support the passage of these *three* bills.

In November, the **Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act** (S. 3294) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA). The bill partners the **Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act** (H.R. 5569) that was introduced in the House of Representatives by Greg Landsman (D-OH) and Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) on September 19, 2023. Both bills call for:

- Providing a 10-cent increase for all eligible meals and snacks in all CACFP-participating Head Start, child care centers, family child care programs, at-risk after school programs, and adult care programs
- Eliminating the administratively restrictive two-tier system for family child care in CACFP
- Allowing family child care providers in CACFP to be reimbursed for meals provided to their own children regardless of their income level

The Senate bill has the same three provisions plus one more:

- Changing the payment policy so that family child care programs in CACFP are reimbursed based on “food away from home,” the same way that child care centers’ rates are calculated

The **Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act** (H.R. 6067) is a third bill introduced in October 2023 by Representative Bonamici (D-OR) and Representative Marcus Molinaro (R-NY) that includes the following improvements to CACFP:

- Adding a meal service for reimbursement in CACFP, eligible when this meal takes place 8 hours after the first meal service of the program day; calls for a study on take-up of this additional meal
- Simplifying reporting processes for the eligibility of for-profit child care center participation in CACFP
- Calling on the USDA Secretary to review the CACFP Serious Deficiency process

The early childhood workforce in Early Head Start, Head Start, child care centers, family child care and at-risk afterschool programs are working tirelessly to ensure children do not go hungry and continue to have opportunities to learn and grow, all while one out of three child care providers themselves is food insecure. CACFP reimbursements help providers absorb some of the costs of providing a meal.

How does CACFP work in child care settings?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), created by Congress in 1968, is an essential federal support for young children. Each day, more than 4.2 million children have nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP. Good nutrition in the first years of life is essential for early brain development, and research indicates that meals and snacks served in CACFP-participating child care programs are of higher quality than in non-CACFP programs. “Investing in the CACFP by way of increased reimbursement, removal of the tiered rate system and reduction of some of the barriers of cumbersome reporting requirements would most certainly result in increased access to the CACFP for many child care providers and the children they serve.” says Margaret McDonald, the National CACFP Forum Policy Chair.

The National CACFP Forum and its fellow national advocates have endorsed all three bills. According to the Forum’s President Reynaldo Green, “The National CACFP Forum applauds the leadership of Senator Casey, Representative Bonamici, Representative Landsman, and Representative Molinaro on these historic bills. We appreciate your ongoing support for ensuring food program access and strengthening benefits. Your commitment to supporting child care providers in using CACFP to serve healthy meals and snacks makes a difference for children across the country every day.”



Urge Your House Members and Senators to Cosponsor These Three CACFP Bills

Child care providers, child and nutrition advocates, and families should contact their Member of Congress to express their support and ask them to co-sponsor each of these bills. Use the Action Center tools on the National CACFP Association website for support:

- **Senate: Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act** (S. 3294): <https://www.cacfp.org/2023/11/14/senate-partner-bill-child-nutrition-enhancement-act/>
- **House: Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act** (H.R. 5569): <https://www.cacfp.org/2023/09/19/child-nutrition-enhancement-act/>
- **House: Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act** (H.R. 6067): <https://www.cacfp.org/2023/10/26/early-childhood-nutrition-improvement-act-of-2023/>