



The Link

YOUR QUARTERLY CONNECTION TO CACFP SUCCESS

WINTER 2025

odbcacfp.org

our
daily
bread
CACFP

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KENYA REEVES

The Link Magazine
Editor-in-Chief

HELLO FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Since 1995, Our Daily Bread CACFP has remained dedicated to promoting the nutritional well-being of children and adults. What began as a simple mission to serve healthy meals has evolved into a deeper commitment: ensuring every child has the nourishment they need to grow, learn, and thrive. Over the years, we've become more than a Child Adult Care Food Program—we are a trusted partner in building healthier futures for families and communities.

Our impact is only possible because of the strong relationships we share with educators, providers and industry partners across Tennessee and Kentucky. Your commitment to creating safe, nurturing, and educational spaces lays the foundation for everything we do. We are honored to support your work through training, resources, and consistent, high-quality nutrition services that help children reach their full potential.

As we look to the future, Our Daily Bread CACFP remains focused on expanding our reach and advancing our commitment to quality in child and adult nutrition. Our vision is clear: to be a driving force in providing access to healthy, affordable meals for all. We are actively exploring new opportunities to innovate, educate, and empower the educators and communities we serve.

Our approach continues to be holistic, addressing not only the nutritional needs of children, but also those of adults. Through nutrition education, community involvement, and sustained support, we strive to inspire lifelong habits that promote better health for everyone. Investing in wellness today means stronger, healthier communities tomorrow.

Together, we are building a future where every child and adult has access to the nutrition they deserve. We deeply appreciate your continued partnership and dedication. We thank you for your continued partnership, and we look forward to working hand in hand as we grow our reach and impact.

Thank you for being a part of our journey.

Warm regards,
Phillip Hester



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SAMPLE WINTER MENU

6-11 MONTHS

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Breakfast
IFIF or BM

 Infant Oatmeal
Mixed Fruit

IFIF or BM

 IF Infant Cereal
Sliced Grapes

IFIF or BM

 Infant Rice –
Cereal
Applesauce

IFIF or BM

 IF Infant Cereal
Watermelon

IFIF or BM

 Infant Oatmeal
Blueberries

Lunch
IFIF or BM

 Pinto Beans
Tomatoes

IFIF or BM

 Turkey
Carrots

IFIF or BM

 Infant Chicken
Oranges

IFIF or BM

 Lentils
Cabbage

IFIF or BM

 Infant Beef
French Fries

Snack
IFIF or BM

 Wheat –
Crackers
Oranges

IFIF or BM

 Cheerios
Blackberries

IFIF or BM

 IF Infant Cereal
Apples

IFIF or BM

 Goldfish
Avocado

IFIF or BM

 Wheat –
Crackers
Applesauce

Keep bottles warm and safe! Use an insulated bag or bottle warmer when transporting food, and always check the temperature before serving.



DID YOU KNOW...

INFANT FEEDING REMINDERS

Offer new foods one at a time to watch for allergies and preferences. As babies grow, introduce more textures!

SAMPLE WINTER MENU

1-12 YEARS/ADULTS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	<u>Fruity Quinoa</u> Quinoa Mixed Fruit 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Alpha Bits</u> (WG) Alpha Bits Raisins 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Rice Cakes</u> Rice Cakes Applesauce 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Almond Toast</u> Almond Butter (WG) Wheat Bread 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Bagels</u> (WG) Bagel Blueberries 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk
Lunch	<u>Burrito Bowl</u> Pinto Beans Brown Rice Spinach Tomatoes 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Turkey Pot Pie</u> Turkey Rolls Peas & Carrots Blackberries 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Asian Chicken</u> Chicken Breasts (WG) Rolls Broccoli Oranges 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Lentil Tostada</u> Lentils Corn Tortillas Cabbage Watermelon 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk	<u>Hamburger</u> Ground Beef (WG) Bun French Fries Baked Beans 1%/Skim/Whole - Milk
Snack	<u>Sugar Snaps</u> Sugar Snap Peas Oranges	<u>Crunchy Yogurt</u> Yogurt (WG) Cheerios	<u>ABC Smoothie</u> Yogurt Beets Apples	<u>Rice Cakes</u> Rice Cakes Avocado	<u>Popcorn</u> (WG) Popcorn 100% Apple Juice

Winter Wellness Tips

Boost immunity with colorful fruits and veggies like **oranges**, **carrots**, and **broccoli**. Also encourage frequent handwashing!

Turn meals into learning moments! Talk about where winter foods come from to make eating fun and educational!

**MEALTIME
MOTIVATION**

BAKED CARROT FRIES (with Yogurt-Sunflower Seed Butter Dip)

Yield: 6 Servings
Meal Type: Snack

Ingredients

¾ cup + 1 Tbsp Greek Yogurt,
non-fat, plain
3 Tbsp Sunflower Seed
Butter
4 cups Baby Carrots, fresh
⅛ tsp Salt, table
1 ½ tsp Canola Oil



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. In a small bowl, mix yogurt and sunflower seed butter until smooth. Keep cold at 40 °F or lower.
3. In another bowl, toss carrots with salt and oil.
4. Spread carrots in a single layer on a baking sheet; bake 20 minutes or until lightly browned and heated to 140 °F or higher for 15 seconds.
5. Serve ½ cup (6–10 fries) with 2 Tbsp dip. Keep dip cold (40 °F or lower) and fries warm (140 °F or higher) until serving.

Serve with another component for a complete snack!



Serving & Crediting

One Serving Provides:

½ cup vegetable
½ oz eq meat alternate

Serving Sizes:

1–2 yrs. ½ cup carrot fries, 2 Tbsp dip 6–12 yrs. ¾ cup carrot fries, 4 Tbsp dip
3–5 yrs. ½ cup carrot fries, 2 Tbsp dip Adults 1 cup carrot fries, 4 Tbsp dip

CRANBERRY APPLESAUCE

Yield: 10 Servings
Meal Type: Snack

Ingredients

1 (12 oz) Package Fresh
Cranberries
4 cups Unsweetened Applesauce
1 Orange, juiced & zested
2 Cinnamon Sticks or 1 tsp
ground cinnamon
2 tsp Vanilla Extract
1–2 Tbsp Maple Syrup (optional)

Instructions

1. Add all ingredients, including orange zest, to a medium saucepan
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring often. Reduce heat if it begins to boil; cook until cranberries soften and break down.
3. Serve warm, chilled, or at room temperature. For a smoother texture, puree in a blender if desired.

Serve with another component for a complete snack!



Serving & Crediting

One Serving Provides:

¾ cup fruit

Serving Sizes:

1–2 yrs. ¼ cup applesauce 6–12 yrs. ½ cup applesauce
3–5 yrs. ½ cup applesauce Adults ½ cup applesauce



GLUTEN-FREE KIDS: HOW TO CARE WITHOUT FEAR (OR BREAD CRUMBS)

You've been with your students for a few months now, and things are mostly running smoothly. But there's still that one moment that gives you pause, snack time with the gluten-free kid.

By now you've learned that gluten is a protein in wheat, barley, and rye, and that it somehow sneaks into everything from crackers to sauces, even play dough. You've also likely discovered cross-contact: where gluten-free food gets contaminated by gluten during preparation or manufacturing. Some children must avoid gluten because of an autoimmune condition called **celiac disease** that damages the small intestine. Others have **non-celiac gluten sensitivity**, which can cause similar symptoms.

Creating a gluten-free-friendly classroom is about simple systems, clear communication, and a sprinkle of creativity.

The Gluten-Free Game Plan

1. Separate is safe.

- Keep gluten-free food away from gluten-containing foods, even crumbs matter! Use different utensils, cutting boards, and prep areas. Label shelves or bins "GF" for clarity.

2. Read it like a detective.

- A label can look wheat-free and still contain gluten from barley or rye, or made on shared lines. The safest choice is **certified gluten-free products**. When in doubt, check the manufacturer's website for a gluten-free or celiac safety statement. Common surprise sources: soy sauce, sprinkles, chocolate, fries, deli meats, and even chips.

3. Communicate early and often.

- Ask caregivers to share what works best for their child, favorite brands and safe snacks to keep a reference list handy. Educators can also reach out to the **school district dietitian** for help finding gluten-free items that meet meal program standards. Other helpful resources include the CACFP website (search "gluten-free"), the Gluten Intolerance Group, Celiac Disease Foundation, Beyond Celiac, National Celiac Association, and the FDA's Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods website.

4. Teach inclusion.

- Use food diversity as a teachable moment: "Some of our friends eat different foods to stay healthy." Encourage gluten-free students to ask, "Is this gluten-free?" It celebrates their confidence, builds self-advocacy and trust.

5. Keep the fun – lose the gluten.

- Try fruit kabobs instead of cookies, corn chips with guacamole instead of crackers and cheese, or rice cakes with sunflower butter and raisins instead of sandwiches.

6. Celebrate safely.

- For birthdays or events, let families know ahead of time so everyone can participate. Keep a small stash of gluten-free cupcakes or treats in the freezer for surprise celebrations.

Kids pick up on your energy. When you treat gluten-free as normal, not an exception, you send a powerful message: everyone belongs at this table. When you make space for one child's needs, you teach the entire class empathy, flexibility, and awareness.

So next time a student says, "I can't eat that," take a breath, smile, and say, "No problem, I've got you covered." Because you do.



QUICK ANSWERS TO SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CACFP + RESOURCES

There is a good amount of moving parts to knowing the regulations of the CACFP. Let's clear up some confusion about some common questions I've seen asked about different aspects of the food program.

Infant Snacks: What's Actually Credible?

If you're feeding babies 6–11 months, here's what counts for snacks:

- Breast milk or iron-fortified formula
- Fruits, vegetables, or grains (think infant cereal, soft crackers)

Quick reminder: juice and cow's milk don't credit for infants, and solids should only come into play when baby's developmentally ready.

The USDA Infant Meal Pattern chart is your friend here; it takes the guesswork out.



Milk Substitutions: Which Ones Actually Work?

These trip people up all the time. Here's the breakdown:

Parent preference: You need a signed parent statement, and the milk has to be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. That means lactose-free cow's milk (like Lactaid) is totally fine. Fortified soy milk usually works too. But almond milk and oat milk? They typically don't meet the nutritional standards.

Medical necessity: When the milk substitution is not nutritionally equivalent, you'll need a licensed professional's medical statement, but you'll have more flexibility with options. Just keep those labels and paperwork organized. Future you will be grateful during review time.

CN Labels & Product Formulation Statements

Ever wonder how to credit those chicken nuggets or that pan of lasagna? That's where CN labels and Product Formulation Statements come in.

They tell you exactly how much meat, grain, or veggie is in each serving, that ensures what is being served is nutritionally acceptable on the program. There are a lot of foods out there that just are not good for our children, and CN labels help us find the ones that we know has the right nutritional balance.

If you're making something from scratch, you'll need a standardized recipe that breaks down ingredients, quantities, prep steps, and creditable portions. If you are an educator/provider with Our Daily Bread, we have a number of recipes on our [Educator Portal](#) that already have the requirements met to be nutritious, and can be automatically adjusted for each age group.



If you have not dived into recipes yet for your home or center this would be a great place to start.

Food Allergies

This one's non-negotiable. Always follow the child's medical statement to the letter. Make your substitutions, prevent cross-contact, and keep those allergy lists visible in both the kitchen and classrooms. Double-check ingredients before serving; it's worth the extra minute for everyone's peace of mind.

A non-dairy beverage product must at a minimum contain the following nutrient levels per cup to qualify as an acceptable milk substitution.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Calcium 276 mg | d. Vitamin D 100 IU or 2.5 mcg | g. Potassium 349 mg |
| b. Protein 8 g | e. Magnesium 24 mg | h. Riboflavin .44 mg |
| c. Vitamin A 500 IU or 150 mcg | f. Phosphorus 222 mg | i. Vitamin B-12 1.1 mcg |

Nutritionally Equivalent Milk

QUICK ANSWERS TO SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CACFP + RESOURCES (CONT.)

Picky Eaters – Picking More.

Here's something that might take the pressure off: kids don't have to eat everything you serve. Your job is to offer all the required components. That's it.

Family-style dining can be a game-changer here, it gives kids some independence and often makes them more curious about trying new things. No pressure, just exposure. In the formative years, the more they try the better. Having some ranch for carrots, celery is fine too!



When Family Resources Change

Life happens! Job losses, rising costs, unexpected emergencies. But here's one of the best things about CACFP: you're providing consistent, nutritious meals regardless of what's happening at home. Kids in your care keep getting balanced meals even when their family's circumstances shift. That stability matters more than you might realize.

What you can do:

- Keep communication open with families about the nutritious care you provide
- Share local resources like food pantries, WIC offices, and community meal programs
- Be that connection point when families need extra support

Here are a few links that can help with family needs, and resources to get you started being that connection point. There are resources out there, sometimes you just have to know where to look!

Second Harvest Partners TN



Food & Nutrition Service: WIC



Gods Pantry Kentucky



TN & KY Family Support



Chattanooga Area Food Bank



Feeding America



ANTON CHARLES
Case Manager

CARDINAL CORNER:

A SPACE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD THOUGHTS, NEWS, AND CELEBRATIONS



Welcome to the Cardinal Corner, a cozy place for anyone who cares about the lives of young children and their families. Here you can learn about what's happening in the world of research, professional development and related organizations doing this work.

I am Michele Hemenway Pullen. I work as a Project Specialist for the Early Childhood Research Center (ECRC) at the University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development. I am responsible for working with the communities of Kentucky (and sometimes beyond) to build responsible, evidence-based and joyful workshops and training toward licensing credit hours and credentialed certifications. Before I began this work, I was a teacher for 40 years. I cherish that time and am still learning from the students and families that I was privileged to know over the years. And raising my son during those years helped to make me the person I am today. I am still learning from him! I am also published in Exchange Press, and a curriculum writer. I have been blessed beyond measure.

Currently I am working with four Jefferson County Public Schools in the Early Childhood Career Pathways program. I have authored a high school Cardinal CDA course that will enable participating students to work with us after graduation to complete their CDA process. The yearlong course satisfies their training hours toward a CDA.

We are hopeful this course will reach more high schools in the future. We believe our communities will benefit from high school graduates who come prepared to enter the early childhood profession.

We are also developing a CDA that will be available to all ages along with an Infant Toddler, School Age and Director Credential in the state of Kentucky.

When I am not working on all that, I am a grandma, a teacher, and I work with student teachers in the classroom. I love all those roles because it keeps me near children and teachers. It helps me stay aware of what teachers are encountering. This, in turn, informs our workshops and trainings. Not to mention, it's great FUN! And of course, being a grandma is a joy like no other!

In this **Cardinal Corner** space, I will introduce you to a few things each time I write:

What's New?

First, an update on any changes in the world of licensing, professional development needs or workplace standards.

What's on your minds?

Second, a spot for a question/answer section from you. Please submit questions you would like me to answer: mhpull02@louisville.edu. I find that if YOU have a question, ten other people have the same question, but have not asked it yet or when they see it, they say, "YES, I want to know more about that too!"



**MICHELE HEMENWAY PULLEN | PROJECT SPECIALIST | EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

SNOW MUCH ENERGY! KEEPING KIDS MOVING ALL WINTER LONG

When cold weather keeps everyone indoors, movement becomes more than just play. It is essential for focus, growth, and joy. Here's how to keep energy high and little bodies active all season long.

WARM UP THE CLASSROOM

Winter months often mean more time sitting and less time outside, but children need to move to learn. Movement fuels attention, builds confidence, and helps regulate emotions. You don't need a gym or special equipment, just imagination. March to circle time, pretend to skate across the carpet, or host a two-minute "snowball stretch." These mini bursts of activity help students release energy while strengthening classroom focus.

"Movement isn't a break from learning. It's a bridge to it."

TRY THIS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Winter Wellness Jar: Fill a jar with fun activity cards such as:

"Do 10 snow jumps!"

"Spin like a snowflake!"

"Pretend to ski in place!"

Pull one between activities for an instant energy boost. It's a simple way to keep bodies moving and spirits bright, even on the coldest winter day!

QUICK INDOOR MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Snowball Toss: Crumple paper into "snowballs" and toss them into baskets for counting practice.

Freeze Dance: Play winter tunes and have children move like snowflakes, then freeze when the music stops.

Obstacle Adventure: Use tape or classroom chairs to create a mini course. Hop, crawl, and balance through!

Story Stretch: Read *The Mitten* and let students act out how each animal moves. **Snowflake Yoga:** Stretch tall like trees, twist like icicles, and sway like snowflakes in the wind.

FUEL THE FUN

Active play runs best on healthy fuel.

Use snack time to connect food and energy:

- What foods help our bodies move fast?
- How does water help us play longer?
- Which snacks give us steady energy?

MOVEMENT MATTERS FOR TEACHERS, TOO

A quick stretch between lessons, a short walk during breaks, or joining in a class dance keeps your energy flowing too. Children notice when their teachers participate, and your joy inspires theirs.



ASHLEY LITTLE
Training Coordinator

WARM HEARTS, COOL CRAFTS

Winter is a magical time to get creative! When it's too chilly to play outside, bring the sparkle of the season indoors with these two easy and inexpensive crafts.

SNOWFLAKE SUNCATCHERS

You'll Need:

- Contact paper
- White paper
- Tissue paper (assorted colors)
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- String or ribbon

How to Make It:

1. Cut a snowflake shape from the white paper.
2. Stick the snowflake onto a piece of contact paper (sticky side up).
3. Tear or cut small pieces of tissue paper and press them inside the snowflake design to fill the open spaces.
4. Cover with another piece of contact paper to seal it.
5. Punch a hole at the top and tie a string or ribbon for hanging.
6. Hang your snowflake in a sunny window and watch it sparkle!

2 INGREDIENT SNOW DOUGH

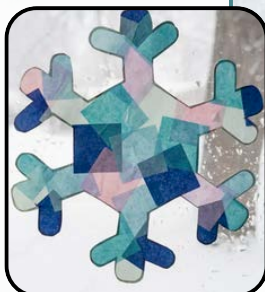
You'll Need:

- 5 Cups Baking Soda
- 1 cup conditioner (ensure gluten free for those with allergies) Can also use hand lotion.

How to Make It:

1. Combine in a large bowl
2. Mix until dough has an even consistency and texture.
3. Play and have fun! Store in an airtight container between uses. If dough seems dry, mix in a tablespoon of water to help soften.

Store your snow dough in an airtight container to keep it fresh. It's cool to the touch and perfect for making mini snowmen or pretend snowballs!



KAYCEE FOX
Case Manager

TURNING WAIT TIME INTO GREAT TIME: MAKING THE MOST OF ALL MOMENTS

Let me set the scene: I'm working in a summer program in an elementary school hallway lined with bulletin boards and kids' artwork. We've just finished morning circle and are headed to breakfast. Suddenly, the Mission: Impossible theme plays in my head—*♪♪* Dun dun da-da... *♪♪*—and I imagine a voice saying: "Your mission, Jen, should you choose to accept it, is to get these 12 kids to the restroom and back with no casualties or incident reports."

I look down the long hallway. The kids look back, half bored, half mischievous. We can do this, I think. We line up "properly"—single file, no talking, hands at sides. I march forward like a drill sergeant, but within seconds the formation collapses. I bark orders, whirl around, repeat. By the time we reach the restrooms, my patience (and voice) are gone. Only two kids at a time can go in, so we wait... and wait. The group devolves into tattling and whining. I raise my voice more. The mission ends without injury, but it's clear I've lost control—and we'll repeat this all day.

That moment hit hard: why do transitions bring out the worst in me? I wasn't alone—many youth workers dread transitions. But when I stopped seeing them as behavior-management nightmares and started seeing them as opportunities, everything changed. With intention, even the in-between moments can build connection, not chaos.

Relationship-Building Opportunities

Every minute counts—there are 1,440 in a day. Use transition time for short, genuine interactions: ask a question, share a laugh, notice something good. These micro-moments build trust, improve cooperation, and reduce behavior issues. Relationship-building is proactive behavior management.

Engaging Activities During Downtime

Keep kids' minds and bodies busy. Try quick games like I Spy, Simon Says, or balancing challenges. Or sprinkle in mindfulness: deep breaths, quiet listening, or short reflections. A few minutes of intentional engagement can turn "dead time" into productive time.

Preparation and Routine

Give 5–10 minute warnings before switching activities. Have materials and spaces ready to avoid long idle stretches. Plan transitions like regular activities—when kids know the routine (and look forward to it), chaos fades.

Flexibility and Feedback

Even great plans can flop—so pivot. Switch from hype to calm when needed, shorten games if they're done early, and ask youth what works. Adapting on the fly keeps energy positive and builds trust.

Team Support

Train all staff in effective, empathy-based transition strategies. Share successes and challenges in team meetings. When adults stay calm and curious, kids feel seen, not scolded—and that changes everything.

With a little planning, creativity, and heart, transitions can shift from Mission Impossible to Mission Possible. Turning wait time into a GREAT time isn't just a catchy phrase—it's a mindset.

Next Steps

Ready to turn transition times into your program's most powerful moments? [Sign up for a free trial of the Transitions Program](#) and get hands-on tools, expert guidance, and proven strategies that will help you transform wait times from chaos into connection. Try it now—your next "in-between" moment could become your next breakthrough.



THE FLOURISH *lab* **JEN HARRIS**

EMBRACING THE SPIRIT OF GIVING THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With autumn's departure and winter's arrival, we naturally feel an overwhelming urge to turn in. Cold weather can increase feelings of isolation and make life slightly more difficult for vulnerable populations. People in general have a natural response to burrow down and get ready to ride out the winter until spring. However, this could cause us all to miss great opportunities.

Winter is the perfect time to help make the community around us a place where everyone can feel included and supported. Engaging in winter giving and showing empathy to others is not only needed but a great learning experience for the children and adults in your care. Although going out into the community may not be possible for some people, that does not mean your organization cannot be involved.

Let's check out a few ways your daycare home or center can get involved in your local community:

Food Banks

- Collecting non-perishable food items for your local food bank is a wonderful way to get started with giving back. For little ones, being able to select a food item to bring in and put into a donation box is exciting! This small gesture can mean so much to someone in need.

Handmade Cards and Letters

- Creating a handmade card for people in senior centers, hospitals, nursing home or even grandparents can be an easy way to get more engaged with your community. Cards can be as easy or as complex as you allow them to be.
- Even though it may not be possible for some, hand delivering cards and letters can easily be the cherry on top for this activity. For nursing home residents, having visitors is always welcomed and can complete the experience for your little ones.

Animal Feeders

- Although they are not people, obviously, little critters outside your window are important to your community too. Creating feeders out of old toilet paper rolls, peanut butter and birdseed not only gives you a fun craft but ensures some hungry animals don't go without for the winter. This easy craft once more shows how empathy for others works.

Sponsor a Family in Need or Participate in the Angel Tree

- Work with your local school or Angel Tree program to provide holiday gifts or groceries to a local family near you.

No matter what you choose to do for the community around you, just know that you are making a difference in someone's life. We all need each other! Providing opportunities like these for children and adults in your care adds up!

"Don't wait for people to be kind, show them how." –Boonaa Mohammed



KELLY CHILDERS
Field Representative

WINTER CACFP MONITORING REVIEWS: TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL REVIEW

Winter months can bring extra challenges holiday schedules, weather closures, and special events but with a little preparation, your CACFP monitoring review can go smoothly!

Keep Schedules and Calendars Up to Date

- Post an accurate meal service schedule and update it promptly if winter events or parties change normal routines.
- Notify your sponsor ahead of time if your center or home will be closed due to snow days, holidays, or emergencies. You are able to notify your Case Manager or Field Representative via phone, text, or email.
- Make sure contact information is current so Field Representatives can reach you easily in case of schedules.

Maintain Accurate Meal Documentation

- Continue daily meal counts and attendance, even on shortened or adjusted days.
- Only mark attendance for children served at the approved meal time. If children leave before being served they should not be marked.
- Ensure menus match the meals served; if substitutions are made (due to supply or holiday menus), record the changes clearly.
- Keep all menus, receipts/records, and enrollment forms organized and up-to-date

Plan Ahead for Holiday Parties

- If holding a classroom or family holiday celebration:
 - Document whether the food served is part of a reimbursable meal or separate from CACFP.

- Avoid non-creditable foods (like candy or sweet treats) being counted toward CACFP meals.
- Include at least one creditable component if you wish to count the meal for reimbursement.
- Communicate with families about healthy celebration options that meet CACFP guidelines.

Prepare for Snow Days & Emergency Closures

- Keep a clear plan for notifying ODBCACFP of weather-related closures or delays.
- If meal service is disrupted, document the reason and the date in your records.
- Have a backup food supply for days when deliveries are delayed.

Be Ready for Unannounced Reviews

- CACFP reviews can happen at any time during your approved meal service period, even in winter months.
- If Director/ Owner is not in when a monitoring review is conducted, please ensure staff know:
 - Where CACFP records are stored.
 - How to correctly serve meal patterns and portion requirements.
 - Who to contact if the director or main contact is unavailable due to weather or illness.



TAKESHA MIDDLETON
TN Centers Program Manager

EMERGENCY PLANNING: MORE THAN JUST FIRE DRILLS

Three reasons to prepare:

- Emergencies can happen at any time, anywhere.
- Your licensing standards require you to have a written plan for responding to emergencies and natural disasters – and if you are Head Start – so do your HS Performance standards.
- The most important reason: Preparing saves lives! The better prepared we are, the safer our children and staff will be.

Your Emergency Plan: What Needs to Be In It?

- **Preparedness** – what are you going to do to prepare for this event in advance? This is the planning portion and will need to include your training plans. You will need to do a self – assessment to understand where you are and what you need. Practice, Practice, Practice – drills help ensure everyone knows what to do.
- **Response** – how will you respond in the event of an emergency? This portion of your plan is where you will outline your response – delegate roles, assign tasks and put your plan into action.
- **Recovery** – this section is for after the emergency concludes – how do you recover and resume operations.

A well-developed plan is going to be developed by the people who are going to use it! It is critical that nutrition staff/ food service staff are part of the planning team when setting up your emergency plans. Kitchens have special requirements like making sure that the utilities are turned off– does your staff know where to turn off the gas or water lines if needed? Emergency food and water– the selection and storage of emergency food and water supplies are critically important considerations.

Hazard assessment: The beginning steps of your emergency plan are to consider what hazards are possible or likely to happen in your program. Let's look at one area and think it through. I live in Las Vegas, the likelihood of a tornado is very slim – but in Tennessee and Kentucky – your probability is high, so your planning in this area will be more intensive. I am sure your program has plans for tornados – monitoring plan, identified shelter areas, emergency supplies – but were the nutrition/food service personnel part of that plan? Where are you staging the emergency supplies? If all your emergency water and food are in the kitchen and your staff and kids are in an internal room inside the facility, how will they access it? Consider that you may be in your shelter in place space for a while – plan accordingly. Even a snack can help calm scared kids.

Food service-specific services present additional planning and training needs:

- **Train staff ahead of time** – make sure they know where to turn off utilities if needed. Train in food safety measures in the event of an emergency, things like keeping water in the freezer as well as in your water supplies – frozen water can be used to keep food cold and it can be used as drinking water when it thaws. Pre-planning shelf stable meals that can be served without having to be cooked, gathering all the supplies to prepare and serve along with the food.
- **Assignments of staff** – in the event of an emergency – who is designated to do what? Who has kitchen shut down duty? Who makes sure the emergency supplies are kept current and rotated? Assigning roles and back – ups is key to making sure things go well. Having a written plan specifically for your kitchen is very important.

- Consider what will be needed following the event. Your kitchen may lose power for an extended period of time, experience flooding or other damage– then you will have to plan for the cleaning needs. Food may be lost and must be thrown out– everything will need to be cleaned and sanitized before it can be used again– you may have to have inspections done on utilities before you can resume operations. Documenting what was lost or damaged is important as you may be able to get reimbursed for those items, if you have it documented.

This article is just the tip of the iceberg– planning for emergencies is a process that must be thoughtfully done and revised often. There is no “one size fits all” for emergency planning– each location is unique, and your planning needs to reflect this. As you begin to think about each situation and what might be the needs of that situation, you will better plan for those needs.

There are a lot of places to help you get started in your planning. Ready.gov <https://www.ready.gov> has some great resources to help you with your planning for all different emergencies. Another good source of information is the Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (ACF) <https://acf.gov/ohsepr/information-providers> Early Childhood Disaster-Related Resources for Early Childhood Education Providers | The Administration for Children and Families .

Even the best resources often don’t consider food specific areas so you will need to add these to your plans. Although we hope we never have to activate our emergency plans, being prepared and practicing will go a long way in helping you and your facility get through these trying times and come out stronger on the other side.

You don’t have to write the whole plan all at once– just get started with one emergency event and go through it. Just expand your facilities already developed emergency plan to include your specialty area! The more you do it, the easier it gets!

If you have an questions or comments, please send me an email at stompkinshess@gmail.com!



SHEILA TOMPKINS-HESS, PROGRAM OFFICER II - STATE OF NEVADA DIVISION OF CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

KENTUCKY EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

CENTER: ROSIE'S PLAYSCHOOL CENTER AND CHILDCARE

A FAMILY AFFAIR...

For Ms. LeeAnn, early childhood education isn't just a career. It's a calling rooted in love, family and community. At Rosie's Playschool Center and Childcare, she's not only an educator but a familiar face whose compassion radiates through every classroom. Her story is a beautiful reminder of how deep care and genuine connection can transform a learning environment into something much more—a family.

What makes Rosie's Playschool Center and Childcare work so special is that her family is woven into the heart of the center itself. Together, They've built more than a workplace, families, and educators grow side by side. It's not uncommon to see her sharing a smile with a parent at drop-off, guiding a child through a new milestone, or collaborating with her staff to create an atmosphere of warmth and belonging.

"Being around the children fills my heart. There's nothing that makes me happier than being able to work alongside my family and watch these kids learn and grow. I love being a part of their little world and watching them grow and develop. We all are family at this center."

Her passion shines through in every moment. Whether she's helping a toddler take their first steps, nurturing creativity through play, or celebrating a child's newfound confidence. Ms. LeeAnn finds joy in each small success. She also understands that a growing child's great start in life begins with the basics—including balanced, nutritious, and tasty meals that fuel learning and play. From encouraging healthy eating habits to making mealtimes joyful, she ensures that every child's needs are met with care and intention.

"Our Daily Bread is an incredible resource that supports an educator in every way to ensure that a child's nutritional needs are met. The support I get from the food program team helps me greatly to ensure compliance with the USDA rules and regulations and any questions I have are always answered. Their support of the children and my daycare is wonderful."

Rosie's Playschool Center and Childcare is not just a career for Ms. LeeAnn it's a center full of love, family and community support!



REBECCA RIFE
Field Representative

TENNESSEE EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

EDUCATOR: TAMMY AUSTIN

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY...

Our Daily Bread would like to recognize Ms. Tammy Austin as our TN Educator Spotlight. Ms. Tammy is one of our amazing home educators, here in East TN. 29 years ago, she began working in a childcare facility and loved getting to take her son to work with her. She knew then that this was something she was called to do, and wanted to be able to one day have her own center. She was able to make that dream come true 8 years ago, when she opened Pecan Patch Preschool.

Ms. Tammy said when she first opened, the name didn't make sense. She dreamed of running her center out of an old home place in the town of Madisonville, TN. She purchased the abandoned home in hopes to restore it for her daycare. Unfortunately, the foundation was so bad that the old home had to be torn down and rebuilt. The new house was built in the same spot, surrounded by pecan trees, and she knew that the name was perfect. She wanted the children to love gathering and playing with the pecans on the land. Now in their first year at the new location, the children are going to get to do just that, and Ms. Tammy's wishes and dreams have become a reality. Her very own granddaughter attends her center as well, and she loves getting to have her with her everyday.

Ms. Tammy has done many trainings with CCR&R, and loves attending Applebaum trainings as well. Last year, she was able to obtain her Preschool Specialization Certification through CCR&R. Ms. Tammy credits her years of being a busy mom of 3, for making her such a great multitasker today.

"I'm the owner, director, cook, maintenance, and educator all in one, but I wouldn't want it any other way"

This year the children have enjoyed creating their own lemonade stand to benefit Isaiah 117 House, the trike-a-thon for St. Jude, a tea party for Easter, beach day, and a fall festival. They also had their very own playground day camp out. Ms. Tammy says the children love playing in the dirt and water, and now that pecans are getting ready to fall in late November, she feels like gathering pecans will be a new yearly tradition that they will love.

Ms. Tammy is making memories that will last a lifetime, and we love her play-based learning approach in early education.



SHEENA WILSON
Case Manager



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"We acknowledge that it takes all of us to meet our goals, and that only together will our organization expand and prosper."

- OUR DAILY BREAD CACFP



JOSH SMITH
Systems Administrator

2026 ANNUAL TRAINING

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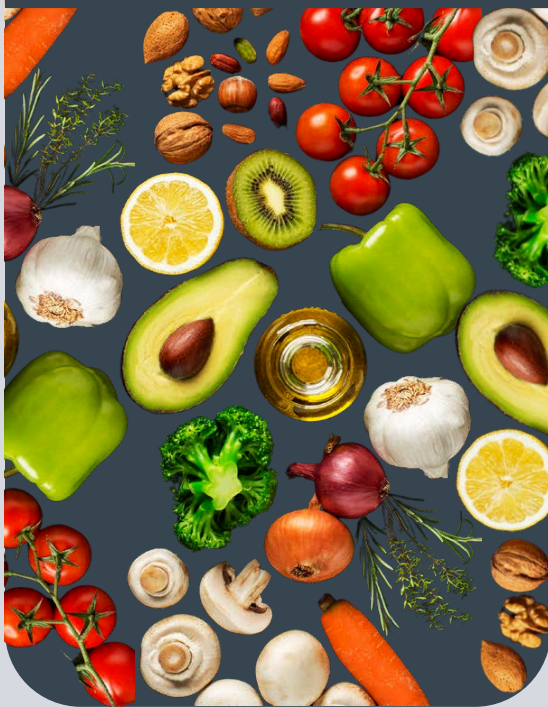
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Memphis, TN

Lexington, KY

Johnson City, TN

CACFP POLICY UPDATE



FY26 Area Eligibility Map Updated

USDA announced that the CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Mapper has been updated for fiscal year 2026. This map can be used to determine the tiering of family child care homes in the CACFP, as well as for every SFSP summer site.

You can access the map here:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/area-eligibility>

The Link

In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

The completed form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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