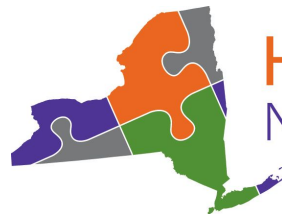


Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Maximizing Participation



HUNGER SOLUTIONS
NEW YORK UNITING POLICIES AND
PROGRAMS TO END HUNGER

Agenda

- Hunger Solutions New York
- Child Hunger in NYS
- Maximizing CACFP
 - Farm to ECE/CACFP
 - Family Style Meals
 - Connect with your Representatives
- Additional Resources
- Questions & Discussion

Hunger Solutions New York is a statewide anti-hunger organization.

We increase **awareness** of, **support** for, and **participation** in federal nutrition assistance programs.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Community Eligibility Program (CEP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Summer-EBT

How Do We Help?

- **Technical Assistance**

- Connect with us! We work one-on-one to provide assistance, answer questions, connect you with peers, other organizations and more.

- **Resources**

- Use and share our resources, information and best practices to help reach more providers and programs with CACFP information and more.

- **Advocacy**

- Working with partners helps us advocate for investments and inform improvements in child nutrition programs.

Consequences of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity has been shown to:

- Impede physical development
- Impact social, emotional, and cognitive development
- Contribute to poor health outcomes long-term
- Disproportionately impact low-income and marginalized populations.

The **federal nutrition programs** are increasingly vital to safeguard families from hunger.

Source: Food Research and Action Center (2018) [Research Brief: Connections Between Food Insecurity, the Federal Nutrition Programs, and Student Behavior.](#)

Hunger in New York State

1 in 7 New Yorkers struggle with food insecurity, including **nearly 1 in 5 children**.

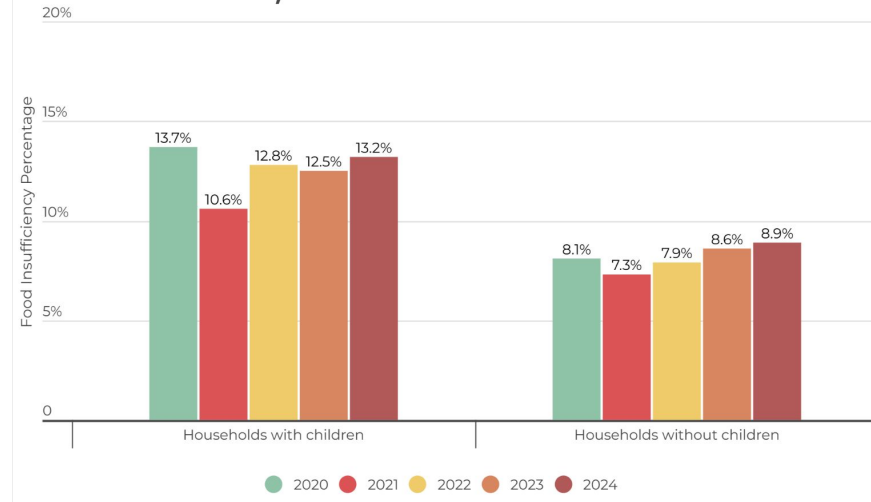
Hunger at **highest point in 5 years**.

- New York's food insecurity rate increased by 36% from 2022-2024 to 2019-2021.

Food insecurity disproportionately impacts communities of color and households with children.

- **Hunger is 1.5x higher** in NY households with children vs those without.

Annual Food Insecurity Among Households with and without Children, New York State



Source: [New York Health Foundation, 2025](#)

Childcare Meals

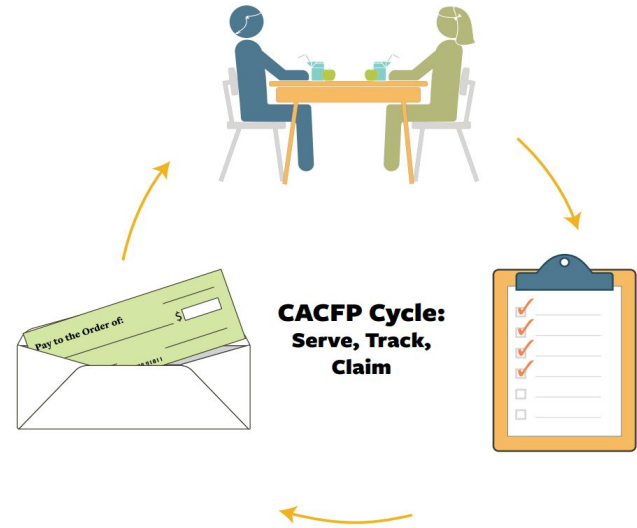
The Child and Adult Care Food Program:

- **Funded** through the United States Department of Agriculture.
- **Administered** by the NYS Department of Health.
- **Underutilized** across NYS and the nation.



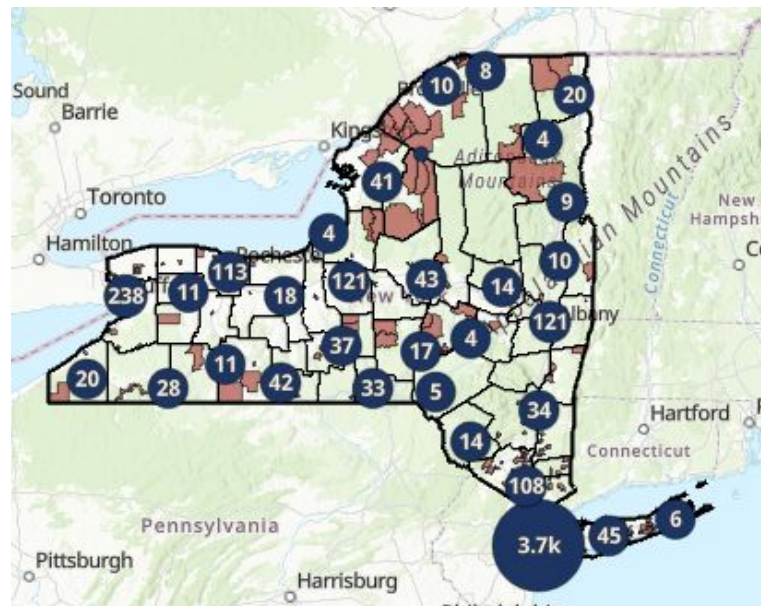
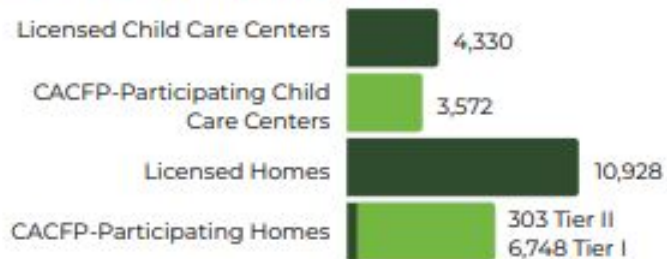
How It Works

- **Serve** meals compliant with CACFP meal patterns.
- **Track** how many meals are served.
- **Request** reimbursement on a monthly basis.
- Participating programs **receive a per-meal/snack reimbursement.**
- Reimbursement rates **updated annually and set by USDA.**



CACFP in NYS

CACFP in New York



Source: [National CACFP Association, 2026](#), [Child Care Aware of America & NYSDOH, 2025](#)

Benefits of CACFP

- Promotes the development of lifelong healthy eating habits
- Improves nutrition security
- Offsets the cost of food for providers & families
- Can lower the cost of care for families
- An indicator of quality care
- Providers can access additional trainings & support
- Professional development opportunity for providers



CACFP is an Indicator of Quality Care



PH-4	Provider promotes the consumption of meals and snacks that meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern for the ages served.	<p>To meet this Standard, written evidence MUST reference the following:</p> <p>IF PROGRAM PARTICIPATES IN CACFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ One source of evidence of participation in CACFP. <p>Acceptable types of evidence (MUST include your CACFP contract number):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Most recent CACFP billing.▪ Most recent CACFP reimbursement check.▪ Most recent correspondence from CACFP sponsor (related to monitoring visit).▪ Approved CACFP contract.▪ Note: Menus, meal counts or attendance forms will <u>NOT</u> be accepted as evidence. <p>OR</p> <p>IF PROGRAM DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN CACFP, evidence MUST include ALL of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 1 week of detailed menus for all meals and snacks served in the program.▪ Menus MUST show compliance with all CACFP minimum meal pattern components including: food components and minimum requirements/serving size for all meals and snacks served (For information on the CACFP nutrition standards for meal and snacks served in CACFP, type National CACFP Sponsors Association Meal Pattern Guidance in the search bar).	2
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Farm to Early Care & CACFP



CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM to SCHOOL



EDUCATION

GARDENS

PURCHASING



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK



LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

- ▶ **PROCURING** foods for taste tests from a local farmers market
- ▶ **PURCHASING** local, culturally relevant foods for use in meals and snacks



GARDENING

- ▶ **PLANTING**, watering, and harvesting in an on-site garden
- ▶ **TASTE TESTING** foods grown in a garden



FOOD, NUTRITION, AND AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

- ▶ **VISITING** a local farm or community garden
- ▶ **CONDUCTING** a cooking demonstration using local food



Farm to Early Care & CACFP

- Helps children learn where food comes from.
- Supports local farmers & producers.
- May help lower the cost of food.



Farm to ECE/CACFP

- CACFP does not define “local.” CACFP providers can decide what definition of local makes the most sense for their specific area.
- CACFP funds can be used to help purchase local foods from farmers markets, gardening supplies and more.
- Homes & centers can engage in farm to early care activities such as:
 - Gardening
 - Composting
 - Cooking lessons
 - Taste testing

Getting Started with Farm to CACFP

- Start small!
- Choose a snack to transition to locally grown items.
- Connect with local producers.
- Check out your local farmers market.
- Connect with community organizations that may be able to offer assistance.
- Talk with your peers!



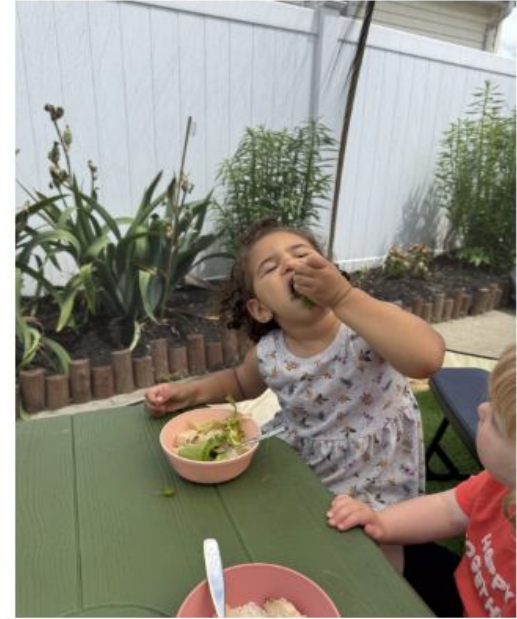
“There's something really special about watching them enjoy meals made with ingredients they helped grow!”



Involving the kids in every step helps them feel connected to what they eat



This year's goal is to add even more vegetables to the garden



Produce from the garden is incorporated into meals

Learn more about Farm to CACFP: [Little Feet Big Steps Daycare](#)

Additional Resources for Farm to CACFP

- NYAEYC Conference Sessions
 - 4/23 1pm **Buying and Serving Local Foods in Your Childcare Program**
 - 4/23 3pm **At My Daycare There's a Farm E.I.E.I.OOOO**
- National Farm to School Network
- USDA - Factsheet, Grow it, try it, like it!
- ASPHN - Fruit & Veggie Snack Menu Planning Tool

Additional Resources for Farm to CACFP

- NY Farm to ECE Network: [Defining Local Guide for NYS Childcare Sites](#)
- NFSN/ASPHN: [Farm to ECE Self Assessment](#)
- Locate Farms/Producers: [USDA Local Food Portal](#) and [Local Harvest](#)
- Rural Health Network/Food and Health Network SCNY: [One-page guide for planning taste tests](#)
- Find your local CCE: [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#)

Family Style Dining

- Not a requirement of CACFP participation.
- Helps children's development.
- Makes mealtime more relaxing and fun!
- May help reduce food costs and waste.



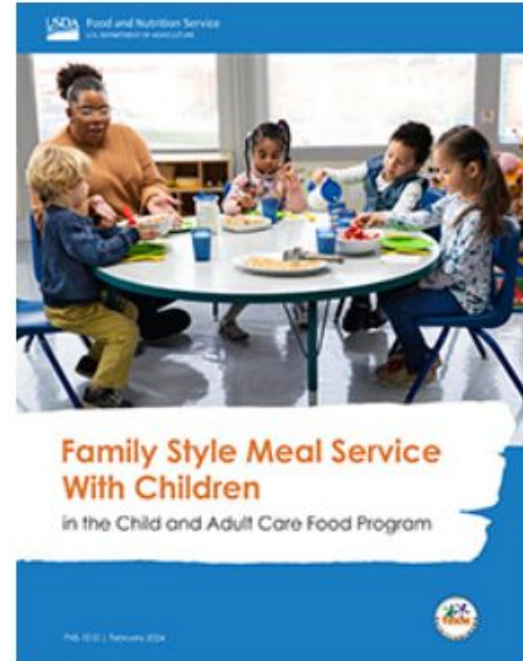
Family-Style Dining

- Give everyone a role.
- Have extra serving utensils and cleaning supplies ready for spills.
- Enjoying mealtime with children is a great way to model trying new foods.



Family Style Dining

- Consider allergies, religious and cultural practices. It may be safer to pre plate some components.
- You can implement some aspects of family-style dining if needed.
- Don't expect perfection - building these skills takes time.



Additional Resources for Family Style Dining

- **NYSDOH**
 - [Serving Meals Family-Style](#)
- **USDA**
 - [Webpage](#)
 - [Family Style Meal Service Webinar](#)
 - [Implementation guidance](#)
- **National CACFP Association**
 - [Meal Pattern Minute: Family Style Dining](#)
 - [Family-Style dining tip sheet](#)

Connect with Elected Officials!



Photo courtesy of Jessica Dean:
Congressman Marc Molinaro visits Jessica's Daycare - Summer 2024

Connect With Your Local Representative

- Scheduling a visit is a great way to introduce representatives to the CACFP & educate them about the program.
- Local Representatives are more likely to be in their districts during breaks - usually, August is an ideal month.
- Visit [House.gov](https://www.house.gov) to [find your representative](#), contact information & more.

Tips for Hosting

- When arranging a date:
 - Provide a few dates and times to their staff.
 - Invite during a snack or meal or prepare another activity.
- Prepare for the visit:
 - Let parents know - photo release forms.
 - Visit your representatives website to better understand their interest areas.
 - Have talking points ready to explain the impact and importance of the CACFP.
 - Provide some educational materials.

Take Action!

- Plan ahead - connect with representative staff 1-3 months in advance. You may need to reach out more than once.
- Follow up with your representative after hosting.
- Share your visit with your peers and on social media!

Additional Resources

- National CACFP Association
 - [Blog](#)
 - [Additional resources](#)
- [National CACFP Forum](#)
- Learn about and support [current CACFP bills](#)
 - **The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act**
 - **The Childcare Nutrition Enhancement Act**



Federal Nutrition Program Resources

- **WIC:** Help [spread the word](#) about WIC. Individuals can visit [WICHelpNY.org](#) to see if they are eligible **today!**
- **SNAP:** the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (**NOEP**) offers **free & confidential** services to connect New Yorkers with SNAP. To find a local NOEP Coordinator, visit [FoodHelpNY.org](#).
- **Summer Meals:** Families can visit [SummerMealsNY.org](#) to find summer meal sites, outreach materials and more.

Additional Resources

- [NYSDOH - CACFP](#)
- [NYSDOH - CACFP crediting handbook](#)
- [USDA Food Buying Guide](#)
- [Child Nutrition Recipe Box: USDA Standardized Recipes](#)
- [USDA Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers](#)

Questions?



Stay Connected!

Kayla Snyder

CACFP Outreach & Engagement Specialist

518-436-8757 x 106

Kayla.Snyder@HungerSolutionsNY.org

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HungerSolutionsNY.org

ChildcareMealsNY.org

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