

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



Why Is CACFP Important?

During the early periods of growth, it is crucial that young children regularly receive good nutrition for their immediate and long-term health and development.

CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality and affordability of child care by reimbursing child care providers for nutritious meals served to children in their care. CACFP provides meals daily for over 7,000 children in more than 650 child care centers and homes in Vermont.

Good nutrition creates the building blocks for learning.

Better Care

Research cites participation in CACFP as one of the major factors influencing quality care. The program contributes financial support as well as training and technical assistance for providers and staff.

Better Nutrition:

Food program meals follow guidelines for healthy eating, providing participating children with key nutrients and fewer fats and sweets. Serving meals in child care helps stretch food budgets at home for families struggling with hunger.

Better Learning:

Serving family-style meals in child care is an opportunity for young children to learn healthy eating habits, and develop motor skills, language and social skills.

For More Information Contact:

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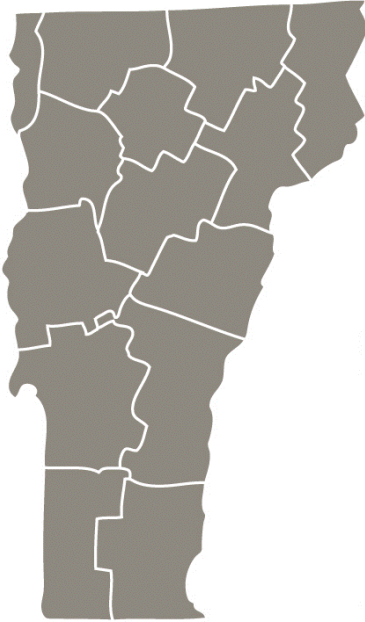
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Increasing access to meals in child care: Vermont's progress and challenges



In Vermont, 1 in 5 children live in food insecure households putting them at greater risk for poor quality diets, developmental delays, and poor academic performance.

Vermont has worked hard to feed its children:

- 97% of Vermont's schools provide school breakfast and lunch.
- Vermont ranks 4th in the nation in the percentage of low income students reached with breakfast.
- Vermont ranks 6th in the nation in reaching low income children with summer food.
- 20 CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal sites were operating in Vermont by the end of the 2011-2012 school year, serving close to 1,000 students.

But VT is doing poorly feeding children in child care centers and homes:

Vermont ranks in the bottom 5 states in child care centers using CACFP: of the 654 licensed child care centers in Vermont, 23% participate in CACFP and of the 1,400 child care homes in Vermont, 54% use CACFP.

What are the challenges of implementing CACFP in Vermont?

- Vermont's small child care programs have higher meal costs and less administrative support to start up and maintain meal programs.
- Meals are not considered an important part of quality child care.
- Vermont has dispersed poverty keeping meal reimbursements low.
- Vermont has a high proportion of for-profit child care centers which are unable to participate in CACFP if their enrollment is less than 25% low income during any month.

Increasing CACFP participation rate will create a network of support and encouragement for providers and will make meals an integral part of quality child care in Vermont.