

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Healthier Meals Initiative

The objective of the CACFP Healthier Meals Initiative is to support Colorado CACFP child care providers in meeting higher nutrition standards for meals served in child care. The improved meal requirements for CACFP meals will become policy in January 2013. These requirements include the following standards, in addition to the current CACFP Meal Pattern requirements:

1. 1% or fat-free milk
2. 100% fruit juice no more than twice per week on the menus
3. Processed/pre-fried meat products no more than once per week on the menus
4. At least one whole grain product each day on the menus

Through collaboration with multiple state, local, public and private partners, this initiative intends to support child care providers with training and tools, and by reducing environmental and systemic barriers that child care providers face in serving healthy meals. The following describes the key activities of the initiative, which will likely be funded by the Colorado Health Foundation (February 2012 application cycle).

- Development of a menu and recipes tool kit, tested by child care cooks and children.
- Training for the Division of Child Care licensing specialists and Healthy Child Care Colorado child care nurse consultants regarding the new CACFP policies.
- Development of tested parent materials to gain their support of the healthier meals standards.
- Culinary workshops with food service equipment incentives.
- Educational programming for parents, child care staff, and administrators to support culinary workshop nutrition concepts.
- Statewide assessment of barriers impacting menu quality in child care, including health inspections, food access and buying power, and lack food service equipment; and subsequent activities to address these barriers.

Detailed action plans are in development for the above grant activities, pending final grant award. This action plan is referenced in the MCH action plan for the child care sector logic model.