

Visionary

Family Nutrition
Bureau
Spring 2025



NEW MEXICO

Early Childhood

Education & Care Department

Sharing our VISION with both
Child and Adult Care Food
Program and Summer Food
Service Program Sponsoring
Organizations in New Mexico

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NEWS FROM THE BUREAU CHIEF

by Loren Miller, Family Nutrition Bureau Chief

Greetings and warm wishes for good health to all our food program partners in child care, adult care, after school programs, education and other social services. Spring is right around the corner and the Family Nutrition Bureau (FNB) is preparing for Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsor applications to be submitted shortly. The arrival of March means that the SFSP team is working on training sessions for 2025 sponsor organizations. We'd love to have more sponsors participate this summer! Anyone interested in sponsoring SFSP this summer should contact Debra Candelaria for information on program expectations, training opportunities and application information.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) team is continuing program reviews and lining up locations for CACFP training in May and June. Dates, times and locations will be shared in the Annual Training notification email which will be sent out soon. Please register for a session that is designed for the type of care that your organization is providing. This will help to ensure that the training is relevant and appropriately tailored.

Leadership changes have occurred at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with Brooke Rollins having recently been sworn in as secretary. On her first day in office, she sent out a list of priorities for USDA during the next four years. The letter detailing her guiding principles for nutrition programs can be read on the USDA website here: [Secretary Rollins' Vision for the Department's 16 Nutrition Programs | Food and Nutrition Service](#)

Many of these priorities have been important components of our USDA programs here at ECECD for many years, and several are directly related to current initiatives. Therefore, we are not anticipating a great deal of change to daily operations of nutrition programs function here in New Mexico. As we learn of updates to any regulations or program expectations, we will keep you informed.

We've had some changes in personnel during the past several months. Cassie Martinez is now working with the SFSP team as a Compliance Officer. We're thrilled to still have her on board with FNB and excited about the contributions she will be making to SFSP. Cathy Lubold has joined the Family Nutrition Bureau staff to fill the Executive Administrative Assistant position that Cassie vacated. Our newest Compliance Officer Fabian Lujan and our new Food Security Coordinator Anna Martin will also be joining the Bureau shortly.

Applications for another round of funding for the New Mexico Grown and Expansion and Enhancement Grants are now being accepted for state Fiscal Year 26 (FY26). Submit your applications for that funding as soon as you can as it is awarded on a first come, first served, basis.. Thank you to those who have participated with these grants and increased consumption of locally grown foods and increased access and infrastructure for your programs.

Thank you all for the work that you do to keep the children and adults in your care well fed and healthy. Have a healthy spring and a nutrition-filled summer.

From Finance

by Guadalupe Perez, Management Analyst Supervisor

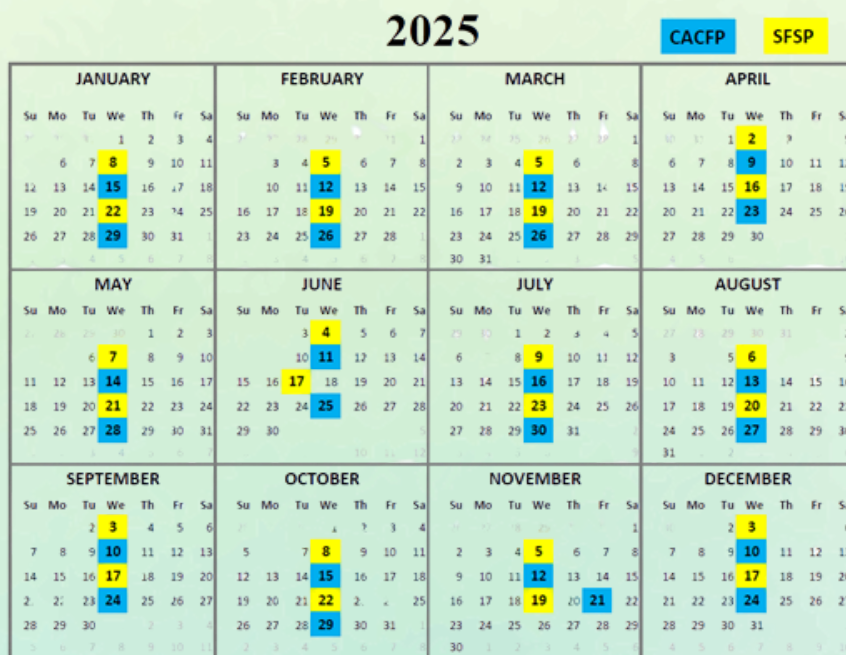
Greetings!

We are working diligently to ensure we are adequately serving the children of New Mexico by processing your monthly reimbursement claims. Thank you for giving your prompt attention to annual applications so we can continue to process approvals in a timely manner.

Quick reminder: if you need to change your information including but not limited to your address or financial information, please submit a new W-9. This is important—it can affect your monthly reimbursements. Please contact Leticia or me to update your program’s information.

2025 CACFP and SFSP Payment Calendar

Note: Due to space constraints, the calendar may appear small. Please contact me if you would like me to email you the calendar separately.



Threshold raised for required audits

Sponsoring Organizations participating in CACFP and/or SFSP require an annual independent audit if they receive \$1,000,000 or more in federal awards in a single school or fiscal year. This applies to state, local, and Tribal government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Federal awards include all CACFP and SFSP reimbursement funds, as they are federally funded programs.

Audit reports are due within nine months of the end of the Sponsoring Organization’s fiscal year. In addition, all programs that need an audit are required to submit a copy of their complete audit to the Federal Audit clearinghouse. Audit requirements are found in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 3052, 2 CFR Part 400

NM Grown and At-Risk and Summer Food Expansion/Enhancement

Recipients of these additional funds will continue to submit receipts/invoices for reimbursement each month. The end of the fiscal year will approach quickly and we do not want you to lose out on your reimbursement.

Fiscal Staff Contact Information:

Lupita Perez, Management Analyst Supervisor - (505) 470-5196 Guadalupe.Perez2@state.nm.us

Leticia Rodriguez, Business Operations Specialist - (505) 309-2792 Leticia.Rodriguez@eceed.nm.gov

Summer Food Service Program for Children Updates

by Debra Candelaria, SFSP Program Manager

Greetings Sponsors,

Congratulations to our SFSP Sponsors—you collectively served 716,206 meals to the children of New Mexico in 2024! We'd like to share a few highlights of our 2024 season, as we look forward to another successful summer in 2025.

SFSP2024 Success Stories

“During the summer, Site Supervisors diligently delivered meals to participants, ensuring that every distribution met the program requirements. They meticulously followed food safety protocols, including proper storage and handling procedures, to maintain the quality and integrity of the meals. Site Supervisors also coordinated delivery schedules to maximize efficiency and reach all participants, especially those in remote or underserved areas. Their commitment to these standards helped foster a reliable and successful meal delivery program over the summer.” -- Christine Juancho, Lead Compliance Officer

“I noticed our Sponsors were holding their Site Supervisors more accountable with trash, following regulations for being on time with meal service, Point of Service and completely filling out the meal count forms correctly and thoroughly.” – Frank Quintana, Compliance Officer



SUN Bucks – New Mexico now has the permanent Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program, SUN Bucks, a grocery benefit program that provides families with \$120 for each eligible school-aged child to purchase groceries when school is out. SUN Bucks is administered through the NM Public Education Department. More information is available at summerebtxm.org or hca.nm.gov/lookingforassistance/sun-bucks/.

Safety Concerns and Challenges at SFSP Meal Sites – ECECD is aware of concerns regarding physical safety at certain Summer Meal sites have increased in recent years. If you are a Sponsors who needs additional technical assistance, please contact the SFSP team.

Meal Service Options – There are now multiple meal service options for rural, non-congregate meal service.

Options include:

- Multi-day meal distribution
- Bulk meal distribution
- Parent or guardian meal pick-up (Drive-thru or curbside pick-up)
- Home delivery meal service
- Mobile route distribution

Sponsors should select the meal service option that best fits the needs of their community. To be approved for non-congregate meals, Sponsors must be in good standing with SFSP, enact procedures to ensure meals are distributed to each eligible child, and ensure that duplicate meals are not distributed or claimed. Please contact your SFSP team for assistance and approval for these options.

Summer Food Contact Information:

Debbie Candelaria, Program Manager debra.candelaria@ececd.nm.gov (505) 699-2596

Christine Juancho, Lead Compliance Office christine.juancho@ececd.nm.gov (505) 699-2627

Cassie Martinez, Compliance Officer cassie.martinez@ececd.nm.gov (505) 637-1440

We are excited to work together with all of you in the upcoming 2025 program year!

Child and Adult Care Food Program Updates

by Jesus Aguilar Jr., CACFP Program Manager
Greetings,



Would you believe that we are already six months into FY25? It's true. I want to thank each of our center and home sponsors for the service that you provide in your communities. FNB appreciates the efforts everyone has made to ensure nutritious meals are prepared and served to New Mexico's children.

FNB is starting to prepare the online application for FY26 as well as develop the online Home Sponsor application. The FY25 online application turned out to be a smooth process despite a few bugs and glitches. We were able to solve those problems and move forward with the application approval process. In FY25, FNB approved 183 online applications and currently have four new applications ready for approval. After this first year of the new online application process, the second year should be easier and faster, and we anticipate that it will continue to run smoothly.

How many of you have started completing the "095" Income & Expense form in the EPICS system? If you don't remember hearing about it during last year's annual center training, you can find it under your Claim month>month/year>actions button>income & expense tracking. You will complete it the same way that you have been completing the Excel version of the form. We will provide further guidance during this year's annual center training. For assistance you can contact any one of the compliance officers or myself.

On Jan. 27, the new federal administration issued a temporary pause of federal funding. This has generated widespread concern, including from some organizations in our community. We hear you. This sweeping order was rather shocking to some and lacked clarity about which funding was affected. After this announcement, FNB received a few phone calls and emails from sponsors voicing their concerns and needing clarification to all the confusion. On Jan. 28, the orders were halted and rescinded. At this time, we believe that child nutrition programs will continue to operate much as they have in the past, however, some changes may still be made to the program. We greatly value you, the child nutrition community, and the millions of children and adults who rely on these programs for nutritious meals every day.

Organizations like FRAC and the National CACFP Association are committed to providing advocacy and support for those who administer, operate and participate in the USDA's child nutrition programs. They are monitoring all new information and will publish updates on their website and through email. Consider familiarizing yourself with their digital platforms and joining their email lists to get reliable information that could impact on your organization.



At this time, I would also like to introduce some new Compliance Officers that have joined FNB since the last Visionary. We are excited to have Karlee Lave, Martha Castro and Jerome Samuel join our Compliance Officer ranks. Karlee comes to us from the CCSB Regulatory Oversight Unit with a wealth of licensing experience. Martha & Jerome came to us from the private sector with lots of kitchen oversight and management experience. Keep them in mind when they come out into your kitchens and don't hesitate to ask about any new recipes or recommendations you can incorporate them into your menus. Check out their bios later in this issue.

FNB's Compliance Officers continued to conduct unannounced program reviews throughout the state. I am pleased to hear that everyone is returning to a bit of normalcy, and that we have not encountered as many findings and deficiencies as in years past. Please ensure that you keep CACFP records complete and up-to-date at their required frequency. Please contact me or any of our Compliance Officers with questions or technical assistance that you might need.

The Annual Trainings are also right around the corner and pre-registration information and dates are coming soon. All proposed dates will be listed on the back of the Visionary. Annual Trainings will include any updates on changes that might impact the program, instructions on how to complete the FY26 renewal application, and training on the income and expense form in EPICS. Please ensure that at least one of your main principals attends this required training.

I hope that many of you celebrated National CACFP Week during March 16-22 in creative ways that promoted the healthy, nutritious meals and snacks that you serve.

Stay safe, and we are hoping to see everyone soon.

Welcome New and Promoted FNB Staff



Christine Juancho – Lead Compliance Officer, SFSP

I am a tribal member from Isleta Pueblo where I grew up most of my life and currently reside. I have two daughters: Desiree, 36, and Adrianna, 33. I also have a beautiful granddaughter, Daizie, who is 14 and has brought so much joy and love to my life. I graduated from UNM with a degree in criminal justice in 2021 and have worked in state government for 11 years. I started in 2013 with CYFD Early Childcare Services Regulatory Unit as a Child Care Specialist and transferred to the Family Nutrition Bureau in 2021 as a Compliance Officer with SFSP. It is an honor to now step into the Lead Compliance Officer role. I enjoy traveling throughout the state and working with sponsors, children and families. Through the years, I have met so many wonderful people and I am most proud of the job we do helping families with the services that our programs provide to New Mexicans. I enjoy traveling with my family and spending quality time together. I also love getting together with friends, who have become a very special part of my life as well.

Cassie Martinez – Compliance Officer, SFSP

I joined the Family Nutrition Bureau in February 2024 as Executive Administrative Assistant, and have been honored to work under the inspiring leadership of Loren Miller. My journey took an exciting turn when I accepted a position as a Compliance Officer with SFSP. This program deeply resonates with me, and I feel truly passionate about being part of it. I am genuinely excited about the future and eager to continue supporting the team and contributing to our shared goals. With my commitment to excellence and passion for community service, I am dedicated to helping the program achieve even greater success.



Karlee Lave – Compliance Officer, CACFP

Karlee is an experienced professional with a background in early childhood education and a passion for serving her community. Originally from Northern New Mexico, she earned her associate degree in early childhood education and spent eight years as an educator, working to make a positive impact on children's lives.

Since the onset of COVID-19, Karlee transitioned to state government, bringing her dedication and leadership to new areas of service. She's excited to continue her career with FNB, where she looks forward to making meaningful contributions to the team and community.

Outside of work, Karlee is a proud dog mom to three furry companions. In her free time, she enjoys fishing and watching movies, finding peace and relaxation in both activities.

Martha Adriana Castro – Compliance Officer, CACFP

I am happy to join FNB as a Food Program Compliance Officer.

Over the last 20 years I have served the community as a chef specializing in geriatrics and high-risk populations. Being able to understand the importance of nutrition at every stage of life allows me to be a support and a link for individuals to find the right direction in their food journey. Nutrition is key, from our early days to our last ones. I have specialized in gastronomy and hospitality to better understand our relationship with food and comfort, since it's one of the recurrent activities we perform every day of our lives, and it has a great impact in our well-being.

Serving my community and reaching people involved in providing and facilitating nutrition to young children of New Mexico is so rewarding. Supporting the individuals—and I must mention, mainly women—that make everything possible, being an aid to the ones that perform the very important role of feeding quality meals to our young New Mexicans and giving them the best start in life is wonderful.

I enjoy helping people connect and heal with food and to feel amazed by what nature does for us. In my own time, I am lucky and privileged to enjoy nature with my family. New Mexico is beautiful and huge; there's always somewhere to visit or re-visit.



Jerome Samuel – Compliance Officer, CACFP

Jerome Samuel is a passionate foodie and chef with over 11 years of experience in the food industry, with a background in cultural preservation. From the Pueblo of Tesuque, Jerome was inspired at a young age by both of his grandmothers to pursue cooking. Coming from two cultures, Jerome was exposed to both Pueblo/Native and Hispanic food. Working through various cuisines and kitchens led Jerome to experience cooking in a range of settings, from school kitchens to fine dining establishments. One of the achievements during his culinary journey was becoming a sous chef in a fine dining restaurant in downtown Santa Fe. During this time Jerome was given the opportunity to represent his Pueblo as a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. Within this time Jerome gained experience with learning various state and federal laws, monitoring multiple archaeological sites, working with government agencies on government-to-government consultations. In this position, it was a high honor to be able to support his people.

Jerome continues his passion for preservation and cooking by passing along lessons, speaking his language, storytelling, and showing cooking skills to others. He enjoys outdoor activities, taking photos and making digital art, keeping up with his cooking skills, and spending time with his family. With great pleasure Jerome is excited to bring his years of experience, hard work and dedication to ECECD. Jerome envisions continuing his passion for helping others and his commitment to creating a better place for future generations.

New Mexico Grown Grant Awards Available



by Cassie Martinez & Ronna Faris

FNB is excited to announce that the NM Grown grant program is in full swing and ready to launch Round Two of FY25 funding! This is a great opportunity for those looking to enhance participant wellness with healthy meals, and contribute to our local food economy.

If you're interested in requesting additional funding, please complete the FY25 application (found here: [New Mexico Grown FY25-Grant Application](#)) and submit it to Laura Spencer at laura.spencer2@ececd.nm.gov and Cassie Martinez cassie.martinez@ececd.nm.gov for consideration. Our team is here to assist you with the application process and answer any questions.



To all our current grant recipients, we kindly remind you to keep utilizing your allocated grant funds. Please ensure that all invoices, logs, and receipts related to the expenditure of grant funds are submitted no later than May 31. No FY25 purchase logs, invoices and receipts will be accepted after this date, to allow time for our Finance Unit to process reimbursements before the close of FY25. Your timely cooperation is essential for the successful completion and reporting of this grant cycle. As a reminder, below are the current allowable products and approved supplier lists:

- [FY24 Allowable Products](#)
- [FY24 Approved Supplier List](#)

Note to awardees: Reimbursement occurs by sending invoices, receipts and purchase logs by the 15th of each month to:

- Food Security Coordinator, Vacant
- Nutrition Program Manager, Laura Spencer – laura.spencer2@ececd.nm.gov
- Compliance Officer, Cassie Martinez – cassie.martinez@ececd.nm.gov

As the NM Grown program continues to grow and achieve success, we are exploring the possibility of expanding our funding opportunities to Home Providers with CACFP in the near future. This expansion will be contingent upon the level of interest and feedback from potential participants. If you are a Home Provider and want to learn more about the program or participate, please contact your sponsoring organization or monitor.

FNB would like to extend our gratitude for your continued support of local farmers and ranchers, and for championing NM Grown and local food initiatives. We are now accepting FY26 NM Grown grant applications for July 1, 2025–May 31, 2026!

[Apply online today at newmexicogrown.org/apply/](https://newmexicogrown.org/apply/)



USDA Policy Memo Updates for CACFP

by Laura K. Spencer, Nutrition Section Manager



The end of 2024 brought many changes and updates for CACFP. USDA announced funding for child care to purchase local foods, released two requests for information, released seven pieces of guidance, and published two studies.

USDA Guidance & Policy Memos

The seven USDA policy memos below give important guidance and clarification on USDA requirements for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) providers and state agencies. Please see below for an overview, and reach out to your Compliance Officer (ECECD-CACFP@ececd.nm.gov) or the Nutrition Staff (ECECD-NET@ececd.nm.gov) with any questions. Watch your email for periodic memo updates.

CACFP 07-2025 (12/26/2024): Registered Dietitian Medical Statements

The USDA released a memorandum to clarify the updated regulatory requirement for program operators to accept medical statements from registered dietitians. Beginning October 1, 2025, Registered Dietitians (RD) and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) will be able to provide medical statements. RDs are not required to be licensed to provide medical statements, as some states do not have licensing requirements for RDs, however RDs located in a state where licensing is required must be licensed to provide a medical statement.

CACFP 06-2025 (12/20/2025): Feeding Infants in the CACFP

The USDA released a memorandum to provide recommendations on infant feeding and infant meal pattern requirements in the CACFP. The memorandum includes updates regarding medical statements from registered dietitians, substituting vegetables for grains at eligible sites, added sugar limits, tofu crediting, and tempeh crediting.

CACFP 05-2025 (12/19/2024): Grain Requirements in the CACFP

The USDA released a memorandum to provide updated guidance on the provisions of the 2024 final rule that apply to the grains requirements in the CACFP, which included adding a definition for whole grain-rich into CACFP regulations; changing product-based limits for breakfast cereals and yogurts from total sugars to added sugars; and updating guidance on substituting vegetables to meet the grains requirements for eligible program operators.

CACFP 04-2025 (11/07/2024): Documenting Processed Products

The USDA released a memorandum to provide additional information and clarification on the state agency monitoring process regarding the: 1) Child nutrition (CN) label, 2) Watermarked CN label, and 3) manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (PFS). This memorandum also reflects updates to the CN Label Verification System and provides clarification on the date of authorization found on the CN label versus the "Valid Until" date on the CN Label Verification Report.

CACFP 03-2025 (10/30/2024): Substituting Vegetables for Grains in Tribal Communities & Hawaii

CACFP and SFSP operators that primarily serve American Indian or Alaska Native participants can substitute ½ cup of any creditable vegetables or 1 cup of raw leafy greens for 1 oz eq of grains. Vegetables substituting as grains can be used to meet the whole grain-rich requirement in the CACFP. There is no limit to the number of times per week that vegetables may be substituted for the grains requirement. These flexibilities also extend to programs in American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

CACFP 02-2025 (10/28/2024); Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in CACFP

USDA released a memorandum that outlines the use of Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in the adult day care and at-risk afterschool settings, as well as the use of family style meals in the CACFP. This memorandum includes two new questions clarifying policy regarding meals for supervising adults and meal accommodations and an attachment with updated examples of OVS.

CACFP 01-2025 (10/28/2024): Milk Substitutes: Units of Measure and Medical Statements

USDA released a memorandum that details the nutrition requirements for fluid milk and fluid milk substitutes in the CACFP and includes a series of frequently asked questions and answers. The memo clarifies who may sign medical statements; provides technical updates on units of measurement for vitamins A and D in fluid milk substitutes; includes a table of the nutrition requirements for fluid milk substitutes; and provides information related to temporary and ongoing unavailability of fluid milk.



Access recent USDA Memos:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

USDA Policy Memo Updates for CACFP Continued

by Laura K. Spencer, Nutrition Section Manager



Local Food for Child Care Funding

USDA released a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) on December 10, 2024, for State agencies to access funds to purchase and distribute local foods for schools and CACFP child care providers in their state. USDA has committed \$188.6 million specifically for institutions participating in the CACFP. ECECD has partnered with the NM Public Education Department (PED) to submit a proposal to access these funds for the schools and CACFP providers in our state. Cooperative agreements will be for a period of three years from the time of award. Watch this space for updates!

USDA Requests for Information

Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in CNPs

USDA recently sought public comment on:

- How grain-based desserts are identified and whether they should be defined as “grains high in added sugars” instead – suggesting a potential added sugar limit for all grain products.
- Whether high-protein yogurt (Greek and Greek-style yogurt) should be identified and credited differently than regular yogurt.

The comment deadline was March 26, 2025; we will update you when the final rule is published.

Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 authorized USDA to conduct pilot projects to allow one or more Tribes or Tribal organizations to administer one or more Child Nutrition Programs, assuming the roles and responsibilities typically held by State agencies. USDA will use comments received in response to their Request for Information to inform the application process, and eligibility and selection criteria, for the Child Nutrition Tribal Pilot Projects.

Comment Deadline: March 24, 2025

CACFP Research

CACFP Emergency Shelter Characteristics Study

The “Characteristics of Emergency Shelters Participating in the CACFP” study by USDA seeks to better understand the characteristics of CACFP emergency shelters, who they serve, how CACFP fits into their operations, and their challenges with CACFP.

Adult Day Care Centers Characteristics Study

The “Characteristics of Adult Day Care Centers that Participate in the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program” study by USDA seeks to better understand key characteristics of adult day care centers participating in CACFP.

Afterschool Supper Participation Report

This report by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) found that afterschool supper participation increased from October 2022 to October 2023 by 6%.

For more information contact policy@cacfp.org.

Source: [Quarterly Policy Update: January 2025 - National CACFP Sponsors Association](#), accessed 01/28/2025



Springing into Action with CACFP Nutrition Trainings

by Brianna Castillo, Nutritionist II



Happy Spring! Here at FNB, we are in a season of new growth—just in time for spring! With the new year well underway and new life blooming all around us, the Nutrition Education and Training (NET) team has revamped our CACFP Nutrition Training class series and content. We are just wrapping up our first series of our newly released in-person classes.

The NET team is offering three new optional classes for child care center organizations that participate in CACFP. Each class offers up-to-date CACFP meal

requirements, content and interactive activities. Our 4-hour CACFP Nutrition 101 - Basic class offers an introduction to CACFP Meal Patterns, Creditable & Non-Creditable foods, menu planning, Child Nutrition labels and meal documentation in the Menu Record Book. This class serves as the prerequisite to CACFP Nutrition 102 - Advanced class. In this class we take a deeper dive into the above “core” topics, while also providing information on food allergies, special dietary needs, and on sourcing and implementing locally grown food from New Mexico in your CACFP meals.

CACFP Nutrition 103 - Feeding Infants, is the third class we offer. This class is useful for infant room teachers, teacher’s assistants, or other staff who feed infants in the childcare setting. Participants will learn about infant feeding using the CACFP guidelines. Topics include breastfeeding support in child care, infant feeding tips, infant Meal Patterns, Creditable/Non-Creditable foods, menu planning, Child Nutrition labels, and the infant Menu Record Book.

Our second series will be occurring in the fall. If you are interested in attending our CACFP Nutrition Trainings during the fall season please contact us at: ececd-net@ececd.nm.gov. We hope to see you in class!

Leche! Leche! Leche!

by Brianna Castillo, Nutritionist II



There are many milk options out there. How do we know which one to offer? Is this alternative milk nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk? Is it approved and reimbursable in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)? At which meals do we

offer milk? Some of you may have questions like the above regarding milk. We are here to help! With ongoing changes to the foods that can be offered in the CACFP program, we understand figuring out what is allowed and what is not can get overwhelming. Breastmilk is reimbursable at any age. If the mother provides breast milk to her child older than 12 months, it is still reimbursable. This would be considered the one allowed component that a parent is able to offer per meal while their child is in the child care setting. The center can get reimbursed for the breast milk provided. It can be reimbursed for Breakfast, Lunch, Supper or Snack, including when the child is older than 12 months. Infant formulas must be iron-fortified and FDA-approved to be reimbursable. Special formulas may be approved with a doctor’s note; contact us for help with this. Please keep in mind that breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula must be offered to infants 11 months or younger on demand, based on the infants’ needs. Typically, infants eat eight or more times in a 24-hour period.

Per CACFP guidelines, starting at 12 months of age, an infant who is formula fed should start transitioning to WHOLE cow’s milk or an approved CACFP milk alternative, and infant formula should stop being offered by 13 months. This does NOT apply to a breastfed child. Being that breast milk adapts daily to the child’s nutritional needs, pure breast milk can still be offered and reimbursed, unless the family wants the child to transition to a different milk. Keep in mind a mother can breastfeed at the child care center or home, and the provider can include that serving of milk as part of the meal or snack that is being claimed for reimbursement.

CACFP guidelines require that the following age groups are offered the appropriate unflavored milk types:

- 1–2-year-old: WHOLE cow’s milk
- 2 years and older: 1% or Fat-Free cow’s milk
- Lactose-free or low-lactose milk can be offered at any age, in addition to approved CACFP milk alternatives such as soy milk or pea milk (See image below). Non-dairy beverages MUST be nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk.



Questions? Email us: ececd-net@ececd.nm.gov

Revamping Your CACFP Menus for 2025

by Ronna Faris, Nutritionist II

Spring is a great time to revamp your menus with new and fresh recipes to get kids excited and engaged with healthy eating. Since April marks the beginning of berry season, now is a perfect time to try recipes incorporating local produce. Plus, berries are full of antioxidants, vitamins and fiber to support good health and the immune systems of the children.

If you need new ideas for recipes, sign up for our monthly emails where we share recipes, cooking tips, and updates on what is locally available and in-season at farmer's markets. Links to sign up:

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)

The following recipe is a sample of what you'll find in our monthly emails. To incorporate this recipe into your CACFP menu, it can be served as written for Snack, or you can serve fluid milk with it to be creditable for Breakfast.



Quick Waffles (WG)

Ingredients for 15 portions (Homes):

- 2 cup White Whole Wheat Flour (or Whole Wheat Pastry Flour)
- 2 tsp. Baking Powder
- 1 tsp. Salt
- 2 Eggs, large, well beaten
- 2 cup Milk
- 2 TBSP. Vegetable Oil

Ingredients for 30 portions (Centers):

- 4 cup White Whole Wheat Flour (or Whole Wheat Pasty Flour)
- 1 TBSP. + 1 tsp. Baking Powder
- 2 tsp. Salt
- 4 Eggs, large, well beaten
- 4 cup Milk
- 1/4 cup Vegetable Oil

Directions:

1. Whisk together dry ingredients.
 - Add eggs, milk & oil.
 - Stir until dry ingredients are moistened (batter may be lumpy).
 - Cook in waffle iron until lightly browned.

Serve:

1 Portion = 1 oz. eq. whole grain serving.

Source: [Quick Pancakes \(WG\) | Day Care Resources - Child & Adult Care Food Program](#)

Waffle Fruit Pizza

Breakfast/Snack Crediting for Ages 3-5: One serving provides 1/2 oz eq. grains and 1/2 cup fruit

Ingredients

- 5 WGR waffles (1 oz eq. each)
- 2/3 cup low-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 5 cups your choice of fruits (kiwi, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, banana, pineapple, etc.)
- 2 tbsp maple syrup (optional)

Directions

1. In a bowl, whisk together the cream cheese, syrup and vanilla.
2. Spread two tablespoons evenly on top of each waffle.
3. Cut each waffle into 4 equal pieces that look like pizza slices.
4. Serve 2 waffle slices and 1/2 cup of mixed fruit on a plate. Have children add their own fruit topping to their fruit pizza!

Source: [Waffle Fruit Pizza - National CACFP Sponsors Association](#)

Help Children Explore the Fun and Creative Side of Healthy Foods

by Brianna Castillo, Nutritionist II



Children are curious, creative and expressive. Giving children the opportunity to explore foods through hands-on activities is a great way to help them learn about healthy foods

healthy foods and make healthier food choices. This opportunity helps them practice math, science, and fine motor skills in addition to stimulating some of their senses like smell and taste.

Here at FNB, we love to see all the creative educational food activities you do with the children. Each month you have the opportunity to submit an educational activity to be considered for an award. Awards are announced in the following calendar year at the Annual CACFP trainings in May and June. To submit, fill out the one-page activity form (found [here](#)) and email them to ececd-net@ececd.nm.gov.

Since we also LOVE to see the educational activities in action,

Save the Date! Home Provider RECEC Conferences

by Ronna Faris, Nutritionist II

Home Child Care Providers,

A new year is upon us, and now is the perfect time to start planning to complete your required training for 2025. The Regional Early Care Education Conferences (RECECs) are a great opportunity to earn your training hours, especially your Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)-specific hours.

Please mark your calendar for upcoming RECEC dates in your area:

- **June 21, 2025** – Albuquerque
- **August 30, 2025** – Las Cruces
- **Tentatively September 20, 2025** – Los Lunas (Contact your sponsor to confirm date.)
- **September 27, 2025** – Silver City
- **October 18, 2025** – Clovis
- **November 15, 2025** – Gallup / Grants

Come and join me at a RECEC near you, where I will go over the nutrition requirements for CACFP. This will be a fun and interactive session where we discuss creative ways to introduce new and different foods to the children. Each RECEC is organized by your home sponsoring organizations and offers additional required competency area trainings aside from CACFP-specific topics. Please contact your sponsoring agency for registration information and to see what other valuable presentations will be provided in your area, from other organizations and speakers around the state!

please share photos when possible. Check out the CACFP webpage for ideas: cacfp.org/activity-pages/ or see the Nutrition Merry-Go-Round manual located under “CACFP Nutrition Section” in FNB’s Materials Library: <https://www.nmececd.org/family-nutrition-bureau-materials-library/>.

We appreciate the work you invest into teaching children about foods and look forward to your Nutrition Education submissions!

As a reminder, activities are required at least once per month in at least one classroom for CACFP Child and Adult Care Centers,—but why limit the fun to just one room? Minor modifications to Nutrition Education activities can allow even the littlest learners to join in and gain understanding of the importance of healthy foods for a healthy life. At-Risk Afterschool programs and Emergency Shelters are not required, but are welcome, to participate.



Revised 2025 CACFP Tools. Forms and Worksheets Now Available

by Laura K. Spencer, Nutrition Section Manager

Great news! The FNB NET section nutritionists have been busy updating our CACFP handouts, creditable foods lists, and Meal Pattern charts to align with USDA Meal Pattern changes implemented in July, and to clarify some fine points of meal service. Please replace your previous handouts and charts with the current 2025 ones and discard older versions. These now reflect the new USDA requirements for CACFP programs which took effect July 1, 2024, to more closely align our Meal Patterns with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These updates were shared with you at the spring and summer CACFP Annual Trainings and fall Cook's Academy classes.

Revisions were made to the following items, many of which we shared via email in November, and have been sharing at recent trainings:

- Center Menu Record Book pages for all age groups
- Meal Pattern Charts & Exhibit A Grains Chart
- Creditable/Non-Creditable Foods lists
- Approved Whole-Grain Rich Cereals Within the Added Sugar Limits
- Approved Non-Dairy Beverages
- Non-Dairy Beverage Guidance
- USDA's Choose Yogurt Low in Added Sugar handout
- USDA's Choose Breakfast Cereals Low in Added Sugars handout

Changes include new limits for added (not total) sugar in cereals and yogurts, a new selection of allowable cereals and non-dairy beverages, and more. You will find these new documents in English and Spanish in the CACFP Nutrition Section folder at the FNB Materials Library: [Family Nutrition Bureau Materials Library | Early Childhood Education & Care Department](#). USDA worksheets and training tools can also be found at [CACFP Training Tools | Food and Nutrition Service](#).

Please reach out to the NET Staff any time you need help accessing these tools.

The USDA deadline to comply with these Meal Pattern changes is October 1, 2025, but CACFP programs are encouraged to begin implementing changes now to avoid meal disallowances after that time.

We are also currently revising the NM Food Purchasing & Production Guide; a 2025 edition should be available this fall, including a first-ever Spanish version, in response to your requests!

Also by your request, nutritionist Ronna Faris will be offering monthly emails with menu planning tips, recipe ideas, suggestions for using local, indigenous and NM Grown foods, culinary tips, and other menu inspiration. Sign up for English or Spanish messages using the links in Ronna's article in this issue.

Lastly, the NET team wants to help you! A brand-new 2025 CACFP Nutrition Training Series for CACFP centers is now underway, with sessions monthly. This includes basic and advanced training for kitchen personnel and CACFP coordinators, as well as the infant feeding training for infant room teachers. See instructor Brianna Castillo's article in this issue for details and registration information. Please also reach out to the NET staff - Brianna, Ronna and Laura - for nutrition training needs, menu review requests, recipe or menu ideas, questions about creditable foods or Child Nutrition (CN) labels, special dietary needs, etc. Our shared email is ECECD-NET@ececd.nm.gov.

We appreciate your participation in CACFP. Thanks for serving healthy meals to children around the state!



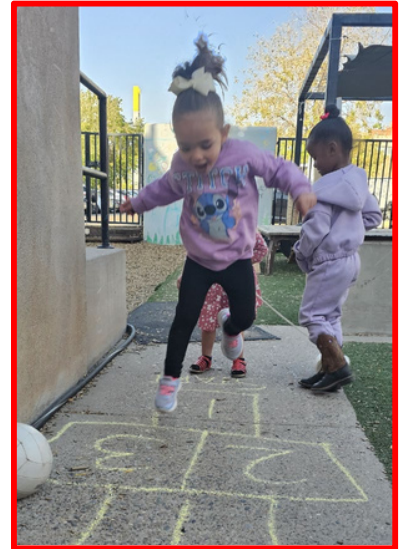

HEALTHY KIDS Healthy Preschool
 BUILDING HEALTHIER TOMORROWS TODAY


Healthy Kids Healthy Preschool Challenge

Early childhood education centers in New Mexico are encouraging physical activity as part of NMDOH's Healthy Kids Healthy Preschool (HKHP) Challenge. Fifty-two centers participated in October's four-week challenge, involving:

- Increase physical activity to 120 minutes a day
- Reduce screen time to no more than 30 minutes a week
- Offer family engagement activities once a week

At Christina Kent Early Childhood Center, physical activity ideas are displayed to inspire teachers. "We're always encouraging physical activity, so this challenge was a great opportunity to have that reminder and motivate teachers to do more," said Assistant Director Andrew Martinez. "We believe that learning can happen more outside of the classroom; kids are learning collaboration, communication, and emotional regulation – social emotional skills we focus on here."



Teachers found simple activities to be the most enjoyable. Students, ages 2 to 5, enjoyed dragging giant bowling pins and jumping over strings. "In my experience in the classroom, I have found that kids just love to move," Andrew said. "This gives teachers an opportunity to think about physical activity a little differently. It doesn't have to be so complicated."



PC: Preschoolers at Christina Kent Early Childhood Center love simple activities like hopscotch and neighborhood walks.

The HKHP Program awards centers with a silver award for completing the challenge and a gold award if they also develop and implement a wellness policy, one of the HKHP strategies to support healthy nutrition and physical activity for preschoolers. Alberto Zavala, HKHP Southern Coordinator, recruits preschools for healthy activities at New Mexico's annual Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) conferences. This summer, he will present a gold award to Christina Kent Early Childhood Center for

participating in the Challenge for the second year and implementing a wellness policy. Andrew and Executive Director Sondra Carpenter embraced the idea of a wellness policy to support healthy teachers and students. "It was a good insight for us," Andrew said.

The HKHP program partners with preschools in New Mexico to make healthy eating and physical activity a part of their daily routine. Together, they engage families, create wellness policies, promote staff wellness, organize healthy lifestyle challenges, and support Farm to Preschool activities.

For more information about HKHP, contact our HKHP coordinators:	Michelle Chavez Northern NM chavezm@caasnm.org (505) 413-2883	Alberto Zavala Southern NM albertoz@caasnm.org (575) 520-8279
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Mission: Supporting preschool providers in making healthy eating and physical activity a part of their daily routine.





Healthy Preschools

Increasing opportunities for healthy eating & physical activity in preschool settings



Kits Help Preschools Launch Gardening Programs

Staff at Little Footprints had wanted to start gardening with their young students but didn't have any tools to get started – until they received a garden kit from the Department of Health's Healthy Kids Healthy Preschool (HKHP) Program. The kit comes with everything needed to create a garden, except soil.

With seeds, trowels, watering cans, various sized grow bags, gloves, crop markers, and sunscreen, kids planted a dozen different heirloom seeds, and teachers incorporated gardening into their lessons. Aracely Pinela, Little Footprints' program administrator in Hatch, said the kids and teachers were excited to see green beans grow in the cloth bags.



Little Footprints staff pose in front of their garden kit. The HKHP Program distributed 36 garden kits so far this year as an incentive to early childhood centers interested in participating in the Farm to Preschool program.

“We grew tomatoes, pumpkins, sunflowers, green chile and lettuce,” she said. “What I really want is to get the community to help us prepare our raised beds and plant with their kids so they are learning healthy habits and how you can grow your own food. I think having a garden is a great way to become healthier. I'd like to do another healthy activity with our community, like walking to school.”

The HKHP Program, led by Alberto Zavala in the south and Michelle Chavez in the north, provided Little Footprints with the kit to encourage the program to participate in Farm to Preschool. Araceli heard about the kits when she attended New Mexico's annual Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) conference, where the HKHP Program gives a presentation about all aspects of its programming.

“We go to the four regional trainings and annual conference every year and talk about implementing a wellness policy, our healthy challenges, Farm to Preschool, and how centers can join the NM Grown Coalition,” said Alberto. On average, HKHP recruits about 55 to 60 early childhood education programs each year. Ultimately, the program wants preschools statewide to implement all the strategies that will give preschoolers more opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables and be physically active.

This is the second year the HKHP Program gave garden kits to encourage participation in Farm to Preschool, which incorporates gardening and healthy eating into center curriculum. “We're educating and exposing them to gardening and removing barriers that get in the way. Then based on their experience, they can continue to improve their garden programming over time,” said Alberto.

So far, 80 percent of preschools increased their garden activities after receiving a kit, Alberto explained. In Hatch, Little Footprints staff applied for a grant for raised bed gardening and is ready to earn a more advanced award in the Golden Chile Awards Program in 2025 after earning a Sprout Award last year for getting started.

“Once we get the garden going, I'd like to make baskets for people in need in our community.”
-- Aracely Pinela, program administrator at Little Footprints in Hatch

FNB 2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS & TRAININGS

by Healthy Kids Healthy Preschool staff / NM Department of Health

APRIL

- **April 9**—ECECD Child Care Community Round Table Meeting (Las Cruces), 6-8pm—See <https://www.nmececd.org/newsroom/>
- **April 10**—ECECD Child Care Community Round Table Meeting (Alamogordo), 12-2pm—See <https://www.nmececd.org/newsroom/>
- **April 14-18**—National CACFP Association 39th Annual Child Nutrition Conference (Dallas)—See <https://www.cacfp.org/conference/>
- **April 16**—ECECD Child Care Community Round Table Meeting (Farmington)—See <https://www.nmececd.org/newsroom/>

MAY

- **May 6**—SFSP Required Annual Training – Make Up Session for Schools Food Authorities (virtual via Teams)—schedule TBA—Contact Christine Juancho, christine.juancho@ececd.nm.gov
- **May 7**—SFSP Required Annual Training – Make Up Session for Non-School entities (virtual via Teams)—schedule TBA—Contact Christine Juancho, christine.juancho@ececd.nm.gov[SL3]
- **May 8**—CACFP Centers Required Annual Training (Santa Fe) 8:00 - 4:00—Contact Jennifer Nutt, jennifer.nutt@ececd.nm.gov
- **May 15**—CACFP Centers Required Annual Training (Roswell) 8:00 - 4:00—Contact Jennifer Nutt, jennifer.nutt@ececd.nm.gov
- **May 20**—CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Required Annual Training (Albuquerque) 1:00 - 5:00—Contact Jennifer Nutt, jennifer.nutt@ececd.nm.gov
- **May 21**—SFSP Cook's Training--by invitation (via Teams) 9:00-11:00—Contact Laura Spencer, laura.spencer@ececd.nm.gov
- **May 26**—Memorial Day Holiday; State offices closed

MAY

- **May 27**—ECECD Child Care Community Round Table Meeting (Roswell), 6-8pm—See <https://www.nmececd.org/newsroom/>
- **May 28**—ECECD Child Care Community Round Table Meeting (Hobbs), 6-8pm—See <https://www.nmececd.org/newsroom/>
- **May 29**—ECECD Child Care Community Round Table Meeting (Clovis). 6-8pm—See <https://www.nmececd.org/newsroom/>

JUNE

- **June 3-6**—National Farm to School Network's 10th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference (Albuquerque)—See, <https://www.farmtoschool.org/our-work/farm-to-school-cafeteria-conference>
- **June 5**—CACFP Centers Required Annual Training (Las Cruces) 8:00 - 4:00—Contact Jennifer Nutt, jennifer.nutt@ececd.nm.gov
- **June 11 and 12**—CACFP Centers Required Annual Training (Albuquerque) 8:00 - 4:00—Contact Jennifer Nutt, jennifer.nutt@ececd.nm.gov
- **June 19**—Juneteenth Holiday; State offices closed
- **June 25**—CACFP Emergency Shelters & Adult Centers Required Annual Training (Albuquerque) 1:00 - 5:00—Contact Jennifer Nutt, jennifer.nutt@ececd.nm.gov
- **June 28**—Albuquerque Regional Early Care & Education Conference (RECEC) for Home Providers--Contact Sponsor or Ronna Faris, ronna.faris@ececd.nm.gov

JULY

- **July 4**—Independence Day Holiday; State offices closed

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Santa Fe: (505) 827-9961 Albuquerque: (505) 231-4703 Statewide: 1-800-EAT-COOL

CACFP RESOURCE CORNER

Useful Links:

- **Family Nutrition Bureau Materials Library:** <https://www.nmeccd.org/family-nutrition-bureau-materials-library/>
- **NM Grown website:** <https://newmexicogrown.org>
- **The Institute of Child Nutrition Mealtime Memos:** <https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/mealtime-memo/>
- **National CACFP Sponsors Association Meal Pattern Minutes:** <https://www.cacfp.org/meal-pattern-minute/>
- **USDA FNS CACFP public website:** <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>
- **CACFP Guidance Manuals:** <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/cacfp-handbooks>
- **CACFP Meal Pattern resources:** <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>
- **CACFP Policy:** <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/policy>
- **The Institute for Child Nutrition (ICN) Recipe Box:** <https://theicn.org/cnrb/>
- **USDA Team Nutrition Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers:** <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-child-care-centers>