

Making the most of The Food Program

- CACFP reimbursement rate updates for 2026-2027
- Reduce reporting errors and collect more reimbursements
- Quick reference guide for meal requirements
- Simple, healthy and compliant recipes



Hello from Playground!

This resource is designed to help you get the most out of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), aka The Food Program.

We've compiled practical tools and up-to-date information to strengthen your compliance and financial projections, simplify meal planning, and capture more of the reimbursements your program is eligible for.

Whether you already participate in the Food Program or are evaluating it as a potential growth lever, this guide gives you a clear view of the requirements and how your current practices measure up.

A recent Playground study found that manual CACFP reporting errors caused the average center with **50 children participating** at the reduced rate to miss out on **\$8,539 per year in reimbursements** they would otherwise be eligible for.

If you're looking for a more effective way to navigate or onboard to subsidy programs, Playground can automate the busywork and help you capture more of those reimbursements.

Ready to see how much more is possible? Book a free custom demo at tryplayground.com/demo.

Warmly,
Team Playground

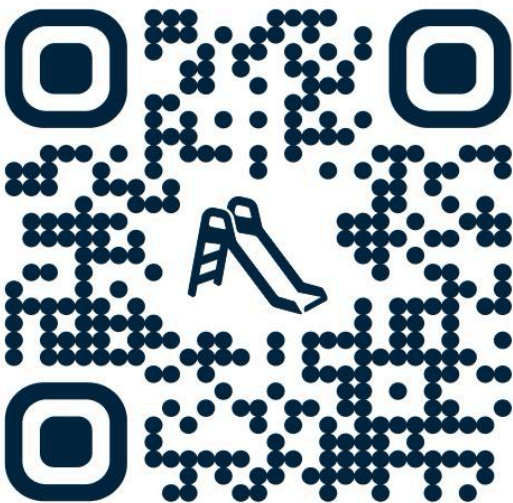
2026-2027 CACFP Reimbursement Rates

Rates take effect July 1, 2026

Change Summary

Program type	Breakfast	Lunch / Supper	Snack
Centers	+\$0.02 (paid)	+\$0.01 (paid)	+\$0.01 (paid)
	+\$0.08 (free & reduced)	+\$0.16 (free & reduced)	+\$0.02 (reduced) +\$0.04 (free)
Homes	+\$0.04 (Tier I)	+\$0.09 (Tier I)	+\$0.02 (Tier I)
	+\$0.01 (Tier II)	+\$0.05 (Tier II)	+\$0.01 (Tier 2)

Stop leaving money on the table.



Learn more at www.tryplayground.com/solutions/subsidy

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)							
Per Meal Rates in Whole or Fractions of U.S. Dollars							
Effective from: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027							
CENTERS		BREAKFAST		LUNCH AND SUPPER		SUPPLEMENT	
CONTIGUOUS STATES	PAID	0.42		0.45		0.12	
	REDUCED PRICE	2.24		4.36		0.65	
	FREE	2.54		4.76		1.30	
ALASKA	PAID	0.64		0.74		0.19	
	REDUCED PRICE	3.79		7.32		1.06	
	FREE	4.09		7.72		2.12	
GUAM, HAWAII, PUERTO RICO, and VIRGIN ISLANDS	PAID	0.52		0.59		0.15	
	REDUCED PRICE	2.99		5.79		0.85	
	FREE	3.29		6.19		1.70	
DAY CARE HOMES		BREAKFAST		LUNCH AND SUPPER		SUPPLEMENT	
		TIER I	TIER II	TIER I	TIER II	TIER I	TIER II
CONTIGUOUS STATES		1.74	0.62	3.31	1.99	0.98	0.27
ALASKA		2.79	0.98	5.36	3.23	1.59	0.44
GUAM, HAWAII, PUERTO RICO, and VIRGIN ISLANDS		2.25	0.79	4.30	2.59	1.28	0.35
ADMINISTRATIVE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS OF DAY CARE HOMES PER HOME/PER MONTH RATES IN U.S. DOLLARS				Initial 50	Next 150	Next 800	Each Additional
CONTIGUOUS STATES				157	119	93	82
ALASKA				254	193	151	133
GUAM, HAWAII, PUERTO RICO, and VIRGIN ISLANDS				204	155	121	107

Quick reference guide

Serving requirements by meal and age

Food	BREAKFAST		SNACK		LUNCH / SUPPER	
	1–2y	3–5y	1–2y	3–5y	1–2y	3–5y
 Fluid Milk fl oz	4	6	4	4	4	6
 Meat & Alt. oz eq	optional		½	½	1	1½
 Vegetables cup	¼	½	½	½	⅛	¼
 Fruits cup			½	½	⅛	¼
 Grains oz eq	½	½	½	½	½	½

Always prepare meals specific to child needs and medical requirements.

See more details about serving sizes and qualifying foods at:

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards>

👶 CACFP meal ideas for 1-2 year olds

All meals and snacks meet CACFP minimum meal pattern requirements for 1-2 year olds.

Breakfast



Banana Oatmeal Bowl

- 4 fl oz whole milk
- ¼ cup mashed banana
- ¼ cup cooked oatmeal

Breakfast



Whole Grain Toast & Fruit

- 4 fl oz whole milk
- ¼ cup diced soft pear, peaches, or applesauce
- ½ slice whole wheat toast torn into small pieces

Lunch



Chicken & Rice Bowl

- 4 fl oz whole milk
- 1 oz finely shredded chicken
- ¼ cup very soft cooked carrots or peas (tiny pieces)
- ¼ cup cooked brown rice (½ oz eq grain)

Lunch



Cheese & Veggie Quesadilla

- 4 fl oz whole milk
- 1 oz shredded cheese
- ½ cup finely chopped soft cooked zucchini or mild bell pepper
- ½ cup mashed or diced banana or melon
- ½ small whole wheat tortilla torn into small pieces (½ oz eq grain)

Dinner



Turkey & Sweet Potato

- 4 fl oz whole milk
- 1 oz finely shredded turkey
- ½ cup mashed or very soft cooked sweet potato or carrots
- ¼ cup mashed or diced peaches
- ¼ cup cooked brown rice (½ oz eq grain)

Dinner



Cheese & Pasta

- 4 fl oz whole milk
- 1 oz small cheese cubes
- ½ cup very soft cooked peas or zucchini (tiny pieces)
- ½ cup mashed or diced banana
- ¼ cup cooked small whole wheat pasta (½ oz eq grain)

Snack



Yogurt & Fruit

- ¼ cup plain yogurt (½ oz eq meat alternate)
- ½ cup mashed banana or finely diced strawberries

Snack



Hummus & Vegetables

- 2 tbsp hummus (½ oz eq meat alternate)
- ½ cup very soft cucumber or steamed carrot sticks (cut tiny)

👶 CACFP meal Ideas for 3-5 year olds

All meals and snacks meet CACFP minimum meal pattern requirements for 3-5 year olds.

Breakfast



Berry Oatmeal Bowl

- 6 fl oz low-fat or fat-free milk
- ½ cup mixed berries or diced peaches
- ¼-½ cup cooked oatmeal (½ oz eq grain - whole grain-rich)

Breakfast



Whole Grain Cereal & Fruit

- 6 fl oz low-fat or fat-free milk
- ½ cup diced banana or berries
- ½-¾ cup whole grain cereal (Cheerios, Kix, or similar) that equals ½ oz eq

Lunch



Chicken & Rice Bowl

- 6 fl oz low-fat or fat-free milk
- 1½ oz grilled chicken
- ¼ cup steamed broccoli
- ¼ cup diced peaches
- ½ cup cooked brown rice (½ oz eq grain)

Lunch



Turkey Sandwich

- 6 fl oz low-fat or fat-free milk
- 1½ oz sliced turkey
- ¼ cup lettuce & tomato (shredded/chopped)
- ¼ cup grapes
- ½ slice whole wheat bread (½ oz eq grain)

Dinner



Pasta with Meat Sauce

- 6 fl oz low-fat or fat-free milk
- 1½ oz ground turkey (in tomato sauce)
- ¼ cup cooked green beans
- ¼ cup diced melon
- ½ cup whole grain pasta (½ oz eq grain)

Dinner



Baked Fish & Veggies

- 6 fl oz low-fat or fat-free milk
- 1½ oz baked fish
- ¼ cup steamed peas
- ¼ cup apple slices
- ½ slice whole wheat bread (½ oz eq grain)

Snack



Cheese & Fruit

- 1½ oz cheese cut into small cubes (1½ oz eq meat alternate)
- ½ cup diced fruit (berries, melon, or apples)

Snack



Hummus & Vegetables

- ¼ cup hummus (½ oz eq meat alternate)
- ½ cup cucumber slices and baby carrots

Scan for more menu ideas and recipes ➡



How much CACFP Reimbursements Is Your Program Missing?

Manual meal tracking costs the average child care provider **\$28 - \$211 per child per year** in missed reimbursements.



POTENTIAL MONEY LEFT ON THE TABLE

Estimated annual reimbursement discrepancies from manual CACFP reporting for center-based providers.

ENROLLMENT	PAID RATE	REDUCED RATE	FREE RATE
10 children	\$289	\$1,708	\$2,108
25 children	\$722	\$4,270	\$5,269
50 children	\$1,444	\$8,539	\$10,538
100 children	\$2,888	\$17,078	\$21,075



WHY THIS HAPPENS

Manual reporting often means:

- ✓ Meals aren't recorded
- ✓ Records don't match attendance
- ✓ Paper logs get forgotten
- ✓ Staff are too busy during meal service
- ✓ Reporting errors delay or reduce reimbursements

Every **missed meal** can become lost reimbursement, or trigger compliance issues.



HOME-BASED PROVIDERS

Even family child care homes lose money.
Average missed reimbursement:

TIER 1	TIER 2
\$148.85 per child/year	\$56.55 per child/year



Just 10 enrolled children can mean nearly **\$1,500** in lost reimbursement **annually**.

See the full study and how much your program may be missing due to manual reporting errors



Put the pieces to work with Playground

This resource gives you the rates, requirements, meal ideas, and data on what manual reporting can cost. Playground turns that knowledge into captured reimbursements, without the extra busywork.

For the Food Program (CACFP)

- Record meals in seconds at the point of service
- Automatically sync counts with attendance and free/reduced/paid status
 - Build and share CACFP-compliant menus with reusable templates
- Generate ready-to-submit reports, flag errors, and keep eligibility forms and documentation audit-ready

For wider subsidies

- Auto-calculate expected agency payments and generate clean invoices
 - Reconcile deposits in one click and flag under- or over-payments
 - Keep agency and family payments clearly separated
 - Submit attendance directly to supported state systems

One platform keeps meals, attendance, billing, and paperwork connected so you stop leaving money on the table and close the books with confidence.

**Book a free demo at tryplayground.com/demo
or scan the QR code**



**Warmly,
Team Playground**