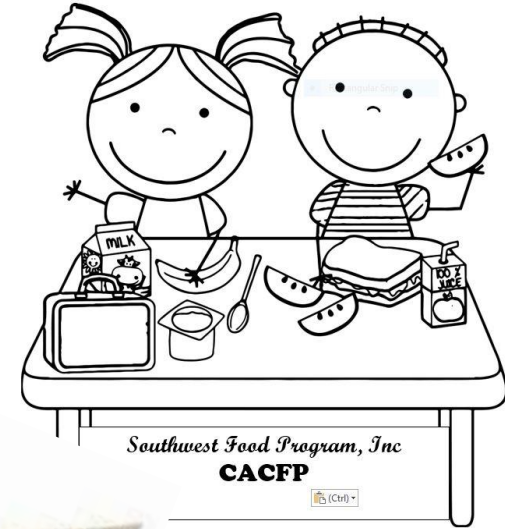




Creative Cost Cutting

Strategies for Serving Healthy Meals and Snacks on CACFP without Overspending



Southwest Food Program, Inc

719-440-8990

southwestcacfp@gmail.com

According to Tom Copeland (a leading expert in home -based child care taxes), participation with CACFP is always a financially smart decision.

Managing Legal Risks in Early Childhood Programs

Presented by...
Tom Copeland
Author, Trainer, Advocate

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CACFP Provides

- Reimbursements for healthy meals & snacks
- Training
- Support



- CACFP helps working families work
- CACFP funding supports the local economy, by purchasing required healthy foods at grocery stores & farmers' markets
- CACFP funding is a significant resource for supporting child care providers, afterschool programs, homeless shelters, & adult care centers
- CACFP supports jobs in child care

In difficult economic times, feeding children healthy meals and snacks might seem like a real challenge. But, there are strategies that can help ease the pinch of food costs without compromising nutrition!

Unit Objectives-

- ❖ Strengthen Resource Relationships like CACFP
- ❖ Provide Sound Guidance for Nutritious and Sustaining Meals/Snacks
- ❖ Explore Strategies for Maximizing Food Dollars
- ❖ Explore Strategies to Control Waste
- ❖ Explore Practical Ways to Make the Most of Reimbursement



In this unit, we will explore tips and advice that may be helpful for family Child Care Providers to cut costs without sacrificing quality



Why is a good nutrition program in your home important?

The average preschool age child spends about 10-11 hours sleeping. Of the remaining 14 hours awake, roughly **70%** is spent in your home when a child attends full time. This statistic emphasizes the enormous opportunity each provider has to influence the habits and health of young children.



During the average care day, children typically receive at least two meals and two snacks or about **75%** of their total food intake! This translates to about 20 food experiences per week, **OR over 1000** per year!!! When this total is multiplied by the typical attendance of 6 children... it means providers are probably serving up more than **6200** food experiences each year (and that doesn't even include suppers, weekends, evenings, or older school age kids who attend part-time)!

Because food is a basic necessity for life, a well delivered nutrition program can significantly contribute to how secure and nurtured a child may feel. Insecurity may lead to feeling out of control and contribute to a host of mental or behavioral concerns of varying degrees.

Feeding young children healthy foods is just the beginning. Presenting inviting meals and snacks, setting a calm and safe environment, speaking to children about their needs/preferences, and allowing food times to be social should all be considered.

Because children are receiving nutritious meals and snacks with the provider, parents can feel relief when their own days get hectic and they may not be able to ensure the highest possible nutrition in the evenings. Your contributions allow them to feel confident that the bulk of their child's intake is well-rounded and healthy.



When Children are Well-Nourished:

- ✓ **Illness is less likely to take hold**
- ✓ **Behaviors are more manageable**
- ✓ **Learning is more effective**
- ✓ **Parents are happier with care**
- ✓ **Good habits are formed**

Shop Wisely and With Purpose- Get in, Get What you Came For, and Get Out!

1. Stick to your list, don't be distracted by "maybe I will" or "that's a good deal"
2. If buying something new or perishable, only buy the amount you know you will prepare
3. Read unit prices.... Generally buying a bigger package saves money, but not always!
4. LOOK DOWN! Stores keep higher priced items at eye level.
5. Buy generic or store brands of common staple foods.
6. Buy inexpensive and filling foods that can be added to almost any meal like rice, beans, potatoes, oats, etc in bulk.
7. Don't shop when you're hungry! Everything will seem like a possibility!
8. Shop alone to minimize the desires of others adding to your cart.
9. Shop at less popular times when foods might be being marked down or at the farmer's market just before closing... they might make a deal rather than hauling it back to the farm!



Prepare Food with Purpose!

1. Make homemade whenever possible to use what you have on hand.
2. Be creative... Look at what you already have and think about how to use it in different ways
3. Think of food prep as part of loving your children rather than a task to be completed
4. Consider meat alternatives more often. Eggs and legumes are generally much more budget friendly than meats.
5. Prep ahead- cut veggies ahead of time and store in containers that you can grab quickly, cook up meats in bulk and then freeze in usable portions.
6. Cook once, eat twice! Last night's dinner could also be today's lunch. Use leftovers in new ways like veggies as part of the next day's snack or in your morning eggs.
7. Keep kids hydrated! Even though the program does not reimburse water, keeping kids well hydrated can keep them from overeating at meals and snacks.
8. Measure portions of foods as you cook to cut down on wasted food.

Skip These Pitfalls-

1. Avoid the end caps, they are there to catch you without comparison!
2. Shop infrequently, don't tell yourself you "need" something from the store without looking for surplus or a substitute you already have.
3. Watch the register and/or check your receipts. Mistakes happen and every little bit counts.
4. Avoid pre-prepared foods! Even spaghetti sauce is more when someone else made it!
5. Do not pay for groceries on credit! Interest adds up quickly!
6. Don't shop when you're too tired to make decisions.
7. Stick to what CACFP asks for meals and snacks and Don't OVERFEED! The program is carefully designed to combine nutrients from different components and with minimum portions for the age of each child. It's VERY common to see providers offering 3 or 4 foods at snacks instead of just 2 and it's tempting to put out more food than you need when kids seem hungry. Let their tummies catch up with minimum portions and then add only when necessary!
8. Watch the condiments! Keep control of ketchup, ranch, etc. Start small!

Post Test- submit to Southwest for credit! “Creative Cost Cutting” – 1 hr Health, Safety, Nutrition

Printed Name

Date

Signature

1. Participation with CACFP is a _____ smart decision according to Tom Copeland.

2. List three benefits of participating on CACFP with Southwest _____

2. The purpose of this unit is to help you find cheap food regardless of nutrient content because times are hard **TRUE** **FALSE**

3. During the typical care day, children receive about _____ % of their food intake in your home. Why is serving healthy foods in care a good idea?

5. How many of the 5 tips for “Plan Ahead” are part of your routine? _____ Which do you think is most beneficial? _____

6. Of the 9 “Shop Wisely” tips, pick 3 and tell us why you do (or why you think you might start) doing them.

7. Of the 8 “Prepare with Purpose” tips, pick 3 and tell us why you do (or why you think you might start) doing them.

5. Of the 8 “Skip These Pitfalls”, pick 3 that you might find challenging and why

Notes/Comments/Suggestions: