

Investing in Family Child Care Homes: A Critical Strategy for Advancing Child Nutrition

Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers are an essential yet often under-recognized part of the child nutrition and early learning ecosystem. Through participation in the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**, these providers deliver nutritious meals, foster healthy habits and support early childhood development in home-based settings that serve millions of children. In a recent survey conducted by the National CACFP Association (NCA), data from over 1,100 FCCH providers indicates that with the right support, home providers consistently serve nutritious meals and deliver high-quality nutrition and education experiences. Strategic investments in FCCHs are essential to improve child health outcomes, strengthen food systems and advance equitable access to care.



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“The CACFP helps ensure the children in my care receive nutritious meals while providing valuable support for families and strengthening my business. Although rising food costs, whole grain requirements and food waste can be challenging, the program is essential to my success, and I am grateful for the difference it makes.”



Trusted and Effective

The sustained longevity of FCCH providers fosters trust within families and communities, enabling providers to consistently deliver high-quality nutrition.



44% have participated in CACFP for more than 20 years.



Deliver High-Quality Nutrition

FCCH providers have the infrastructure necessary to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Whether cooking from scratch, semi-scratch or including local foods in their menus, FCCH participation in CACFP strengthens local economies, improves meal quality and exposes children to healthier food options.



65% (713 FCCH providers) report purchasing locally sourced foods.

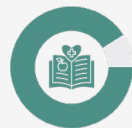


93% use scratch or semi-scratch cooking methods.



CACFP and Early Learning Go Hand in Hand

FCCH providers do more than serve healthy meals; they also help children learn about food. By integrating nutrition and agriculture education, FCCH providers play a critical role in shaping lifelong habits.



91% offer nutrition education, helping children understand what foods are good for them and encouraging healthy eating habits.



59% incorporate agricultural education, helping children learn where their food comes from.

Family Child Care Home providers are one of the cornerstones of the child nutrition system. Through CACFP, they are already delivering nutritious meals, supporting local economies and fostering early learning environments that support healthier outcomes. With strategic investments in funding, training and support systems, policymakers can strengthen this critical workforce, improve child health outcomes and ensure that all young children have access to nutritious meals and early learning experiences they need for lifelong success.

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“I love that the food program makes it possible for us to provide balanced meals to kids who might otherwise eat poorly, or not get enough.”