

41st National
**CHILD
NUTRITION
CONFERENCE**

CACFP · AFTERSCHOOL MEALS · SUMMER FOOD



Take a Peek!

- » Workshops
- » Speed Sessions
- » Shop Talks
- » Pre-Conference Academy
- » Post-Conference Academy
- » Sponsors & Exhibitors
- » Networking Opportunities



March 29 - April 2, 2027
Chicago, Illinois

Register today at cacfp.org/conference

Schedule of Events ↗

Thank you to our Sponsors!

**"Networking for Good" Sponsor &
Tote Bag Sponsor**



Self-Kare Lounge Sponsor



**Afterschool Meals Track Sponsor &
Summer Food Track Sponsor**



Nutrition Education Track Sponsor



CACFP Meal Patterns Track Sponsor



Farm to CACFP Track Sponsor



Monday, March 29, 2027		Virtual Sessions
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Self-Care Strategies	
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	Leadership Lab	
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Professional Headshots	
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Pre-Conference Academy *Pre-registration required	
1:15 pm - 1:45 pm	Navigating the Conference Q&A	
1:45 pm - 2:45 pm	NCA-Guided Tour of Conference Space	
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Afterschool Meals Overview	Afterschool Meals Overview On Demand
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Leadership Lab	
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	SFSP Overview	SFSP Overview On Demand
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Leadership Lab	
4:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Professional Networking Strategies & Tips	
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Shared Purpose: Networking for Good	
Tuesday, March 30, 2027		Virtual Sessions
7:15 am - 7:45 am	CACFP Creditable Tools & Resources	CACFP Creditable Tools & Resources
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Group Meetups	
9:00 am - 1:15 pm	Exhibit Hall Open	
9:15 am - 10:15 am	CACFP Overview	CACFP Overview
9:15 am - 12:15 pm	Pre-Conference Academy *Pre-registration required	
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Mid-Morning Coffee Break in Exhibit Hall	
10:30 am - 11:30 am	CACFP Certification Program Overview + Q&A	Program Overview On Demand
11:00 am - 12:30 pm	State Agency Office Hours	
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	National Conference General Session	National Conference General Session
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Featured Speakers	USDA CACFP Policy Update
4:30 pm - 5:00 pm	NCA Annual Member Meeting *by invitation only	NCA Annual Member Meeting^
4:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Speed Sessions	Coming Soon
5:15 pm - 6:15 pm	Quizapalooza: Are You a Meal Pattern Superstar?	
Wednesday, March 31, 2027		Virtual Sessions
6:00 am - 6:45 am	Fitness/Wellness Class	
7:00 am - 7:45 am	Continental Breakfast, Coffee & Conversation	
7:15 am - 7:45 am	Shop Talks	
8:00 am - 12:30 pm	Exhibit Hall Open	
8:45 am - 9:45 am	Workshops Session One	Coming Soon
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Workshops Session Two	Coming Soon
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	Workshops Session Three	Coming Soon
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch	
1:45 pm - 2:45 pm	Workshops Session Four	Coming Soon
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Workshops Session Five	Coming Soon
4:15 pm - 5:15 pm	Workshops Session Six	Coming Soon
5:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Shop Talks	
Thursday, April 1, 2027		Virtual Sessions
6:00 am - 6:45 am	Fitness/Wellness Class	
7:00 am - 7:45 am	Continental Breakfast, Coffee & Conversation	
7:15 am - 7:45 am	Shop Talks	
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Workshops Session Seven	Coming Soon
9:15 am - 10:15 am	Workshops Session Eight	Coming Soon
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Workshops Session Nine	Coming Soon
11:45 am - 12:15 pm	Workshops Session Ten - Speed Sessions	Coming Soon
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch	
1:45 pm - 2:45 pm	Workshops Session Eleven	Coming Soon
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Workshops Session Twelve	Coming Soon
4:15 pm - 5:15 pm	Featured Speakers	Coming Soon
5:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Closing Session: Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler!	Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler!
Friday, April 2, 2027		
8:00 am - 10:00 am	Post-Conference Academy *Pre-registration required	
8:00 am - 12:15 pm	NCA Office Hours: Certification & Membership	
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Fresh Ideas, Shared Purpose: Actions for the Future	
9:15 am - 10:15 am	More About CACFP: Ask Us Anything!	
10:30 am - 11:30 am	CACFP Meal Pattern Exceptions	
10:15 am - 12:15 pm	Post-Conference Academy *Pre-registration required	
11:45 am - 12:15 pm	Networking Event	

Registration Rates & Deadlines

Register early & save!

 cacfp.org/conference



Conference Registration (In-Person or Virtual)

Registration Period	Members	Non-Members
Advance (Through Dec. 1)	\$499	\$639
Early (Dec. 2 - Jan. 21)	\$599	\$719
Standard (Jan. 22 - Feb. 16)	\$689	\$809
Late (Feb. 17 - March 9)	\$759	\$879
Onsite (March 10 - April 2)	\$859	\$979

Save more as a member! Visit cacfp.org/members to join NCA.

Pre-Conference and Post-Conference Academies

Registration Period	Pre-Conference	Post-Conference
Standard (Through Feb. 16)	\$79	\$59
Late (Feb. 17 - March 9)	\$99	\$79
Onsite (March 10 - April 2)	\$149	\$129

There are **NO REFUNDS** for cancellation. Individuals can transfer their in-person registration to the virtual option. Organizations may transfer registration to another individual within their organization.

Conference Headquarters

Hyatt Regency Chicago

151 E Wacker Dr
Chicago, IL 60601

Room Rate: \$189.00 per night plus tax until sold out

Booking link will be shared via email once registration is confirmed.



Flying in?

Fly in on Sunday and stay with us until Friday!



VIRTUAL
Option Available

Unable to join us this year in Chicago? No problem! We're offering a virtual option for the 2027 National Child Nutrition Conference that will give you four days of virtual training from March 29 – April 1. Attend the sessions live through Zoom or watch them on-demand until April 30, 2027.

If you'll be joining us in Chicago, your registration fee also includes all virtual sessions, which you can attend onsite or watch on-demand until April 30, 2027.





Fresh Ideas, Shared Purpose

Every day, CACFP and SFSP professionals change lives by ensuring children and adults have access to nutritious meals, supportive environments, and opportunities to thrive. At NCNC27, we come together to strengthen that impact.

Fresh Ideas is about challenging ourselves to think bigger, lead smarter, and embrace new possibilities. Over five days, you'll discover innovative strategies, practical solutions and proven approaches from leaders and peers who are driving meaningful change in their communities. You'll leave with more than inspiration. You'll leave with ideas you can implement immediately to better serve those who depend on your programs.

Shared Purpose is what brings us together. It's the powerful connection among people who understand the importance of this work because they live it every day. In Chicago, more than 1,500 dedicated professionals from across the country will gather around a common mission: ensuring that every child and adult has access to the nutrition and care they need to flourish.

This conference is about more than professional development. It's about renewing our commitment, expanding our vision and building the relationships that fuel progress long after the week ends. When NCNC27 concludes, our hope is that you'll leave energized, equipped and empowered, knowing exactly what step you'll take next and confident that you are part of a passionate community advancing this mission together.

Because the work we do matters. The people we serve matter. And when fresh ideas meet a shared purpose, extraordinary things happen.



Days of
Education



150+ Hours
of Workshops



Over 200
Presenters



36+ CEUs

Discover the Power of Networking!



“ The conference is an **amazing networking tool**. It's so nice to have one place to go and get the knowledge to help in your job. ”



Visit cacfp.org/networking to learn more about all of the events we have planned for you.

► Monday, March 29

Leadership Labs

11:15 am - 12:15 pm, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm, 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

Professional Networking Strategies and Tips

4:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Shared Purpose: Networking for Good
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Sponsored by **food for good**
by PepsiCo

► Tuesday, March 30

Group Meetups

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Back by popular demand!

Mid-Morning Coffee Break

10:00 am - 11:00 am

State Agency Office Hours

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

► Wednesday, March 31

Continental Breakfast, Coffee & Conversation

7:00 am - 7:45 am

CACFP Professionals' Networking Lunch

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

► Thursday, April 1

Continental Breakfast, Coffee & Conversation

7:00 am - 7:45 am

Closing Session: Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler!

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm

► Friday, April 2

Networking Event

11:45 am - 12:15 pm



Group Meetups

- » CACFP Sponsor ED/CEO
- » CACFP Sponsor of Afterschool Meals
- » CACFP Sponsor of Centers
- » CACFP Sponsor of Family Child Care Homes
- » Child Care Center Directors
- » Centers - Adult Care
- » Centers - Afterschool
- » Claims Administrators
- » Cooks
- » Emergency Shelters
- » Family Home Providers
- » Field Monitors
- » Food Banks
- » Head Start Managers
- » Nutritionists
- » Schools - Afterschool
- » Schools - Summer Food
- » State Agency ARAS
- » State Agency CACFP
- » State Agency Directors
- » State Agency Nutritionists
- » State Agency - SUN Meals
- » Summer Food
- » Tribal Nations





General Session

When we come together in one room with one mission, we leave energized by new perspectives and united in our commitment to child and adult nutrition. This session is thoughtfully designed with speakers who will inspire innovation, strengthen our shared purpose, and remind us why our work matters in ensuring all children and adults have access to healthy meals and snacks.

Meet Our Distinguished Speakers



Jorge Perez
YMCA of Greater Cincinnati



Dion Dawson
Dion's Chicago Dream



Plus

NCA Board Chair: Deborah Gillison-Wilson,
Georgia Nutritional Services, Inc.

NCA President: Alexia Thex,
National CACFP Association

USDA Food and Nutrition Administration

Food & Beverage

Mid-Morning Coffee Break

Tuesday, March 30
10:00 am - 11:00 am

Continental Breakfast, Coffee & Conversation

Wednesday, March 31
7:00 am - 7:45 am

Thursday, April 1
7:00 am - 7:45 am

Lunches

Wednesday, March 31
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Thursday, April 1
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

NCA Office Hours: Certification & Membership (Coffee Provided)

Friday, April 2
8:00 am - 12:15 pm



Meals and coffee breaks are a great
time to mix and mingle!

Partners, Sponsors & Exhibitors



Exhibit Hall Hours

Tuesday, March 30

9:00 am - 1:15 pm

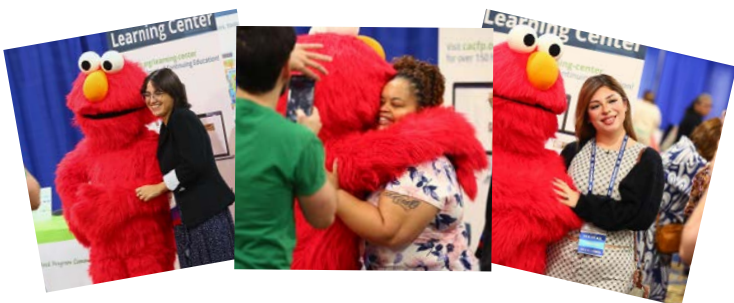
Wednesday, March 31

8:00 am - 12:30 pm



He's on his way!

Costume Character Elmo will be traveling to Chicago all the way from Sesame Street!



Scholarships Available!

Through our scholarship program, the National CACFP Association is honored to recognize the professionals who have dedicated their careers to ensuring that our nation's most vulnerable populations have access to nutritious food.

NCA is pleased to offer **15 scholarships** to attend the 2027 National Child Nutrition Conference, including **7 in-person scholarships** in Chicago and **8 virtual scholarships**.

In-person scholarships cover conference registration, four nights of lodging, and up to **\$450 in travel expenses**, providing a value of more than **\$2,000 each**.

Virtual scholarships cover the cost of virtual conference registration.

Applications are due by December 1, 2026 and recipients will be announced by December 18.



Visit cacfp.org/scholarships to submit your application.

*Apply by
December 1*





Start exploring! **Workshops & Speed Sessions**

Workshops and speed sessions do not require pre-registration, and you are welcome to attend any session you desire.

This is also not the final list! Sessions may change or be added, so be sure to check the website for the most up-to-date information.



Visit cacfp.org/2027-workshops for descriptions, key points, speakers and CEU specialties.

Nutrition Education *Sponsored by*

- » Benefits of Nutrition Education in Early Childhood Settings
- » Donde la cultura inspira y la alimentación educa
- » Engaging Strategies to Integrate the New Dietary Guidelines
- » Food Allergies, Food Intolerances and Celiac Disease
- » Managing Special Diets for Inclusive Mealtime Experiences
- » Mealtime as Curriculum
- » Measure, Portion, Scale: Smarter Kitchen Math for Consistent Meals
- » Nourishing the First Five Years: Building Healthy Brains
- » Nourishing Young Minds Starts With Us
- » Personalizing Responsive Feeding to Improve Meal Acceptance
- » Reframing Healthy Habits for Every Age and Setting
- » Rethinking Feeding as a Developmental Process
- » Supporting ECE Staff Wellness Through Physical Activity

- » Beyond Picky Eating: Feeding Children on the Spectrum
- » Building a Cycle Menu
- » CACFP-Friendly Ways to Limit Added Sugars
- » Creando una cultura de apoyo a la lactancia materna en el CACFP
- » Creating a Culture of Breastfeeding Support in the CACFP
- » Crediting Recipes Step-by-Step
- » Fueling the First Year with Infant Meal Patterns
- » Identifying Whole Grain-Rich
- » Let's Talk Milk
- » Plan Like a Pro: Level Up Your Menu Planning
- » Right Child, Right Meal: Special Diet Swaps
- » Understanding Protein Options in the CACFP
- » Using Your Menu to Spark Learning & Play
- » Whole Grains Kids Love: Practical CACFP Menu Strategies

This is an extremely valuable experience. Not only do we get the benefit of learning new skills or brushing up on previous knowledge, but we also get a chance to meet new people and gain alternative perspectives from others who are also doing the work.

Head Start

- » Collaborative Strategies to Support Dietetic Interns
- » Family Style Dining in Head Start
- » Farm to Head Start: Stories from the Field
- » Feeding Children with Special Needs in Head Start
- » More Than a Meal: Building Engagement Around Your Food Program
- » Promoting Healthy Habits Together Through Family Cafés
- » The Right Bite: Safe Feeding in Early Head Start and the CACFP
- » Savoring Connection And Enriching Community Through Your Kitchen
- » Using Nutrition to Build Language and School Readiness in Head Start

Afterschool Meals Sponsored by

- » Afterschool Meals for Stronger Youth Outcomes
- » Farm to Future: Afterschool Youth in Urban Agriculture
- » Increasing Access and Revenue with Supper in the Classroom
- » Keeping Teens Connected Through Afterschool and Summer Programs
- » Measuring Health Behavior Changes Among Pennsylvania Youth
- » No Money, No Problem: Reframing Resources for Your ARAS Program

Discover Chicago!





Farm to CACFP *Sponsored by* **PORK & PARTNERS**

TASTE WHAT PORK CAN DO

- » Cultivating Connections and Habits Through Farm to CACFP
- » Digging In: Active Play in ECE Gardens
- » Farm Fresh Taste Tests: Engage Kids with New Foods
- » Farm to CACFP: Give Your Food Program a Head Start
- » Growing Healthy Eaters: Garden-Based Curriculum in the Early Years
- » Harvesting Funding Opportunities for Farm to ECE
- » Planting Connections: Farmers and Educators in Early Learning

Summer Food *Sponsored by* **CHAMPION**

foodservice

- » Breaking Barriers to Rural Summer Meals Access
- » Creating Workforce Pathways Through Summer Meal Sites
- » Fresh from the Farm: Local Foods in SUN Meals To-Go
- » Grab-and-Go Summer Meals: Keeping the Enthusiasm
- » Incorporating Produce into Your Summer Meals Program
- » Innovation at Its Best: Exploring the Possibilities of AmeriCorps
- » Launching Rural Non-Congregate Sites for Greater Impact
- » Low Cost and High Return: Scaling Rural SUN Meals To-Go
- » Non-Congregate Summer Meals: Lessons for Program Expansion
- » Sponsoring Summer Food: Keys to Financial Management
- » Stop Packing Boxes, Start Building Programs
- » Strengthening Summer Meals Through Collaboration
- » Summer EBT: Leveraging Out-of-School Time to Boost Participation
- » Turning Administrative Review Data into Effective Sponsor Training
- » Using Statewide Partnerships to Drive Summer Meals Promotion



Financial Management

- » Administrative Review Preparedness for Sponsors
- » Administrative Review: Financial Management for Sponsors
- » Developing Better Budgets in the CACFP
- » Investigating Fraud, Waste & Abuse in Federally Funded Programs
- » Navigating Specific Prior Written Approvals for Budget Items
- » Preventing Fraud Before It Happens
- » Program Integrity and Compliance for CACFP Sponsors
- » Red Flags to Resolution in the CACFP: Lessons from an Investigation

Management & Professional Development

- » Build High-Impact Nonprofit Boards
- » Communicate with Confidence: Building Stronger Teams
- » Microlearning that Makes Cents
- » Present and Powerful: Building Resilient Teams That Stay
- » Refilling Your Cup: Understanding and Preventing Burnout
- » Setbacks to Steppingstones: When Life Throws Curveballs
- » The Emotional Labor of Caring: Supporting Ourselves and Others
- » The Emotional Reset Formula: Prevent Burnout and Turnover
- » Welcome to the Jungle: People, Teams, and CACFP Success

Policy & Advocacy

- » Beyond the Meal Count: Helping Children and Families Thrive
- » Championing Change with CACFP Advocacy
- » Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Continued Advocacy for the CACFP
- » Compliance and Special Diets in the CACFP
- » Policy, Politics and Programs: The Future of CACFP and SFSP
- » State Agency Strategies to Uplift the CACFP

NCA is doing an exceptional job of keeping the community in the know about new changes, updates and reminders. It is an important asset for new operators of the CACFP, especially those with less than five years of experience.



Research & Resources

- » A New Baseline: Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices
- » CACFP to Whole Child: Braided Funding to Boost Impact
- » Digital Marketing of Ultra-Processed Foods to Children
- » Early Relational Health Builds Healthy Child Development
- » Eat, Play, Learn: Nutrition Education Through Play-Based Learning
- » Exploring Fruits and Vegetables Through Hands-On Learning
- » Extending Nutrition Education from the Classroom to Home
- » Food Buying Guide on the Go
- » From Package to Plate: Children's Environmental Health
- » Happy and Healthy with Sesame Street
- » Look, Cook, Learn! Exploring New Foods with Rusty's Cooking Club
- » Mapping Tools for Food Resource Coordination
- » Navigating Dairy Options Within the New Nutrition Standards
- » Turning Participant Feedback into Better CACFP Menus
- » Using Provider Surveys to Drive CACFP Success

Program Administration & Operations

- » Beyond Paper: Modern Technology for Managing CACFP Programs
- » Completing Claims Like Clockwork
- » Enhancing VCA in the CACFP for Long-Term Success
- » Evaluating Menus for Meal Pattern Compliance
- » Every Number Tells a Story: Data That Drives Quality
- » Get Started Successfully Sponsoring CACFP Centers
- » Leading a Multi-Site CACFP Program: Lessons from the Field
- » Managing Multiple Sites: Compliance, Support and Staff Capacity
- » Modernizing CACFP Operations: Tools to Save Time & Reduce Errors
- » Navigating Monitoring Challenges in Family Day Care Homes
- » Zero Waste for Greater Community Impact



K-12 Nutrition Programs

- » Building Equitable Farm to School Programs in the CACFP
- » Cracking the Case: Strengthening Program Operations
- » Leading Through Hard Seasons in School Nutrition
- » Leveraging Food Education to Promote Positive Youth Development
- » Taste Test to Tray: Student-Led Innovation in School Meals
- » Turn USDA Foods into Crave-able School Meals One Can at a Time

Commercial

- » CACFP Training Program and Nutrition Calendar
- » Health-e Pro: Your CACFP Superpower
- » KidKare: One Connected Platform for Child Care Organizations
- » Making the Move: Success with My Food Program
- » Transforming Preschool Mealtimes with Local Love Lunch
- » YPTC Presents: Why Cash Flow Matters to Mission Success

“The presentations at the conference are great for both sponsors and front-line staff, and the networking gives you so much insight on how other sites do things.”





But wait, there's more!

Pre-Conference Academy

Monday & Tuesday, March 29-30

Three-hour deep dives in a classroom setting. Pre-registration is required. Learn more at cacfp.org/2027-preconference.

All About Grains

Let's talk about grains! Learn what grains are creditable and non-creditable grains in the CACFP, how to identify whole grain-rich, and how to calculate grain ounce equivalents in recipes and pre-packaged grain products to meet CACFP grain requirements for the age(s) you are serving. Bring your favorite grains to review!

CACFP Meal Pattern Training

Are you just starting out with the CACFP? Start your week off with a deep dive into the core fundamentals of the food program. Learn about the meal patterns and the five food components served in the CACFP, as well as tips and strategies for implementation in your operations.

Compliance with Confidence: Monitoring and Oversight for Family Day Care Homes

As a sponsor, director, monitor or field staff for family day care homes, you know efficient monitoring and oversight are essential to CACFP success. Learn how to conduct reviews that meet program requirements while also supporting and uplifting providers. Strengthen your oversight approach and build confidence in maintaining compliance.

Financial Records, Reporting and Integrity in the CACFP

Build confidence in managing CACFP finances and navigating key compliance requirements. Explore financial management fundamentals, recordkeeping and reporting requirements, and the Final Integrity Rule. Strengthen financial practices, understand what to expect during a financial integrity review, and gain the knowledge needed to support accurate records and ongoing compliance.

The Food Substitution Problem: Supporting Selective Eaters

Every program, including Head Start, faces the same question: how do you meet CACFP meal pattern requirements when a child won't eat what's served? Discover practical, research-grounded approaches to adapting menus and family-style service, cutting the food waste and unplanned substitutions this creates, and supporting children's individual needs while staying fully CACFP-compliant.

Getting Started with the Food Buying Guide

Learn how to use the USDA Food Buying Guide (FBG) as a tool to support meal planning and food purchasing in the CACFP. Gain hands-on experience using the FBG Calculator Shopping List to determine food quantities, the Recipe Analysis Worksheet to credit recipes for the meal components, and the Exhibit A Grains Tool to determine serving sizes to ounce equivalents. Build confidence with these tools through guided examples and practice activities to ensure compliance and support menu planning.

Head Start and CACFP Success: Updates, Strategies and Solutions

Stay informed, prepared, and successful in today's Head Start and CACFP environment. Apply program updates, strengthen compliance, and address real-world nutrition challenges. Build effective approaches for managing special diets, operational best practices, and emerging trends while gaining tools and resources to strengthen program quality and confidently lead nutrition programs.

Infant Meal Pattern Requirements

Infants experience rapid changes in the brain and body, making it important to ensure they receive proper nutrition regularly. Discover updated requirements for serving infants based on their growth and development. Explore updates to the infant meal pattern, as well as tips and strategies for implementation.

Menu Planning for the CACFP

Develop meal planning techniques that can be used to serve healthy and appealing meals and snacks that meet CACFP and preschool meal pattern requirements. Learn how to accommodate food allergies, incorporate multi-cultural recipes and locally-sourced foods, develop strategies for creating custom menus and go home with menus you can use immediately or as inspiration.

Post-Conference Academy

Friday, April 2

Two-hour intensives in a classroom setting. Pre-registration is required. Learn more at cacfp.org/2027-postconference.

Annual CACFP Training FY27

Get a comprehensive review of the essential components of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Explore key topics including meal patterns for all meal types, meal counts, claims submission, review procedures, recordkeeping requirements, monitoring protocols and the reimbursement system. The training also covers Civil Rights compliance, recent updates in CACFP guidance, including learning how to identify food allergens in commercially prepared food products.

Financial Viability in the CACFP

Strengthen your understanding of CACFP Performance Standards and the role financial viability plays in program compliance. Explore what financial viability means, what it does not, and how it can be demonstrated through appropriate documentation, evaluation and sound recordkeeping practices.

Shop Talks

Throughout the conference, join these small group conversations to share stories, learn from each other and connect with professionals who are facing the same challenges and opportunities you encounter. Learn more at cacfp.org/2027-shoptalk.

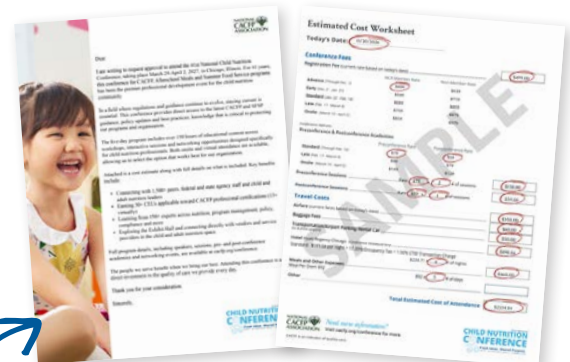
- » Ask a Marketing and Social Media Expert
- » Ask a Monitoring Expert
- » Ask a Nutritionist: Creditable or Not?
- » Ask a Policy Expert
- » Making Mealtimes Fun in Family Day Care Homes

From Garden to Kitchen: Connecting Food, Children, and Families

Follow food from seed to table with MSU Extension Head Start. Children plant and harvest school gardens, prepare and taste what they grow in the classroom, and extend learning at home through Yum Boxes, cooking demonstrations and Family Learning Parties. Designed for Head Start, these approaches can be adapted across child care settings, with a hands-on design lab to create a measurable garden-to-family nutrition plan.

Work Smarter: Leveraging AI in Child Nutrition Programs

Artificial intelligence can help child nutrition professionals save time, analyze food spending, review product labels, evaluate menus, draft communications, and identify potential compliance concerns. Review examples, effective prompts, and safeguards for using AI responsibly while keeping human review, confidentiality, and program requirements at the center.



Make your case to join us in Chicago! Download a letter outlining the benefits of attending at cacfp.org/conference, which includes a budgeting worksheet for you to fill out for your supervisor!



Fitness Classes *Get moving!*

Start your day with an energizing boot camp or a calming yoga session that gets you ready for a day of learning. Fitness classes will be held Wednesday and Thursday morning.



Self-Kare Lounge Sponsored by KidKare by Minute Menu™

Relax and recharge at the Self-Kare Lounge. You can take a few minutes to unwind in the lounge and pick up a Self-Kare Bag to treat yourself during the conference.



Make the most of your time with us!

Self-Care Strategies

Before a week of learning, networking and inspiration, take time to focus on your own well-being. Join us for a session designed to help you kick off your NCNC27 experience feeling centered, energized and ready to fully engage in everything the conference has to offer.

Leadership Labs

Great leaders are always learning. Kickstart your conference experience with engaging, interactive sessions designed to strengthen your leadership capacity and support your program's success. From building resilient teams and enhancing communication skills to recruiting and retaining high-quality staff and improving collaboration, Leadership Labs offer practical strategies, peer connections and fresh ideas to build your confidence and help you grow as a leader.



Professional Networking Strategies and Tips

Join us to learn how to implement strategies both in person and on social media to help meet people and advance your career.

Shared Purpose: Networking For Good

Roll up your sleeves, make an impact, and make new connections! Join us for a food packing event sponsored by Food For Good where you'll give back while building relationships that will last long after the conference.

State Agency Office Hours

We're excited to offer a unique opportunity for attendees to connect in-person with their State Agency through open office hours. Drop by your state's office to ask questions, get clarification or just to say hello!



Group Meetups

Meet with people who do what you do every day! Join your moderator and colleagues to talk about workplace issues. Find a mentor. Share your experience. Make contacts. Talk shop and learn from one another. These are some of the most powerful conversations at the conference and can't be missed.

CACFP Professionals' Networking Lunch

We celebrate and commend those who have achieved the highest level of CACFP professional recognition by earning their certification as a Management Professional and/or Child Nutrition Professional. Enjoy reserved tables specially set aside for you. Join us for a delicious lunch and take this opportunity to network and connect with fellow certified professionals and the NCA Board of Directors.



Quizapalooza: Are You a Meal Pattern Superstar?

Think you know the CACFP meal pattern like the back of your hand? Put your skills to the test in a fast-paced, interactive challenge packed with surprises, friendly competition, and fresh insights you won't want to miss.

Closing Session: Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler!

Get ready for a high-energy sendoff that brings the spirit of New Orleans to Chicago and kicks off the countdown to next year's conference! Save the dates to join us at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans, April 17 – 21, 2028.

Hear the latest from



The USDA Food and Nutrition Administration will be joining us once again to provide the latest news on the CACFP and SFSP. Be sure to check out these featured sessions to stay up-to-date on program guidance and regulations.

USDA CACFP Policy Update

Hear from USDA Food and Nutrition Administration staff as they present an overview of new and revised policy guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program and share a state-of-the-state update of the CACFP. The USDA Food and Nutrition Administration works to end hunger and obesity through the administration of 15 federal nutrition assistance programs including the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is crucial to ensuring children have access to nutritious foods and where healthy eating becomes a habit.

USDA SFSP Policy Update

Hear from USDA Food and Nutrition Administration staff as they present an overview of new and revised policy guidance for the Summer Food Service Program and share a state-of-the-state update of the SFSP. The USDA Food and Nutrition Administration works to end hunger and obesity through the administration of 15 federal nutrition assistance programs including the Summer Food Service Program, which is crucial to ensuring year-round access to foods for children.

“I look forward to the conference every year! It is a wonderful experience, not only for the training, but for the memories with my colleagues and new people I meet.”



See you in Chicago!

Start planning your trip now at cacfp.org/conference

REGISTER
early
& SAVE!

When you attend NCNC27, you'll...

- ★ Learn from 150+ experts in sessions covering nutrition, program management, policy, compliance and more
- ★ Earn 36+ Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
- ★ Hear the latest policy updates and engage with leaders working to strengthen child nutrition programs
- ★ Connect with CACFP and SFSP professionals and peers from across the country
- ★ Explore the Exhibit Hall and discover vendors and service providers in the child nutrition space
- ★ Have access to all hybrid sessions on demand through April 30, 2027