

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Head Start and Even Start Programs Fact Sheet

The Purpose of the Child and Adult Care Food Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA,) via the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), provides reimbursement through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for nonresidential childcare institutions to plan, purchase, prepare and serve nutritious meals to eligible children.

Head Start and Even Start Program Eligibility Requirements

- A Head Start or Even Start Program may participate in CACFP either as an **independent institution** or under the sponsorship of a **sponsoring organization**.
- Head Start or Even Start Programs may be operated by one of the following types of institutions:
 - **Public Entity**—a municipal, county, state, or federal government agency
 - **Nonprofit Institution**—a Federally tax-exempt institution, per section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as determined by the US Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service
 - **For-profit Child Care Institution**—a childcare institution that does not qualify for tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code. The institution must receive subsidized childcare payments for at least 25 percent of its license capacity or enrollment (whichever is less), or at least 25 percent of its license capacity or enrollment (whichever is less) must be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Children who only participate in the at-risk after-school meals program must not be considered in determining the 25 percent calculation.
- A Head Start or Even Start program must be **licensed or license exempt** as determined by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
 - Facilities operated by a public-school district, in a public-school building, are automatically exempt when children are three years of age and older.

Eligible Age Range

- Birth through 5 years of age

Eligible Operational Time

- In conjunction with the Head Start or Even Start Program calendar

Meal Pattern Requirements

- Meals and snacks served to children age 1 through 5 must meet the requirements set forth in the **CACFP Meal Pattern for Children**. The chart specifies the required food components and portion sizes.
- Meals and snacks served to infants, children age birth through 11 months, must meet the requirements set forth in the **CACFP Infant Meal Pattern**. The chart specifies the required food components and portion sizes.

Recordkeeping Requirements

- Annual CACFP Application
- CACFP Annual Enrollment Forms for all participating children
- Master List of Enrolled Children for Head Start or Even Start (NOTE: Household Eligibility Applications are not required for Head Start or Even Start programs. All children are eligible for free reimbursement.)
- Attendance records
- Dated menus listing the food items served for each meal and snack
- Accurate meal count records
- Receipts and invoices
- Bank statements, cancelled checks and cost allocation plans, as applicable
- Record of annual civil rights training and Record of annual CACFP training
- Medical Exception Statements, as applicable
- Infant Formula/Food Waiver Notifications, as applicable
- Food vendor contracts, as applicable.

Reimbursement

- Head Start and Even Start Programs can be **reimbursed for up to three meal services per child per day**. The combination of allowable meal services includes two meals (breakfast, lunch, supper) and one snack or one meal and two snacks.
- The amount of reimbursement an institution is eligible for depends on the number of meals served to children.
- **All children are reimbursed at the free rate.**
- Head Start and Even Start Programs **may not profit from CACFP**. Institutions must operate a nonprofit food service program, which means that all reimbursement received for food service is restricted and used only for allowable food program costs. Any reimbursement in excess of food program expenses must be used to maintain, expand, or improve the institution's nonprofit food service program.
- Meals and snacks may not be sent home with the child. Meals and snacks must be consumed while the child is at the facility.

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