



Child Care and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) represents a major step forward in our nation's effort to provide all children with healthy food and increase opportunities for physical activity in child care. More than 3.2 million children participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and more than 3.5 million attend a child care facility or in-home daycare. With more than 24 percent of children ages 2-5 already overweight or obese, child care facilities must ensure they provide healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity. This law makes significant improvements to child care nutrition programs to provide children with more nutritious food options and teach children healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Improves the Nutrition and Wellness in Child Care

Many child care programs have already seized the opportunity to provide healthier foods and have implemented initiatives that encourage healthy eating and physical activity. Still, there is room for improvement. Through concerted and coordinated efforts at the federal, state, and local levels, today's early learning settings can support healthy weight through the development of good habits for nutrition, physical activity, and screen time.

The HHFKA provides opportunities for child care facilities that participate in the CACFP to continue to improve nutrition and wellness for participants. The law:

- Requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to review and update nutrition standards and meal costs for the CACFP program to be consistent with current practices and nutritional science. USDA is expected to issue a proposed rule in the Summer of 2012 and publish a final rule in the Fall of 2013;
- Requires USDA to update the CACFP program purpose statement to include nutrition and wellness and to encourage physical activity and limit screen time;
- Requires water be available at CACFP sites;
 - USDA Guidance available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/Regs-Policy/policymemo/2011/CACFP-20-2011.pdf>
- Requires fat-free or low-fat milk to be served to CACFP participants over the age of two years, as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans;
 - USDA guidance available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/Regs-Policy/policymemo/2011/CACFP-21-2011.pdf>
- Requires USDA, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to publish a guidance handbook for improving nutrition and wellness in CACFP sites by January 1, 2012.

Strengthens Child Care Licensing Standards

Each state creates and enforces its own child care licensing standards, as well as other program standards for center-based and family child care homes; however, research has shown that state licensing requirements for child care centers and family child care homes have few regulations related to healthy eating, physical activity, and screen time.

The HHFKA requires USDA, in coordination with HHS, to encourage respective state entities to include nutrition and wellness criteria in child care licensing standards. USDA, HHS Child Care Bureau, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are now working to develop and implement an action plan.

Improves Availability of Information on Nutrition and Wellness in CACFP

Leaders in children's health are constantly looking for ways to increase the knowledge base to move the field forward. Innovative research is one of the primary means of achieving this goal. Conducting research studies in child care settings will help to identify promising policies and practices for obesity prevention as well as pinpoint research gaps, which will enable researchers to refocus their work to better the field.

The HHFKA requires USDA, in coordination with HHS, to conduct a study of the nutrition quality and wellness of CACFP sites. USDA must contract for the study within three years of enactment. USDA has indicated that it expects to issue a Request for Proposals for evaluation of projects in the Fall of 2012 and award an evaluation contract by December of 2013.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Weber with Nemours at 202.649.4416 or jweber@nemours.org or Arianne Corbett with the Center for Science in the Public Interest at 202.777.8358 or acorbett@cspinet.org.