



The Child and Adult Care Food Program in Milwaukee County

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The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal entitlement program that reimburses care providers for serving nutritious meals and snacks to children and adults in their care. The CACFP is used in five care settings: family home daycare centers, group childcare centers (including Head Start sites), after school programs, emergency shelters, and adult daycare centers.

During the fall of 2003, the Hunger Task Force conducted an assessment of the CACFP in Milwaukee County. Anecdotal evidence had suggested that the CACFP was greatly underutilized in Milwaukee County and that CACFP participation was decreasing. Full implementation of the CACFP could lead to a decrease in the prevalence of hunger affecting the nearly 16,000 children under age 5 living in poverty in Milwaukee County. A comprehensive assessment of CACFP use in Milwaukee County would inform and direct Hunger Task Force's advocacy and outreach work related to this important child nutrition program, which, when well-utilized can effectively plug gaps in our

food system not covered by other federal nutrition programs.

Hunger Task Force's assessment study consisted of:

1. A survey project of CACFP participants in family home daycare and group childcare center settings. Surveys were sent to 1,255 family



home daycare providers and 61 group childcare centers. 28.1% of family home daycare providers and 54.1% of group childcare center providers responded to our survey.

2. Conducting over 40 interviews with program participants and administrators from all five program settings.

3. A mapping project depicting participating CACFP family home daycare centers and group childcare centers.

Program-wide findings from this assessment project include:

- Overall, CACFP providers have positive feelings

about their participation in the program. This sentiment was strongest among family home daycare providers. Participating care providers seem to have positive feelings towards CACFP participation because of the program benefits.

- The CACFP is an important financial and informational resource for all types of care providers. Program stakeholders find that the benefits of participation in the program outweigh the negatives.

- A program's participation in the CACFP helps to strengthen the quality of care provided. This is especially important for low-income children.

- Children benefit from the CACFP because they are able to receive nutritious meals and develop life-long healthy eating habits.

- The CACFP has become expensive to operate as increasing administrative and reporting requirements have not been matched by a proportional increase in the reimbursement rate. Participating programs find the annual contract renewal process especially burdensome.

- There is a need for more outreach to educate and attract non-participating care providers to the CACFP.

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The Role of the Media in Childhood Obesity

The Kaiser Family Foundation has released a report reviewing more than 40 studies on the role of media in childhood obesity, and the American Public Health Association (APHA) has released a resolution on food marketing directed at children. Scientific research shows that children who spend the most time with media are more likely to be overweight. However, research does not show that time spent with media takes the place of time spent in physical activity. One possible explanation for the relationship between media use and obesity is the amount of food related advertising and marketing to children.

Television is the largest source of media messages about food to children, especially younger children. The average child or adolescent watches an average of three hours of television per day and may view as many as 40,000 commercials each year. Because low income children of all ethnic groups watch more television than middle and upper income white children, they are exposed to more food ads.

The food and beverage industry targets children and adolescents in a number of ways, including television ads, in-school marketing, and toys and products with brand logos. In-school commercial activities include food sold in vending machines, fast food and fund raisers; direct advertising in schools; and indirect advertising, such as corporate sponsorship of school activities.



Parents may not be aware that the ads their kids are watching may have as much effect on their health as the time spent being sedentary.

The majority of television ads aimed at children are for cereal, candy, soda and fast food. Many advertising and marketing campaigns use movie and TV characters to promote products. Research has shown that exposure to food ads does affect children's food choices and requests for products at the supermarket, as many parents will confirm.

Most children under age 6 cannot tell the difference between the TV program and the commercials, and most children under age 8 don't understand that advertising is intended to sell a product. Studies with 4th and 5th grade children have found that children who watched more television were less able to correctly identify the healthier food in a pair – choosing frosted flakes instead of corn flakes, for example.

The Kaiser study lists several policy options that could be considered to reduce the role media plays in childhood obesity:

1. Reduce or regulate food ads targeted to children.
2. Expand public education campaigns to promote healthy eating and exercise. Using the same strategies that work for promoting less healthy foods, promote healthy eating and physical activity.
3. Support interventions to reduce the amount of time children spend with media. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV or videos for children younger than 2, and suggests limiting older children's media time to 1-2 hours of quality programming per day. Other experts recommend substituting active play for screen time, and teaching kids how to identify and evaluate the food ads they see.

The APHA believes children are a vulnerable group that should be protected from commercial influences that may adversely

affect weight status and subsequent health problems. The APHA encourages the federal government, states, school districts, and other agencies to:

1. Designate schools as advertising-free zones.
2. Develop school policies that promote a healthful eating environment.
3. Eliminate television food advertising aimed at young children.
4. Develop guidelines for responsible food advertising
5. Encourage government recommendations to address this issue.
6. Study the effects of food advertising and marketing on health behaviors of children and adolescents.
7. Teach children, adolescents and their parents consumer media literacy.

How can educators use this information? The Walk, Dance, Play campaign gives you an opportunity to help families identify ways they can be more active together. Suggest turning off the TV and substituting 30 minutes of activity. Parents may not be aware that the ads their kids are watching may have as much effect on their health as the time spent being sedentary.

For full text of the Kaiser report, including references, go to: <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7030.cfm>. For full text of the APHA report, see: <http://www.apha.org/legislative/policy/2003/2003-017.pdf>

Wisconsin Food Security Project Website

The Wisconsin Food Security Project provides up-to-date county and state-level information about food security, economic well-being, and the availability and use of programs to increase access to affordable and nutritious foods. Using this website, users can create customized food security profiles for any county in Wisconsin. Check out the website at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/cfs/index.cfm> or contact Kadi Row for more information, kadi.row@ces.uwex.edu.

Small Changes That Make a Difference

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal summarizes recent research and gives providers more recommendations for helping parents help kids to grow up healthy.

It may be hard to believe health decisions parents make for a 5-year-old today will still count when the child turns 50. Childhood is the only window of opportunity to influence some aspects of adult health. Bone and tooth strength is almost entirely determined by the end of adolescence, which is why calcium intake and exercise are so important for kids and teens. If obesity occurs in childhood, when the number and size of fat cells is determined, a child may end up with more fat cells for the rest of their life than they would have had if they had stayed thin. Eating behavior and food preferences are also determined during childhood and adolescence.

Providers can encourage parents that a series of small, subtle changes in the way we raise our children can translate into major health advantages in adulthood. Here is a list of suggestions, drawn from recent research in a number of fields, to improve the entire family's health, now and in the future.

Reduce the juice. While a glass of orange juice with breakfast is fine, experts are concerned that kids and teens are making juice their preferred beverage throughout the day. Parents should encourage kids to drink water and low-fat milk.

Sit down to a family meal. Kids who eat an evening meal with their parents consume more fruits, vegetables and dairy foods, and are less likely to skip breakfast, than kids who don't eat with their parents, according to a May report in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. When parents are present at the table, the meal is more likely to be healthful and the kids are more likely to eat it.

Encourage sporting friendships. Active kids are more likely to become active adults. When it comes to healthy behaviors, adults often forget the power of peers. A recent study from Purdue found that the most active kids are those who have a close friend participating in the same activity. The Bogalusa Heart Study has shown that the biggest drop in activity levels occurs as kids move from middle school to high school. Parents can encourage kids to try an activity that they can enjoy throughout their lives without needing to belong to a team, and suggest that they get a friend involved, too.

Don't mix food and TV. Television's real harm may be its impact on kids' eating habits. Turning off the TV doesn't always increase kids' physical activity, but it does reduce the time they spend eating in front of the TV and reduces the amount of high-fat foods they eat.

Keep offering rejected foods. If kids say they don't like a new food, wait a

week or so and serve it again. Keep a low-key approach; when kids are cajoled or rewarded for trying new foods, they often develop an aversion to foods they associate with parental control.

Control the food in the house, not the kids. Parents should provide healthy food, put nutritious meals on the table, and keep less healthy foods out of the house. Once the shopping and cooking are done, let the kids decide how much and what they will eat. The biggest problem comes when parents allow foods like soda and snack foods into the house and tell kids they can't have them.

Set the example. At every age of a child's development, a parent's example is key in influencing behavior. When a child refuses a new food, the best response is "that's ok, I'll eat it." What parents don't eat is just as important. A Penn State study found that girls were more likely to be picky eaters if their mothers didn't eat a variety of vegetables. Kids are highly aware of their parents' food preferences. Parents set an example for kids' activity habits, too. Kids with active parents were more likely to be active themselves, but kids were also more active when parents provided support – like rides to practices, or watching games.

Adapted from "A Longer Life" by Tara Parker-Pope, *Wall Street Journal*, December 9, 2003.

CACFP in Milwaukee County (continued from page 1)

▪ The age limit for serving meals (12 years) is a problem for after-school programs and emergency shelters serving Milwaukee County.

Based upon the findings of our assessment study, Hunger Task Force has made a variety of program simplification, outreach, policy and administrative recommendations to improve and expand CACFP utilization in Milwaukee County.

First, we believe CACFP administration can be streamlined and simplified through technological improvements. Initial investments in technological infrastructure will lead to long-term savings. Second, we think that DPI and sponsoring organizations should work with the community organizations to conduct follow-up outreach with non-participating care providers. Finally, we support changes in CACFP eligibility regulations in order to

allow after-school programs and emergency shelters to claim reimbursements for meals served to children through age 18.

For more information about Hunger Task Force, see their website: www.hungertaskforce.org

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Our Mission

The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network facilitates collaborative planning of nutrition education programs at the state and local levels. We promote healthful and enjoyable eating so that Wisconsin's low income individuals and families receive consistent, positive, relevant, accurate, and effective nutrition messages.

Nutri-Net News is published quarterly. It is available on the web or by mail.

Walk Dance Play in 2004—What's next in 2005?

The *Walk Dance Play ...Be Active Every Day* Campaign 2004 is officially in progress. There are many new materials this year—two displays, lesson plans, hand-outs, evaluation forms, and menu backs. The materials are arranged by caregiver audience—caregivers of infants and preschoolers, caregivers of school age children, and older adult caregivers — to make it easy to find and determine what to use with each group. A number of these new materials are available in Spanish. We encourage you to share your successes and any adaptations you make of the materials or displays by submitting them to the “Idea Sharing” section of our website.

The goal of the 2004 campaign is to promote regular physical activity and healthy eating habits to food stamp eligible parents, grandparents and guardians of children. Campaign materials urge parents, grandparents and guardians to engage in 60 minutes of physical activity each day, for their own health and to become role models for children who are always watching. Often adults and children can become active together, providing a fun way to strengthen family relationships. Besides modeling, another way for adults to help children become active is to encourage them to participate in activities that are safe and appropriate for their age.

With escalating rates of obesity and physical inactivity of children, the public's attention is focusing on ways to help schools and families across the country become more active and improve their eating habits. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends that children should accumulate at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of age appropriate physical activity on all or most days of the week. *Walk, Dance, Play... Be Active Every Day* encourages families to participate in a variety of age appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, and fitness benefits for all members.



Network Update

Campaign 2005 is around the corner. A Planning Committee has been identified and has chosen “To promote regular physical activity and healthy eating habits to food stamp eligible individuals and families” as the 2005 goal. The committee felt it was important to have activities for older adults, families with children, pregnant women, adults (age 18-64), youth (age 12-17), and youth (age 5-11). The committee felt the message should be the same for all age groups, but with appropriate materials identified and adapted for each of the age groups. This would reinforce the message and provide

a greater impact when several members of a family receive the same message from several community partners.

Selecting a slogan for Campaign 2005 is crucial. The committee invites suggestions from all our readers. The slogan should be active, not boring, and convey the idea that physical activity is fun. It is preferable that it includes both nutrition and physical activity ideas. If you would like to contribute ideas and/or slogan suggestions, please contact one of the Planning Committee members. The Network will use existing materials whenever possible, so we also welcome your recommendations for suitable educational materials. The committee will consider all suggestions for slogans and materials.

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