

The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act of 2025

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal & Tina Smith U.S. Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA)

Working families' budgets are getting crunched at the grocery store. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) ensures children in care settings are fed healthy meals throughout the day. On any given day, the program serves approximately 4.6 million American children nutritious meals. However, outdated program rules are holding back participation and holding back providers from serving needed food to children in their care. At present, CACFP providers can only serve two meals and a snack to children per day. Two meals and a snack is simply not enough for the child of working parents who must leave them in child care for full day. Additionally, burdensome paperwork holds back providers, preventing participation and saddling participating organizations with paperwork. And due to the misalignment of reimbursement rate increases, many child care homes are struggling to afford participation in CACFP.

Children in care centers should be provided every opportunity for a healthy start. The research is clear, higher meal frequency is directly related to a higher quality diet. This is true for adults and children—both of which participate in CACFP. Streamlining eligibility criteria for some providers and reducing paperwork will attract more child care centers to the program, meaning more working families will have access to nutritious meals for their children.

The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act

The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act would make several improvements to CACFP to make it work better for children, families, and child care centers. Specifically, this bill would:

- Allow care providers to serve an additional meal or snack to children in their care for more than eight hours;
- Order USDA to study the impact of providing an additional meal on children, families, the viability of child care and afterschool programs, and the local economy;
- Align CACFP reimbursement rate increases for child care homes to the consumer price index for food away from home to better track with increasing prices and create parity within the program;
- Require USDA to conduct a review of the serious deficiency process, which identifies care providers that are out of compliance with CACFP rules;
- Streamline eligibility criteria for private care providers to allow them to certify on an annual basis instead of monthly; and
- Establish an advisory committee on paperwork reduction to reduce unnecessary or duplicative paperwork.



119th Cosponsors

This bill is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Tina Smith (D-MI), Peter Welch (D-VT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and U.S. Representatives Linda Sánchez (D-CA), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Joaquin Castro (D-TX), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Andrea Salinas (D-OR), Dina Titus (D-NV), and John Mannion (D-NY).

119th Supporting Organizations

National Organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics and YMCA of the USA, Advocates for Better Children's Diets, All Our Kin, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), American Heart Association, CACFP National Professional Association, CACFP Roundtable, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Child Care Aware of America, Child Welfare League of America, Coalition on Human Needs, Community Change Action, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces, Early Care and Education Consortium, Early Learning Ventures, Family Values @ Work, First Children's Finance, First Five Years Fund, First Focus Campaign for Children, Food Research and Action Center, Home Grown, KinderCare Learning Companies, Main Street Alliance, National Adult Day Services Association, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, National Association for Family Child Care, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National CACFP Association, National CACFP Forum, National Education Association, National Farm to School Network, National Head Start Association, National Indian Child Care Association, National Women's Law Center, ParentChild+, Partnership for a Healthier America, Save the Children, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

State and Local Organizations

Arkansas

Arkansas Family Child Care Association Northwest Arkansas Family Child Care Association OPERATION KIDS White River Planning & Development District

California

4Cs Sonoma County Bay Area Professional Family Child Care Network Building Better Communities Foundation California Child Care Resource and Referral Network Child Development - Pomona Unified School District CocoKids Family Resource Center FRAMAX

New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children

New York

Alliance for Quality Education Empire State Campaign for Child Care

Ohio

Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children



Human Response Network Neighborhood House Association Options for Learning PEACH Thriving Families California

Colorado

Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children

Connecticut

Connecticut Voices for Children Hartford Family Child Care Educators Community

District of Columbia DC Family Child Care Association

Florida Florida Head Start Association

Georgia Quality Care for Children

Maine Family Child Care Association of Maine

Maryland Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children Maryland Family Network Maryland State Family Child Care Association

Massachusetts Clarendon Early Education Services

Montana Montana Association for the Education of Young Children Montana Family Childcare Network

Oregon

Alliance for Equity in Montessori Education Children's Institute NeighborImpact Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children Pennsylvania Head Start Association Quality Influential Professionals (QIP) The Kimble Group, LLC

Tennessee

AWAKE Tennessee Chambliss Center for Children Nashville Area Association for the Education of Young Children Nashville Early Childhood Coalition Raphah Institute St. Mary Villa, Inc. The Urban Child Institute Youth Encouragement Services, Inc.

Texas ADFW Family Child Care Network El Paso Human Services, Inc.

Utah

Utah Association for the Education of Young Children

Vermont Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children

Virginia Voices for Virginia's Children



Wisconsin

Green County Child Care Network Wisconsin Early Childhood Association Wisconsin Family Child Care Association