



Association of State Public Health Nutritionists

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Ms. Cochran and Ms. Farmer:

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Resource Workgroup within the National Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Council of the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN*) is writing to express concern about the grain-based dessert recipes posted on the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) [Child Care Recipes for Centers](#) website.

The CACFP Resource Workgroup is made up of nutrition experts from across the country funded by, or partnering with, the CACFP. We recommend eliminating the 'Desserts' subgroup and replacing with a vegetable and fruit focused 'Snack' subgroup, to ensure all recipes meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

The Child Nutrition Recipe Box is an excellent, online resource scaled specifically for childcare settings to help menu planners find creditable recipes to serve their participants. The website currently states "*these recipes provide childcare centers with delicious new dishes that meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. These kid-friendly recipes are standardized to provide updated crediting information for easy menu planning.*" While many of the posted recipes meet meal pattern requirements, some do not, in particular the grain-based desserts. The current statement is misleading and could result in findings for serving non-creditable food items for participating CACFP childcare providers.

The 2017 CACFP meal pattern updates were implemented to help safeguard the health of children early in their lives. The updates reflect the most current nutrition research and recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the National Academy of Medicine to help increase consumption of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain and reduce the consumption of food items high in added sugars and saturated fats. Grain-based desserts no longer count towards the grain component of a reimbursable meal or snack and non-creditable foods cannot be purchased with CACFP reimbursement funds.

Including dessert recipes on this otherwise informative website sends a mixed message to CACFP childcare providers. Instead of promoting non-creditable cakes, cookies and other sweet treats, recipes that focus on vegetables, fruits, and whole grains should be highlighted and encouraged, especially for inclusion at snack time. Under the Accompaniments subgroup, for example, several vegetable and fruit based snack options are buried in sauces. These colorful and enticing recipes for [Fruit Salsa](#), [Cran-Orange Relish](#) and [Pico de Gallo](#) could be moved to a Snack subgroup and other recipes such as [Broccoli Bites](#), [Black Bean Hummus](#), [Spring Rolls](#) could be listed under the Vegetable and Snack subgroups to help menu planners build healthier, kid-approved snack menus.

Encouraging providers to serve healthier meals and snacks helps children build healthy food preferences and sends a more accurate and consistent message to childcare providers.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



Diane Golzynski, PhD, RD
ASPHN President



Megan Hlavacek, MS, RDN, LN, CLC
National Fruit & Vegetable Nutrition Council Chair

CC: Karen Probert, MS, RDN, ASPHN Executive Director
Michelle Futrell, MS, RDN, LDN, ASPHN Consultant

Links:

USDA Nutrient Standards for the Child and Adult Care Meal Pattern
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

The Institute for Child Nutrition Child Nutrition Recipe Box
<https://theicn.org/cnr/recipes-for-child-care/child-care-recipes-for-centers-2/>

*Founded in 1952, ASPHN is a non-profit membership organization that provides state and national leadership on food and nutrition policy, programs and services aimed at improving the health of our population. ASPHN's membership is composed of more than 500 public health nutritionists located throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories. ASPHN's vision is "healthy eating and active living for everyone." ASPHN is an affiliate of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. ASPHN is comprised of registered dietitians, nutritionists, and other health professionals who are closely involved in the implementation of federal nutrition programs. More information about ASPHN members and resources is available on the web at www.asphn.org and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/asphn.