

About Team Nutrition

What Is Team Nutrition?

Team Nutrition is an initiative of the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service that supports national efforts to promote lifelong healthy food choices and physical activity by improving the nutrition practices of the Child Nutrition Programs. We provide resources to schools, child care, day care, afterschool, and summer meals sites that participate in these programs.

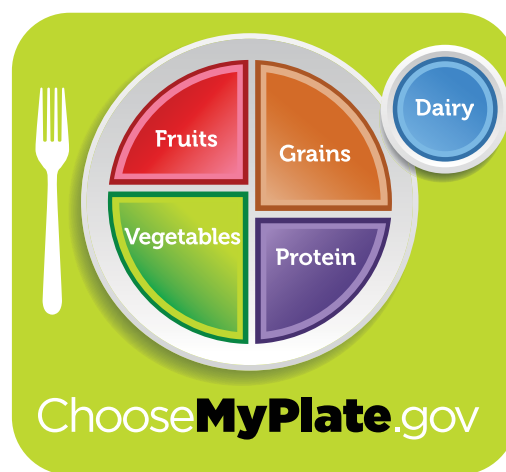
What Strategies Does Team Nutrition Use To Change Behavior?

Team Nutrition uses three strategies to change behavior:

1. Provide training and technical assistance to child nutrition professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that appeal to children.
2. Increase nutrition education through multiple communication channels to help children have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to make healthy food and physical activity choices as part of a healthy lifestyle.
3. Build support for healthy school and child care environments that encourage nutritious food choices and physically active lifestyles.

Team Nutrition Messages

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are the basis of Federal nutrition policy, education, outreach, and food assistance provided through the Child Nutrition Programs. The Team Nutrition initiative helps schools, child care settings, summer meal sites, parents/caregivers, and children put the Dietary Guidelines for Americans into action through training, technical assistance, and nutrition education.



The MyPlate icon uses a familiar image—a place setting for a meal—to prompt consumers to build a healthy plate at mealtime. MyPlate also illustrates the five food groups, reminding everyone that these foods are the building blocks of a healthy diet. Team Nutrition helps communicate MyPlate messages to children and their caregivers through a variety of innovative delivery methods including hands-on activities, electronic games, songs, videos, lessons, stories, events, tweets, graphics, and gardens.

Introduction

Every day, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves millions of infants, children, and adults across the United States. The CACFP provides a great opportunity to introduce infants and children to healthy eating habits. Good nutrition is important at every age, but is critical for the growth and development that occurs during a baby's first year.

How To Use This Guide

This guide will help child care providers understand the CACFP meal pattern requirements that were published in April of 2016, with an implementation date of October 1, 2017. It also includes best practices for feeding babies in a way that supports their growth and development. All child care centers and family child care homes that participate in the CACFP must offer meals to all infants in their care. This guide can help you do that.

Use this guide to answer questions you have about what to feed babies and how to offer meals that are reimbursable in the CACFP. Before reading this guide, take the Feeding Infants pre-test in **Appendix H** on **page 176**. Then, after reading the guide, take the test again to see how much you've learned.

Note

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this guide. The guidelines provided align with CACFP policy memorandums as well as best feeding practices for babies. Several reviewers, including pediatricians, sponsoring organizations, State agencies, and Federal staff with expertise in the CACFP and infant nutrition provided

feedback. Additionally, interviews were held with center-based and home-based child care providers to gather feedback from our target audience.

While this guide provides information on feeding infants within the CACFP, it does not include all of the information you may need when providing a healthy feeding environment for each individual baby in your care. For this reason, always talk with each baby's parents about their baby's usual eating habits.

If you are interested in reviewing the CACFP policy memorandums, they can be found online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/policy>.



Use this guide to answer questions you have about what to feed babies.



Handouts are included within the chapters of this guide. These can be used as quick reminders posted at your child care site. Or, you may wish to share them with parents as part of a conversation on what their baby is eating at child care.


The Importance of Partnering With Parents

Parents give you important information to help you care for their babies. Communicating with parents will help you know when to give certain foods to a baby and which foods to avoid. Each baby in your care has his or her own eating abilities. This is because babies grow and develop at different rates. You can make sure the babies are getting the best care possible by speaking with parents regularly and working together as a team.



Talk to parents icon

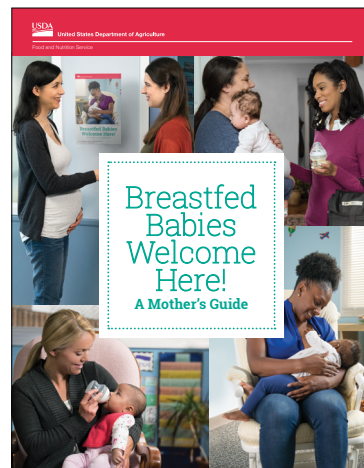
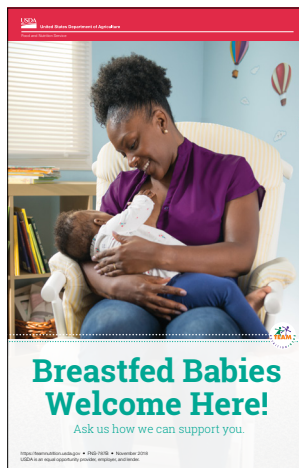
This icon is included throughout this guide to indicate different opportunities for you to interact with parents. Pause when you see this icon to discover new ways to connect with the families in your child care site.

There are several parent handouts in this guide that you can use to communicate with parents on a variety of topics. In the **Table of Contents**, look for the handout icon  to quickly find those resources. All of the parent handouts have a title that starts with "**For Parents**" to make it clear which handouts are specifically designed for child care providers to share with parents.

In developing this guide, USDA conducted formative research to make sure the materials were clear and helpful for child care providers, child care directors, expecting mothers, and current mothers. Both providers and mothers shared that communicating with each other was important to them, but a challenge. As a result, USDA has added an entire chapter to this guide dedicated to communicating with parents (see **Chapter 12: Partnering With Families on page 129**). In the chapter, you will find tips and sample scenarios to make talking to parents easier.



USDA



Visit the USDA Team Nutrition website for our "Breastfed Babies Welcome Here!" materials.