

Child Nutrition Programs: Growing Healthy Children and Healthy Communities



WHAT IS CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION (CNR)?

CNR is a broad piece of legislation that includes School Meals, WIC, Farm to School, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the Summer Food Service Program. These programs employ many Academy members who are leaders in these areas and impact millions of children's diets on a daily basis. Unfortunately, the diets of most children continue to fall far short of recommendations for good health.

These Child Nutrition Programs provide an infrastructure that can be mobilized to improve children's diets and health on a national scale while also improving **school attendance, test scores and educational attainment**.

There is evidence of social and economic benefits of the Child Nutrition Programs that extend into local communities.

These include improvements in the diet of other family members, healthier options in the grocery store, economic stimulus to communities, stable customers for American agriculture, job creation and poverty reduction.³

HOW CAN YOU STRENGTHEN THESE IMPORTANT PROGRAMS?

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics convened a work group of 11 experts in child nutrition programs to determine the best path forward for these important child nutrition programs.

Nutrition Education

- Assure that strong, comprehensive nutrition education is included in the authorizations for all Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Meals Program, the Child and Adult Care programs for day care and after school settings, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Farm to School and other initiatives for children.

Problem:

The diets of most children continue to fall far short of recommendations for good health.

More than one in five American households and one out of every ten children still experience food insecurity¹

Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years.²

Solution:

Child Nutrition Programs

These programs are administered in over 100,000 of America's public, private and parochial schools, 42,000 community food sites, 57,000 child care centers, 122,000 home day care sites and over 1,900 local WIC agencies in 10,000 WIC clinic sites in low-income community settings.⁴

1. US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Key Statistics and Graphics. www.ers.usda.gov. Accessed Jan. 2015.
2. National Center for Health Statistics. Health, United States, 2011: *With Special Features on Socioeconomic Status and Health*. Hyattsville, MD; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2012.
3. IOM (Institute of Medicine). (2012). *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
4. Congressional Research Service. (2014). *School Meals Programs and Other USDA Child Nutrition Programs: A Primer*.

- Provide adequate funds to help all states build a state-level leadership infrastructure for comprehensive nutrition education in which every state with an approved nutrition education plan would promote, coordinate and provide nutrition education and leadership training in all Child Nutrition Programs.
- Continue to support WIC Nutrition Education, including breast-feeding support, as a vital component to early health and development of the child and continuing care of the mother.
- Continue to support research that provides evidence-based improvements for comprehensive, nationwide nutrition education approaches that foster healthy behavior, educational attainment and lifelong health for all children.

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

- Maintain current evidenced-based meal and nutrition standards to help assure the health of American children.
- Support our Academy school nutrition members who are leading the way in implementing improvements to school meals.
- Provide adequate funding for schools to purchase healthy, quality foods for school meals and snacks.
- Provide adequate funding to USDA to provide training and technical assistance, including the standards of the school nutrition profession and details of the skills necessary to run a successful program.
- Increase funding mechanisms for updated infrastructure and equipment to school kitchens.
- Require USDA to monitor the paid meal pricing requirement and student participation in the programs and report back to Congress, to ensure that all families can afford healthy school meals.
- Ensure that children have adequate nutrition in special populations and settings, such as Residential Child Care Institutions, that supply the total daily dietary requirements for youth and adolescents, recognizing that most juvenile facilities, or those feeding juveniles, serve approximately 3000 to 3500 calories per day in three meals and a snack to meet the nutritional needs and activity levels of these children in their rehabilitation process.

The Summer Food Service Program

- Improve access to and participation in the Summer Food Service Program.

The Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- Support nutrition and breastfeeding counseling as successful cost-effective healthcare services.
- Support the evidence-based, prescriptive WIC food package.
- Continue to support programmatic efficiencies already in place.
- Examine new policy supports that would optimize a woman's health before and between pregnancies.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- Support adequate funding for CACFP nutrition and wellness education and other training efforts led by qualified staff.
- Provide adequate reimbursement to implement the new proposed improved meal patterns and nutrition standards.
- Streamline access to healthy meals for young children in child care, such as those identified in the CACFP Paperwork Reduction Report Recommendations.

The Farm to School Grant Program

- Provide funding and support for expansion of the grant program to include preschool, summer, afterschool and tribal communities.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

- Continue to support the successful Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for elementary students from predominantly economically disadvantaged families to support a reduction in chronic disease through improved dietary quality.

Contact Jennifer Folliard, jfolliard@eatright.org to get a copy of the entire document, or with any questions.
