USDA

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Management Improvement Guidance

Child Care Center Sponsors and Independent Centers

CACFP

Building for the Future

Acknowledgments

We would like to express appreciation for the contributions and support of the following individuals who served on the Child and Adult Care Food Program Initiative Task Force and developed this guidance material.

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Note: This document is considered a working document and we would appreciate any comments and suggestions to improve its effectiveness.

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PREFACE

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Initiative Task Force (Task Force) convened in March 1995 to assist the Department in:

- improving program integrity;

- streamlining the operations of CACFP in an attempt to make the program easier to operate at the State and local levels; and

- maintaining a program which is fully open to all well-managed sponsoring organizations and the children they serve.

This initiative was a collaborative State and Federal endeavor. The Task Force consists of 14 State agency and Food and Nutrition Service representatives.

The Task Force provided assistance to the Department in the areas of program approval, training and operations, and oversight of the Program. We believe that the use of this guidance along with the prototype monitoring instruments at both the sponsor and day care home levels is critical to Program improvement.

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Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Management Improvement Guidance

Overview

The CACFP Management Improvement Guidance includes:

- Standards for Sponsors of Centers,
- Standards for Independent Centers,
- Standards for Child Care Centers, and
- Prototype Review Forms.

Each of these tools is interrelated to ensure sound Program management at both the administrative and operational levels of Program operations. In the complete cycle of Program management, the tools provide indicators of Program performance, and are intended to enable the user to target resources and technical assistance for strengthening Program management. Though these components are interrelated, each has a designated purpose in Program operations.

Administrative Standards

Both sponsoring organizations of child care centers and independent centers have an oversight responsibility to ensure compliance with Program requirements. The **Standards for Sponsors of Centers** and the **Standards for Independent Centers** are directed to the administrative level of Program operations.

The **Standards for Sponsors of Centers** is subdivided into three key Programmatic areas. They are:

- Organizational Management,
- Financial Management, and
- Oversight of Center Operations.

The **Standards for Independent Centers** is subdivided into three key Programmatic areas. They are:

- Organizational Management,
- Financial Management, and
- Program Operations.

Overview

These standards are resources to improve the quality of meal service in centers, and the accountability of funds to support the Program. The Guidance provides tools for State agencies, sponsors, and independent centers to use along with the regulations to evaluate ongoing operations, improve performance and ensure that only well-qualified potential participants are approved. The Guidance may also be used for self-evaluation of an on-going operation or for those interested in applying for the Program.

Operational Standards

The **Standards for Child Care Centers** was developed in recognition that successful center operations are dependent on the effective performance of center staff. Program responsibilities for center staff fall under three broad standards. They are:

- Administration and Operations,
- Meal Service and Nutrition, and
- Health, Safety and Well-Being.

The **Standards for Child Care Centers** identifies the basic skills and qualifications to be mastered by Program operators to achieve competencies necessary to operate successful Programs and meet Program performance requirements. The Guidance identifies key standards that Program operators are expected to meet. It is formatted as an assessment checklist to be used by sponsors or independent centers to determine how well the Program is being operated. The Guidance may also be used by both the sponsor and independent center to determine training needs.

Prototype Review Forms

Two prototype review forms, the Center Administrative Review Form and the Child Care Center Review Form, were developed by the Task Force. The Center Administrative Review Form is designed to be used by the State agency for oversight of the administrative functions performed by either the sponsoring organization or the independent center. The Child Care Center Review Form is designed to be used by both the State agency and the child care center sponsoring organization in monitoring the operational functions of the child care centers.

Overview

PART I. Administrative Standards for Center Sponsors

Introduction

Goal: To improve the accountability and quality of meals served in child care centers.

Outcomes Desired:
- Improve the quality of meal service and the accountability of funds to support the Program.
- Increase the number of tools available to State agencies and sponsors to improve performance.
- Improve the ability of State agencies and sponsors to monitor performance and oversee delivery of CACFP in child care centers.
- Prevent serious problems in Program operation by sponsors and child care centers.

Purpose and Use

The **Standards for Sponsors of Centers** was developed as a resource to improve accountability and the quality of meals served in child care centers. It will also help prevent serious problems in Program operations at both the sponsor and center levels. The Guidance provides tools for State agencies and sponsors to use in conjunction with the regulations to improve performance of existing sponsors and to ensure that only well-qualified sponsors are initially approved. The purpose of the Guidance is to set out in broad terms, goals, desired outcomes and standards. When developing the tools, an instrument was created that would provide State agencies with administrative flexibility as differences in State agency operations and policy implementation require State agencies to tailor their own instruments. To use this instrument effectively, State agencies must define terms, make judgment calls and apply the standards to a degree determined based on the size of the sponsor.

Overview

The instrument, defined by four columns, actually serves several purposes. It establishes:

     *   performance standards;

     *   approval/continuing participation criteria;

     *   performance measures; and,

     *   a performance improvement plan.

Standards (Column 1)	To allow sponsoring organizations and State agencies to assess performance, standards have been established in three key Programmatic areas. These are: organizational management, financial management, and oversight of center operations. The standards define expected performance Stated in terms of how a sponsor should operate the Program. Whenever possible, measurements have been included to determine if the sponsor meets the standard; and performance improvement plans are provided to make corrections where problems are identified. The standards are listed in Column 1 of the instrument.
Approval/ Continuing Participation Criteria (Column 2)	The approval/continuing participation criteria for each key Programmatic area are listed in Column 2. They may be used by a potential sponsoring organization and the State agency to determine if the staff of the organization has the skills and qualifications to become a successful sponsor. These approval/continuing participation criteria could be used to deny potential sponsoring organizations.
Performance Measures (Column 3)	Column 3 addresses measurement. Measurement is, in fact, the key to this instrument. Wherever possible, an outcome-based measurement has been included for each function of each performance standard. There are frequently several measurements for each standard or function but no pass/fail levels. The sponsor or the State agency would select all or just a few measurements and develop a custom instrument based on their needs. This does not have to become a labor/paper-intensive exercise. Pass/fail levels for the measurements were not included because a different use for the instrument was envisioned. It is intended to be used on an ongoing basis (e.g., annually) to measure effectiveness of the sponsor or State agency management, training, monitoring and technical assistance, not for a one-time snapshot of the sponsor's performance.
	Many of the measures allow for comparison from one assessment period to the next. State agencies should establish appropriate levels based on their experience. Eventually, a few key measurements and pass/fail levels for each standard may be established. In order to establish realistic levels of expectation, it is best to first test the standards.
Performance Improvement Plan (Column 4)	Finally, the instrument may be used to help identify corrective action strategies for each performance standard where problems are noted. The corrective action strategies listed in Column 4 are examples, not requirements. Where applicable, strategies have been identified for both the sponsoring organization, followed by those aimed at the State agency. In certain cases only one or the other is relevant. Generally, the strategies have been listed starting with the simplest. As is true throughout the rest of the Guidance, there is no implied order; sponsors and/or State agencies can select the method or methods that seem appropriate for their particular situation.

CACFP Management Improvement Guidance
Standards for Sponsors of Centers

Definitions

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Standards	**Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria**	**Performance Measures**	**Performance Improvement Plan**
Expected performance that can be measured on quantitative and qualitative levels. The standards are defined under three key programmatic areas: **1.** Organizational Management **2**. Financial Management **3.** Oversight of Center Operations	Sponsor documents and State agency verifies that: • Administrative and center staff have skills and qualifications needed to meet standards. • Sponsor has ability or has plan to show that they can meet standards and expectations.	Practical means to evaluate performance of standard in a qualitative and/or quantitative manner in order to: • determine strengths and needs of sponsor's management, and • identify areas where corrective action should be targeted.	Means to improve performance in order to meet standards, correct seriously deficient performance and/or exceed performance standard (continuous quality improvement).

Standards for Sponsors of Centers - 3 Key Programmatic Areas

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1.   ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT. Sponsor effectively manages Program to achieve desired standards and outcomes.
1.1   Governing Board. Governing board provides adequate Program oversight. (Not applicable to Proprietary Title XX centers.)
1.2   Application. Valid and complete sponsor and center applications are submitted for approval.
1.3   Training. Sponsor trains administrative and center staff to proficiently operate Program.
1.4   Monitoring. Sponsor monitors centers' compliance with Program requirements.
1.5   Staffing. Sponsor has adequate staff to operate Program.
1.6   Policies and Procedures. Sponsor has written policies and procedures for Program operations.
1.7   Civil Rights. Sponsor complies with civil rights requirements.
1.8   Recordkeeping. Sponsor has recordkeeping practices which meet Program requirements.

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2.   FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. Sponsor expends and accounts for funds in accordance with regulatory requirements and sound financial management principles.
2.1   Sponsor Budget. Sponsor plans necessary and reasonable budget.
2.2   Fiscal Responsibility. Sponsor's financial system and management controls assure fiscal responsibility.
2.3   Claims Processing. Sponsor processes claims accurately and in a timely manner.

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3.   OVERSIGHT OF CENTER OPERATIONS. Sponsor assures that child care centers accountably and appropriately operate a Program to provide nutritious meals to children.
3.1 Meal Service and Nutrition.
　　3.1.1 Meal Service. Child care center's meals meet meal pattern requirements.
　　3.1.2 Nutrition. Child care center's meal service is moving towards compliance with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid* recommendations. (Recommended)
3.2 Health, Safety and Well-Being.
　　3.2.1　Licensing/Approval. Child care centers meet licensing and/or approval requirements.
　　3.2.2 Sanitation. Child care centers practice appropriate sanitation measures.
3.3 Administration and Operations.
　　3.3.1 Civil Rights. Child care centers comply with civil rights requirements.
　　3.3.2 Recordkeeping. Child care centers complete and maintain Program records.
　　3.3.3 Claiming Meals. Child care centers claim only eligible meals.

Note: For the purpose of this instrument, the standards are broadly Stated; a sponsor must adhere to all regulatory requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 226.

Standard 1: Organizational Management: Sponsor effectively manages Program to achieve desired standards and outcomes.

1.1 **Governing Board.** Governing board provides adequate Program oversight. (Not applicable to Proprietary Title XX centers.)
1.2 **Application.** Valid and complete sponsor and center applications are submitted for approval.
1.3 **Training.** Sponsor trains administrative and center staff to proficiently operate Program.
1.4 **Monitoring.** Sponsor monitors centers' compliance with Program requirements.
1.5 **Staffing.** Sponsor has adequate staff to operate Program.
1.6 **Policies and Procedures.** Sponsor has written policies and procedures for Program operations.
1.7 **Civil Rights**. Sponsor complies with civil rights requirements.
1.8 **Recordkeeping.** Sponsor has recordkeeping practices which meet Program requirements.

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.1 Governing Board [Federal tax-exempt not-for-profit organizations] Sponsoring organization has a governing body that meets applicable Federal and State statutes and requirements. The governing board is composed primarily of members of the community and is responsible for: • policy setting, • fiscal Guidance, and • ongoing governance. It regularly reviews the organization's policies, Programs, and budgets.	Sponsor can demonstrate that it: • operates for public purposes rather than private benefit; and • has a screening system in place to scrutinize any criminal convictions of board members which may disqualify them from performing Program administrative functions. Sponsor's board: • is composed of a majority of members of the community who are not financially interested in its activities, or related to its personnel or to each other;		**Sponsor Action** Board members and/or sponsor staff attend(s) training or class on Program regulations and/or nonprofit board membership (or read relevant materials). **State Agency Action** Provides resource list to sponsors on boards (e.g., Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Exempt Organizations Handbook, National Charities Information Bureau-Standards in Philanthropy, other bibliographical information on nonprofit board membership and responsibilities). Refer to IRS, if necessary.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.1 Governing Board (continued) [Federal tax-exempt not-for-profit organizations] Operations and decisions are documented in board minutes which are maintained and available for review by the State agency, on request.	• does not vote on decisions relating to their own compensation (or for a related party) and is otherwise independent and accountable; • approves decisions about compensation of employees and other parties providing services; and • meets the performance standard with respect to policy, fiscal management, Program knowledge and operational oversight.		**State Agency Action (continued)** On basis of faulty or missing board oversight which results in poor Program performance, declares sponsor seriously deficient and terminates sponsor if corrective action is not taken within specified time frame. Denies application for sponsor who fails to demonstrate that they meet standards and fulfill requirements.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.2 Application. Valid and complete sponsor and center applications are submitted for approval.

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.2 Application Sponsor submits accurate and valid application and agreement materials to the State agency in accordance with requirements and prescribed time frames unless materials are already on hand (maintained) at the State agency or at the sponsor as required by State agency procedures. To include: • applications and signed agreements (if applicable) from each center under the sponsor's jurisdiction; • documentation of licensure/approval for each center; • management plan and budget (management plan includes information on staffing, training, monitoring and payment system); • documentation of nonprofit status and information regarding governing board, if applicable; • for proprietary center(s), documentation of Title XX eligibility; • free and reduced-price information, in accordance with the State agency's prescribed system;	Sponsor staff can evaluate center eligibility and complete accurate and valid application materials. Sponsor can prepare management plan that supports the proposed level of operations. Sponsor has adequate office facilities and equipment to support administrative staff.	Completeness and validity of all application materials and timeliness of submission. Ability of the sponsor to follow its approved policy for serving meals.	**State Agency Action** Provides technical assistance to new or continuing sponsors in the preparation of application materials. Technical assistance may include: • Guidance, • staff training, • consultation, and/or • resources. Requires a continuing sponsor, with weaknesses in its application, to prepare a corrective action plan. Requires an applicant who was a former sponsor with problems to demonstrate that previously identified problems have been corrected. Denies approval for participation of potential sponsors who fail to demonstrate that its staff has the skills and a system to meet standards and fulfill requirements.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.2 Application (continued) • if contracted, appropriate contract information; • media release, if not done by State agency; • nondiscrimination policy Statement (pricing or nonpricing); • documentation of compliance with Civil Rights requirements; • preference to receive commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities; and • preference to receive all, none or partial advances if available in the State. Sponsor submits accurate and valid data to the State agency when adding new facilities to its sponsorship and/or making amendments to the application.			

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.3 Training. Sponsor trains administrative and center staff to proficiently operate Program.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.3 Training Sponsor conducts adequate training for center staff prior to participation in the Program and during the first year of Program operation. At least annually, the sponsor conducts or provides and documents training on all aspects of Program operation. • Administrative staff training includes approval of income eligibility determinations, financial management, operational procedures, personnel policies, monitoring, meals and nutritional requirements. • Center staff training includes meal service, recordkeeping, etc. (see Standard 3 and the Standards for Child Care Centers).	Sponsor provides sufficient orientation, training and ongoing review so administrative and center staff are fully trained in Program operations and requirements. Sponsor participates in State agency training and meetings related to Program operations.	Number and percentage of staff that participated in CACFP related training in the last 12 months. See Standards for Child Care Centers.	**Sponsor Action** Offers effective, appropriate training, resources and technical assistance to staff. **State Agency Action** Notifies the sponsor of the areas of noncompliance. Provides training, technical assistance and/or guidelines as needed. Provides opportunity for corrective action. In cases of continued noncompliance, declares sponsor seriously deficient and terminates sponsor's participation if serious deficiencies are not corrected within specified time frame.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.4 Monitoring. Sponsor monitors centers' compliance with Program requirements.

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.4 Monitoring Sponsor provides sufficient and timely monitoring to ensure that centers meet Program requirements. Monitoring visits are conducted and follow-up reviews are documented. At least one monitoring visit per year is unannounced (consistent with State authority). At least two monitoring visits per year are conducted during meal times. Monitoring visits include a sample of meal types claimed by child care centers including evening, weekend, and holiday meals, where appropriate.	Sponsor demonstrates that it has sufficient number of administrative staff that are adequately trained to: • conduct announced and unannounced visits, • review monthly documents to support meal claims, and • identify problems and work with center staff to achieve corrective action. Sponsor has procedures in place to address centers that do not comply with Program requirements including: • identify problems, • notify center, • provide technical assistance, • monitor corrective action, and • terminate participation of center.	Range in number of visits that sponsor conducts for center in last 12 months. (Sponsor adjusts visit schedule based on needs or problems of center.) Comparison of average number of meal disallowances found by State agency versus number found by sponsor.	**Sponsor Action** Tracks and compiles findings to determine training needs of centers, and offers needed training and technical assistance for problem areas. Ensures that staff conduct complete and thorough reviews. Improves monitoring form and procedures or use prototype forms if needed or as directed by the State agency. Provides additional monitoring and on-site technical assistance to problem centers. Conducts more unannounced visits of problem centers. Immediately notifies proper authorities when imminent danger to the health/safety of children is suspected or noted.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.4 Monitoring (continued) Parents/households are contacted when problems indicate need to verify meal claims or the quality of meals. Appropriate disallowances are made in claims for meal reimbursement when findings require such action. Sponsor reports license or approval violations when observed. Sponsor reports to proper local and State authorities when they observe that health and/or safety of children is threatened in center. Sponsor takes action, as appropriate, in cooperation with State agency, to terminate center's participation in the Program.	Sponsor has staff trained to recognize violations, (e.g., imminent danger, over license capacity) follow procedures to take action where appropriate, and report in a timely manner, as needed.		**State Agency Action** Encourages use of prototype monitoring form. If needed, limits the number of centers that may be sponsored until problems are resolved. Refer also to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.5 Staffing. Sponsor has adequate staff to operate Program.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.5 Staffing Sponsor ensures that there are sufficient qualified administrative and center staff to timely perform all functions that support Program operations. Sponsor has job descriptions and qualifications outlined for each administrative staff position. Sponsor clearly delineates job duties for administrative staff members and does routine appraisals on all staff's performance. Sponsor has an established personnel system which is appropriate to the size of the organization.	Sponsor has adequate number and type of staff for the size of the organization. Sponsor has staff who can successfully complete all job requirements as demonstrated through experience, formal skills or training. Sponsor can certify that a screening system is in place to scrutinize any criminal convictions of applicants or of any Program staff, as well as prior mismanagement of not-for-profit or of government supported Programs. Such a system must disqualify applicant or staff if the conviction might jeopardize the safety of the children in care or compromises their ability to perform administrative or operational functions.	Number and type of findings on State agency review.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.6 Policies and Procedures. Sponsor has written policies and procedures for Program operations.

1.7 Civil Rights. Sponsor complies with civil rights requirements.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.6 Policies and Procedures Written operational policies and procedures are in place for correctly performing required general administrative duties, including, but not limited to, monitoring, recordkeeping, training, financial management, and procurement.	Sponsor demonstrates that it has adequate procedures and policies in place to effectively perform administrative duties required by State agency.	Number of findings on State agency review of sponsor that are related to inadequate policies and procedures.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.
1.7 Civil Rights Sponsor offers the Program and serves meals to all enrolled children equally regardless of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin. Sponsor includes the nondiscrimination Statement and complaint procedure in advertisements when referencing admissions and/or the Program.	Sponsor demonstrates understanding of civil rights requirements and application materials. Sponsor also documents compliance with requirements.	Number and type of findings on State agency reviews. Number of civil rights complains filed.	

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.8 Recordkeeping. Sponsor has recordkeeping practices which meet Program requirements.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.8 Recordkeeping Records are maintained for required time period to document all required items, including, but not limited to: application materials, minutes from board meetings, procurement actions, food cost documentation, monitoring, personnel actions (e.g., job descriptions, hiring, appraisals), training conducted and all records in support of claims for reimbursement (including menus, enrollment, attendance, meal counts, meal substitutions, free and reduced-price applications, and proprietary center eligibility documentation).	Sponsor has filing system that maintains required records in an accessible manner for required time periods. .	Number of audit or review findings due to missing records to support Program operations or claims.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.8 Recordkeeping (continued) Accessibility of eligibility information concerning individual households is restricted to those persons directly connected with CACFP administration and oversight.	Sponsor has a system to ensure that eligibility information concerning individual households is confidentially maintained.		

Standard 2: Financial Management: Sponsor expends and accounts for funds in accordance with regulatory requirements and sound financial management principles.

2.1 **Sponsor Budget.** Sponsor plans necessary and reasonable budget.
2.2 **Fiscal Responsibility.** Sponsor's financial system and management controls assure fiscal responsibility.
2.2 **Claims Processing.** Sponsor processes claims accurately and in a timely manner.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.1 Sponsor Budget Sponsor submits a management plan which includes detailed information on the administrative budget and system which will be used to administer the Program and disburse payments to centers under its jurisdiction, including amount retained by sponsor for administrative costs. Administrative costs included in the budget to manage the Program are necessary and reasonable, and budget conforms to State agency financial management system based on: 7 CFR Parts 226 and 3015, 48 CFR 31, FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, and OMB Circulars A-87, A-102, A-110 and A-122. Sponsor uses a system to track actual expenditures against the approved budget.	Sponsor demonstrates that it has sufficient, well-trained staff with the skills necessary to formulate and execute a budget. Sponsor has procedures and systems in place to ensure adequate financial controls, e.g., tracking expenditures, reconciling actual expenditures to budgeted amounts at appropriate intervals, analyzing Program operations, and submitting budget revisions, as needed.	Sponsor submits a timely budget and budget revisions that meet the standard and support Program objectives. The budget is an accurate reflection of annual operations.	**State Agency Action** Based on identified weaknesses, provides technical assistance to sponsor in the preparation of budget estimates and expenditure tracking which may include: • Guidance • staff training • consultation • and/or providing resources

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.1 Sponsor Budget (continued) Sponsor has a budget amendment process that considers year-to-date expenditures, anticipated expenses under its management plan and anticipated revenue sources.			

Standard 2. Financial Management

2.2 Fiscal Responsibility. Sponsor's financial system and management controls assure fiscal responsibility.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.2 Fiscal Responsibility Sponsor maintains a financial management and recordkeeping system that ensures fiscal integrity and accountability for all funds (including cash-in-lieu of commodities, if applicable) and property received, held, and disbursed (e.g., costs, including shared costs, are adequately documented; necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient administration of the Program; allowable under the State agency's financial management system; and properly allocated, within the approved budget) and property is protected and used solely for authorized purposes. Sponsor ensures that centers maintain a nonprofit food service, ensuring that all funds (including cash-in-lieu of commodities, if applicable) are used (1) solely for the	Sponsor demonstrates it has established administrative and financial management controls. Sponsor demonstrates that it has sufficient, well-trained staff to operate a financial management system and a board that is accountable in its direction. Sponsor demonstrates that it has an acceptable financial management system and adheres to Federal and applicable State financial management standards.	Independent audit reports, audited financial Statements and/or Program reviews do not identify insolvency or indicate other serious problems. Sponsor maintains financial reports in accordance with State requirements to document compliance with nonprofit food service requirements.	**Sponsor Action** Develops or revises written operational policies and procedures. Conducts staff financial management training in areas where weaknesses were identified. **State Agency Action** Notifies the sponsor of the areas of noncompliance. Based on identified weaknesses, provides technical assistance to sponsor including Guidance, staff training, and consultation. Provides opportunity for corrective action. Denies a sponsor's request for advance funds (if applicable), or all or part of the claim for reimbursement. Denies a sponsor's application to participate in the Program, and start-up funds, if applicable.

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.2 Fiscal Responsibility (continued) conduct of the food service operation; or (2) to improve such food service operations principally for the benefit of the participants. The accounting system in place ensures administrative costs incurred by the sponsor are allowable and included in approved budget; advance payments, if applicable, which exceeded the amount earned for serving eligible meals are returned to the State agency; and costs are consistently treated either on an accrual or cash basis.			**State Agency Action (continued)** In cases of continued noncompliance, declares sponsor seriously deficient, and terminates sponsor's participation if serious deficiencies are not corrected within specified time frame. Denies approval for participation of potential sponsor who fails to demonstrate that they have the skills and a system to meet standards and fulfill requirements.

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.2 Fiscal Responsibility (continued) Sponsor has implemented written operational policies and procedures for financial management that accurately reflect regulations, and Federal and State policies. Procurement practices as specified in FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, 7 CFR Parts 226, 3015, 3017, and 3018, OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110, and State or local requirements, if applicable, are followed and contracts contain applicable certifications (e.g., debarment and suspension, and disclosure of lobbying activities).	Sponsor demonstrates that it follows acceptable procurement procedures.	Number of purchases which have not adhered to proper procurement practices.	

Standard 2. Financial Management

2.3 Claims Processing. Sponsor processes claims accurately and in a timely manner.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.3 Claims Processing Payments are made to centers based on the number of meals served by type (breakfast, lunch/supper, supplement) and category of enrolled, eligible children at the appropriate rate, less any payments advanced to such center, if applicable. Such a system should ensure that: • reimbursement is only claimed for centers that have entered into a written agreement with the sponsor (as specified by the State agency) • centers' claims for ineligible meals are denied. Sponsor accurately and timely processes claims and claim amendments, and disburses payments to centers (if applicable) according to its management plan.	Sponsor demonstrates that it has adequate payment procedures and financial controls (e.g., sufficient claim edits) for processing center payments.	Sponsor pays center on the basis of processed claims. Percentage of payments to centers disbursed within five working days of receipt from the State agency. Percentage of centers under a sponsor's oversight for which sponsor edit checks and reviews disclose no overclaims or underclaims during a 12-month period. If applicable, number of times in 12-month time frame that claims for reimbursement are submitted late to the State agency.	**State Agency Action** If necessary, denies sponsor application for start-up funds, advance funds (if applicable), and all or part of the claim for reimbursement. Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.3 Claims Processing (continued) Sponsor maintains documentation concerning the dates and amounts of disbursements to each center and reconciles its records on a regular basis. Proprietary center eligibility is verified monthly and claims/payments are only made/submitted in the months in which they are eligible.		Number of revised claims for reimbursement submitted by sponsor in 12-month time frame. Number of payments made to ineligible proprietary centers. Percentage of children incorrectly claimed due to income eligibility determination errors.	

Standard 3: Oversight of Center Operations. Sponsor assures that child care centers accountably and appropriately operate a Program to provide nutritious meals to children.

3.1 Meal Service and Nutrition.
    3.1.1 Meal Service. Child care center's meals meet meal pattern requirements.
    3.1.2 Nutrition. Child care center's meal service is moving towards compliance with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid* recommendations. (Recommended)
3.2 Health, Safety and Well-Being.
    3.2.1 Licensing/Approval. Child care centers meet licensing and/or approval requirements.
    3.2.2 Sanitation. Child care centers practice appropriate sanitation measures.
3.3 Administration and Operations.
    3.3.1 Civil Rights. Child care centers comply with civil rights requirements.
    3.3.2 Recordkeeping. Child care centers complete and maintain Program records.
    3.3.3 Claiming Meals. Child care centers claim only eligible meals.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.1.1 Meal Service Child care centers serve meals to all participants in accordance with the meal pattern requirements specified in 7 CFR 226.20. Menus and other food service records (as required by the State agency) are maintained to document compliance with these requirements. If operating a pricing Program, center collects payment in accordance with its approved policy Statement.	Sponsor staff follow policies and procedures to evaluate centers' compliance with food service and nutrition standards. This would include knowledge and understanding of meal pattern requirements. See <u>Standards for Child Care Centers</u>.	Percentage of meals claimed (as recorded on menu) that meet meal pattern requirements. Percentage of meals claimed (as observed by sponsor) that meet meal pattern requirements. For modified meals that are claimed, percentage that are documented with a medical Statement.	**Sponsor Action** Trains its monitoring staff. Provides technical assistance to center on-site. Conducts training session for center(s) off-site. Requires production and/or purchase records of centers. Increases on-site monitoring visits of meal service. Conducts unannounced visits.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.1.1 Meal Service (continued) Meals served include creditable foods for all required components in appropriate quantities and textures for the ages of children being served. If applicable, meals are modified to meet individuals' required dietary modifications and special needs. The meals furnished by a food service management company/ or vendor meet all meal and contract requirements.			Evaluates in-office review of procedures and makes necessary improvements. In cases of continued noncompliance, terminates center. **State Agency Action** Requires production and/or purchase records of centers. Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations   **3.1 Meal**
Service and Nutrition   **3.1.2 Nutrition.** Child
care center's meal service is moving towards compliance with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid* recommendations. (Recommended)

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.1.2 Nutrition (Recommended) Child care centers plan and serve meals with the goals of: • serving meals that are appealing and meet appropriate food and nutrient standards and guides including the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid* recommendations; • offering a variety of nutrients, colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes and flavors. • introducing new foods; and • providing good sources of Vitamin A three times per week, and good sources of Vitamin C and iron daily.	(Recommended) Sponsor staff can evaluate centers' menus with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, the *Food Pyramid* and nutrient standards.	(Examples) Percentage of menus reviewed that: • complies with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*; • reflects a variety of nutrients, colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes and flavors; • meets the recommended number of servings from the *Food Pyramid* for vegetables, fruits, and grain products; and • contains sugars and sodium in moderation.	

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations

3.1 Meal Service and Nutrition

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.1.2 Nutrition (continued) • Nutrition related activities are incorporated into daily activities and communication with children and parents.			

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations

3.2 Health, Safety and Well-Being

3.2.1 Licensing/Approval. Child care centers meet licensing or approval requirements.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.2.1 Licensing/Approval Child care centers meet license or approval requirements. Sponsor takes appropriate action or reports license or approval requirement violations when observed. Sponsor reports to proper local and State authorities when they observe that health and/or safety of children is imminently threatened in center. Sponsor may take action, in cooperation with State agency, to terminate center's participation in Program.	Sponsor has staff and system in place to verify license or approval requirements prior to approval. Sponsor has procedure in place to track expiring licenses and approvals and ensure that they are renewed in a timely manner. Sponsor has procedure in place to discontinue center's participation if license/ approval requirements are not met. Sponsor has staff trained to recognize certain violations, (e.g., imminent danger, over license capacity) follow procedures to take action where appropriate, and report in a timely manner, as needed.	Number of centers that have valid license or approval. Number of violations observed compared to number reported. Number of centers over capacity on meal claim form.	**Sponsor Action** Refers centers with a high number of violations observed or reported for assistance (e.g., referral to child care resource and referral agency, university child development course or conference, child care regulatory unit). Cooperates with State agency recommended action when imminent danger is suspected or present. **State Agency Action** Reviews system for tracking, identifies weaknesses and provides consultation to improve system.

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations

3.2 Health, Safety and Well-Being

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.2.1 Licensing/Approval (continued)			**State Agency Action (continued)** If no data is collected, recommends sponsor include this as part of monitoring and train staff on license or approval violations including how to notify appropriate authorities. If data is collected but few violations are reported, reviews process for capturing information, determines whether staff have adequate training and advises accordingly.

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations
3.2 Health, Safety and Well-Being   3.2.2
Sanitation. Child care centers practice appropriate sanitation measures.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.2.2 Sanitation Child care center staff practices appropriate sanitary measures while preparing and serving meals.	Sponsor staff monitor and provide training to centers on safe food handling.	Percentage of centers with sanitation problems noted on monitoring visit. Problems sited by State or local health department have been corrected.	**Sponsor Action** Where problems are noted, provides additional training or technical assistance for center. Reports to proper authorities a center with major sanitation and health problems that have not been corrected or pose danger to children. **State Agency Action** Requires sponsor staff to attend training and/or conduct training or provide technical assistance to center staff. Reviews monitoring procedures and assures that sponsor has sufficient checks of sanitation standard(s). Requires sponsor to revise monitoring forms and procedures if necessary. Requires sponsor to work with center on corrective action for problem areas.

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations
3.3 Administration and Operations   **3.3.1 Civil**
Rights. Child care centers comply with civil rights requirements.   **3.3.2**
Recordkeeping. Child care centers complete and maintain Program record.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.3.1 Civil Rights Center offers the Program and serves meals to all enrolled children equally regardless of race, color, sex, age, disability or national origin. Center includes the nondiscrimination Statement and complaint procedure in advertisements when referencing admissions and/or the Program.	Sponsor staff are knowledgeable of and can provide training to center staff on the civil rights requirements.	Number and type of findings on State agency review.	**Sponsor Action** Provides additional training, consultation, and resources to centers to ensure that they understand the respective requirements. Denies participation for those centers that fail to comply. Reports civil rights violations (discriminatory practices) to proper authorities.
3.3.2 Recordkeeping Center staff maintains records for required time period to document all required items, including, but not limited to: menus, enrollment, attendance, meal counts by type (breakfast, lunch/supper, supplement), meal substitutions, income eligibility forms and other records required by the State agency or sponsor.	Sponsor staff provides sufficient training and forms to centers, adequately reviews centers' records, and provides sufficient technical assistance as needed.	See Standards for Child Care Centers.	**Sponsor Action** Provides additional training, consultation and resources to centers.

Standard 3. Oversight of Center Operations

3.3 Administration and Operations

3.3.3 Claiming Meals. Child care centers claim only eligible meals.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.3.3 Claiming Meals Centers claim only eligible meals, that is: • reimbursement does not exceed 2 meals and 1 snack (or l meal and 2 snacks) per child per day; • only meals served to enrolled children with documented attendance are claimed; • a menu that meets meal pattern requirements is available for each meal claimed; • meal counts taken at the point of service are maintained for all meals claimed; and • only meals served during time frame of organized child care are claimed.	Sponsor has effective procedure in place to review and verify claim and allows only those meals that are served to eligible children to be claimed. Sponsor has adequate staff who are sufficiently trained to compile accurate claims. Sponsor provides or has plan to provide adequate training for centers on requirements and provides technical assistance when problems are noted.	Percentage of centers that were reimbursed based on claims that met all standards. Percentage of correctly approved free and reduced price applications. Number of centers that: • have meal counts that do not exceed 2 meals and 1 snack (or l meal and 2 snacks) per child per day. • claimed only children where there were enrollment forms. • claimed only children who were in attendance. • have menus available for meals claimed.	**Sponsor Action** Provides additional training, consultation and resources to center staff to ensure that they understand respective requirement. Requires additional records to be submitted with each claim prior to processing. Denies reimbursement to centers that do not meet requirements. Does not approve supper, holiday and/or weekend meal service when inappropriate claims for these meals have been submitted.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.3.3 Claiming Meals (continued) Correct income eligibility documentation is maintained for all children claimed in the free and reduced price categories. As required by Federal and/or State agency Guidance, such income documentation is complete (all required elements are completed by the household), current (not older than one year old), and approved for the appropriate reimbursement category (documented with a center official signature and date). Reimbursement is not claimed for meals served to children in excess of the center's authorized capacity, unless appropriate documentation of shift feeding is available.		• only claim meals for children within authorized capacity or have appropriate shift documentation. • claimed meal types that were approved to be claimed. • claim children that meet age requirement. Number of centers in which children were incorrectly claimed due to income eligibility determination errors.	

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.3.3 Claiming Meals (continued) Only approved meal types are claimed. Only children 12 or under, migrant children through age 15 or individuals who have documented disabilities are claimed.			

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PART I -

PART II. Administrative Standards for Independent Centers

Introduction

Goal: To improve the accountability and quality of meals served in child care centers.

Outcomes Desired:
- Improve the quality of meal service and the accountability of funds to support the Program.
- Increase the number of tools available to State agencies and independent centers to improve performance.
- Improve the ability of State agencies to monitor performance and oversee delivery of CACFP in independent centers.
- Prevent serious problems in Program operation by independent centers.

Purpose and Use

The Standards for Independent Centers was developed as a resource to improve accountability and the quality of meals served in independent centers. It will also help prevent serious problems in Program operations. The Guidance provides tools for State agencies and independent centers to use in conjunction with the regulations to improve performance of existing independent centers and to ensure that only well-qualified independent centers are initially approved. The purpose of the Guidance is to set out in broad terms, goals, desired outcomes and standards. When developing the tools, an instrument was created that would provide State agencies with administrative flexibility as differences in State agency operations and policy implementation require State agencies to tailor their own instruments. To use this instrument effectively, State agencies must define terms, make judgment calls and apply the standards to a degree determined based on the size of the independent center.

Overview

The instrument, defined by four columns, actually serves several purposes. It establishes:

* performance standards;

* approval/continuing participation criteria;

* performance measures; and,

* a performance improvement plan.

Standards (Column 1)	To allow independent centers and State agencies to assess performance, standards have been established in three key Programmatic areas. They are: organizational management, financial management, and Program operations. The standards define expected performance Stated in terms of how an independent center should operate the Program. Whenever possible, measurements have been included to determine if the independent center meets the standard; and performance improvement plans are provided to make corrections where problems are identified. The standards are listed in Column 1 of the instrument.
Approval/ Continuing Participation Criteria (Column 2)	The approval/continuing participation criteria for each key Programmatic area are listed in Column 2. They may be used by a potential independent center and the State agency to determine if the staff of the organization has the skills and qualifications to become successful Program operators. These approval/continuing participation criteria could be used to deny potential independent centers.
Performance Measures (Column 3)	Column 3 addresses measurement. Measurement is, in fact, the key to this instrument. Wherever possible, an outcome-based measurement has been included for each function of each performance standard. There are frequently several measurements for each standard or function but no pass/fail levels. The independent center or the State agency, would select all or just a few measurements and develop a custom instrument based on their needs. This does not have to become a labor/paper-intensive exercise. Pass/fail levels for the measurements were not included because a different use for the instrument was envisioned. It is intended to be used on an ongoing basis (e.g., annually) to measure effectiveness of the independent center or State agency management, training, and technical assistance, not for a one-time snapshot of the independent center's performance.

Many of the measures allow for comparison from one assessment period to the next. State agencies should establish appropriate levels based on their experience. Eventually, a few key measurements and pass/fail levels for each standard may be established. In order to establish realistic levels of expectation, it is best to first test the standards. |
| **Performance Improvement Plan (Column 4)** | Finally, the instrument may be used to help identify corrective action strategies for each performance standard where problems are noted. The corrective action strategies listed in Column 4 are examples, not requirements. Where applicable, strategies have been identified for the independent center, followed by those aimed at the State agency. In certain cases only one or the other are relevant. Generally, the strategies have been listed starting with the simplest. As is true throughout the rest of the Guidance, there is no implied order; independent centers and/or State agencies can select the method or methods that seem appropriate for their particular situation. |

PART II -   **Introduction**

CACFP Management Improvement Guidance
Standards for Independent Centers

Definitions

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Standards	**Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria**	**Performance Measures**	**Performance Improvement Plan**
Expected performance that can be measured on quantitative and qualitative levels. The standards are defined under three key Programmatic areas: **1.** Organizational Management **2**. Financial Management **3.** Program Operations	Independent center documents and State agency verifies that: • Staff have skills and qualifications needed to meet standards. • Independent center has ability or has plan to show that they can meet standards and expectations.	Practical means to evaluate performance of standard in a qualitative and/or quantitative manner in order to: • determine strengths and needs of independent center's operation, and • identify areas where corrective action should be targeted.	Means to improve performance in order to meet standards, correct seriously deficient performance and/or exceed performance standard (continuous quality improvement).

Standards for Independent Centers - 3 Key Programmatic Areas

1. ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT. Independent center is effectively managed to achieve desired standards and outcomes. **1.1 Governing Board.** Governing board provides adequate Program oversight. (Not applicable to Proprietary Title XX centers.) **1.2 Application.** Valid and complete application is submitted for approval. **1.3 Training.** Staff is trained to proficiently operate Program. **1.4 Staffing.** Independent center has adequate staff to operate Program. **1.5 Civil Rights.** Independent center complies with civil rights requirements. **1.6 Recordkeeping.** Independent center has recordkeeping practices which meet Program requirements.

2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. Independent center expends and accounts for funds in accordance with regulatory requirements and sound financial management principles. **2.1 Fiscal Responsibility/Budget.** Independent center plans necessary and reasonable budget, and maintains a financial system and management controls to assure fiscal responsibility. **2.2 Claims.** Independent center processes claims accurately and in a timely manner.

3. PROGRAM OPERATIONS. Independent center accountably and appropriately operates a Program to provide nutritious meals to children. **3.1 Meal Service.** Independent center's meals meet meal pattern requirements. **3.2 Nutrition.** Independent center's meal service is moving towards compliance with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid* recommendations. (Recommended) **3.3 Sanitation.** Independent center practices appropriate sanitation measures. **3.4 Safety and Well-Being.** Independent center practices appropriate measures to ensure the well-being of the children in care.

Note: For the purpose of this instrument, the standards are broadly Stated; an independent center must adhere to all regulatory requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 226.

Standard 1: Organizational Management: Independent center is effectively managed to achieve desired standards and outcomes.

1.1 **Governing Board.** Governing board provides adequate Program oversight. (Not applicable to Proprietary Title XX centers.)
1.2 **Application.** Valid and complete application is submitted for approval.
1.3 **Training.** Staff is trained to proficiently operate Program.
1.4 **Staffing.** Independent center has adequate staff to operate Program.
1.5 **Civil Rights**. Independent center complies with civil rights requirements.
1.6 **Recordkeeping.** Independent center has recordkeeping practices which meet Program requirements.

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.1 Governing Board [Federal tax-exempt not-for-profit organizations] Not-for-profit center has a governing body that meets applicable Federal and State statutes and requirements. The governing board is composed primarily of members of the community and is responsible for: • policy setting, • fiscal Guidance, and • ongoing governance. It regularly reviews the organization's policies, Programs	Independent center can demonstrate that it: • operates for public purposes rather than private benefit; and • has a screening system in place to scrutinize any criminal convictions of board members which may disqualify them from performing Program administrative functions. Independent center's board: is composed of a majority of members of the community who are not financially interested in its activities, or related to its personnel or to each other;		**Independent Center Action** Board members and/or independent center staff attend(s) training or class on Program regulations and/or nonprofit board membership (or read relevant materials). **State Agency Action** Provides resource list to independent centers on boards (e.g., Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Exempt Organizations Handbook, National Charities Information Bureau-Standards in Philanthropy, other bibliographical information on nonprofit board membership and responsibilities). Refer to IRS, if necessary.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.1 Governing Board (continued) [Federal tax-exempt not-for-profit organizations] and budgets. Operations and decisions are documented in board minutes which are maintained and available for review by the State agency, on request.	• does not vote on decisions relating to their own compensation (or for a related party) and is otherwise independent and accountable; • approves decisions about compensation of employees and other parties providing services; and • meets the performance standard with respect to policy, fiscal management, Program knowledge and operational oversight.		**State Agency Action (continued)** On basis of faulty or missing board oversight which results in poor Program performance, declares independent center seriously deficient and terminates independent center if corrective action is not taken within specified time frame. Denies application for independent center that fails to demonstrate that they meet standards and fulfill requirements.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.2 Application. Valid and complete application is submitted for approval.

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.2 Application Independent center submits accurate and valid application and agreement materials to the State agency in accordance with requirements and prescribed time frames unless materials are already on hand (maintained) at the State agency. To include: • application and signed agreement; • documentation of licensure/ approval requirements; • management plan (as applicable) and budget; • for nonprofit independent center, Federal tax-exempt status; for proprietary center, documentation of Title XX eligibility; • free and reduced-price information, in accordance with the State agency's prescribed system; • if contracted, appropriate contract information; • media release, if not done by State agency;	Independent center staff can complete accurate and valid application materials.	Completeness and validity of all application materials and timeliness of submission. Ability of the independent center to follow its approved policy for serving meals.	**State Agency Action** Provides technical assistance to new or continuing independent centers in the preparation of application materials. Technical assistance may include: • Guidance, • staff training, • consultation, and/or • resources. Requires a continuing independent center, with weaknesses in its application, to prepare a corrective action plan. Requires an applicant who was a former independent center with problems to demonstrate that previously identified problems have been corrected in order that the Program may be operated in accordance with Program requirements.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

Standards	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.2 Application (continued) • non-discrimination policy Statement (pricing or non-pricing); • documentation of compliance with Civil Rights requirements; • preference to receive commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities; and • preference to receive all, none or partial advances, if available in the State. Independent center submits accurate and valid data to the State agency when making amendments to the application.			Denies approval for participation of potential independent centers that fail to demonstrate that its staff has the skills and a system to meet standards and fulfill requirements.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.3 Training. Staff is trained to proficiently operate Program.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.3 Training At least annually, the independent center conducts or provides and documents staff training on all aspects of Program operation including meal service, recordkeeping, etc. (see Standard 3 and the Standards for Child Care Centers).	Independent center provides sufficient orientation and training so staff are fully trained in Program operations and requirements. Independent center participates in State agency training and meetings related to Program operations.	Number and percentage of staff that participated in CACFP related training in the last 12 months. See Standards for Child Care Centers.	**Independent Center Action** Offers effective, appropriate training, resources and technical assistance to staff. **State Agency Action** Notifies the independent center of the areas of noncompliance. Provides training, technical assistance and/or guidelines as needed. Provides opportunity for corrective action. In cases of continued noncompliance, declares independent center seriously deficient and terminates independent center's participation if serious deficiencies are not corrected within specified time frame.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.4 Staffing. Independent center has adequate staff to operate Program.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.4 Staffing Independent center has sufficient qualified staff to timely perform all functions that support Program operations. Independent center has job descriptions and qualifications outlined for each position. Independent center clearly delineates job duties for each staff member and does routine appraisal on all staff's performance.	Independent center has adequate number and type of staff for the size of the organization. Independent center has staff who can successfully complete all job requirements as demonstrated through experience, formal skills or training. Independent center can certify that a screening system is in place to scrutinize any criminal convictions of applicants or of any Program staff, as well as prior mismanagement of not-for-profit or of government supported Programs. Such a system must disqualify staff if the conviction might jeopardize the safety of the children in care or compromises their ability to perform administrative or operational functions.	Number and type of findings on State agency review.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.5 Civil Rights. Independent center complies with civil rights requirements.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.5 Civil Rights Independent center offers the Program and serves meals to all enrolled children equally regardless of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin. Independent center includes the nondiscrimination Statement and complaint procedure in advertisements when referencing admissions and/or the Program.	Independent center demonstrates understanding of civil rights requirements and application materials. Independent center also documents compliance with requirements.	Number and type of findings on State agency review. Number of civil rights complaints filed.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 1. Organizational Management

1.6 Recordkeeping. Independent center has recordkeeping practices which meet Program requirements.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
1.6 Recordkeeping Records are maintained for required time period to document all required items, including, but not limited to: application materials, minutes from board meetings, procurement actions, food cost documentation, training conducted and all records in support of claims for reimbursement (including menus, enrollment, attendance, meal counts, meal substitutions, free and reduced-price applications, and proprietary center eligibility documentation). Accessibility of eligibility information concerning individual households is restricted to those persons directly connected with CACFP administration and oversight.	Independent center has filing system that maintains required records in an accessible manner for required time periods. Independent center has a system to ensure that eligibility information concerning individual households is confidentially maintained.	Number of audit or review findings due to missing records to support Program operations or claims.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 2: Financial Management: Independent center expends and accounts for funds in accordance with regulatory requirements and sound financial management principles.

2.1 Fiscal Responsibility/Budget. Independent center plans necessary and reasonable budget, and maintains a financial system and management controls to assure fiscal responsibility.

2.2 Claims. Independent center processes claims accurately and in a timely manner.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.1 Fiscal Responsibility/ Budget If applicable, independent center submits a management plan which includes detailed information on the budget and procedures which will be used to administer the Program. Costs included in the budget to manage the Program are necessary and reasonable, and budget conforms to State agency financial management system based on: 7 CFR Parts 226 and 3015, 48 CFR 31, FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, and OMB Circulars A-87, A-102, A-110 and A-122. Independent center uses a system to track actual expenditures against the approved budget.	Independent center demonstrates that it has sufficient, well-trained staff with the skills necessary to formulate and execute a budget. Independent center has procedures in place to ensure adequate financial controls, e.g., analyzing Program operations, and submitting budget revisions, as needed.	Independent center submits a timely budget and budget revisions that meet the standard and support Program objectives. The budget is an accurate reflection of annual operations. Independent audit reports, audited financial Statements and/or Program reviews do not identify insolvency or indicate other serious problems. Independent center maintains financial reports in accordance with State requirements to document compliance with nonprofit food service requirements.	**Independent Center Action** Develops or revises operational policies and procedures. Conducts staff financial management training in areas where weaknesses were identified. **State Agency Action** Notifies the independent center of the areas of noncompliance. Based on identified weaknesses, provides technical assistance to independent center in the preparation of budget estimates and

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.1 Fiscal Responsibility/ Budget (continued) Independent center has a budget amendment process that considers year-to-date expenditures, anticipated expenses under its management plan and anticipated revenue sources. Independent center maintains a financial management and recordkeeping system that ensures fiscal integrity and accountability for all funds (including cash-in-lieu of commodities, if applicable) and property received, held, and disbursed (e.g., costs are adequately documented; necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient administration of the Program; allowable under the State agency's financial management system; and properly allocated, within the approved budget)	Independent center demonstrates it has established financial management controls. Independent center demonstrates that it has sufficient, well-trained staff to maintain an accountable financial management system. Independent center demonstrates that it has an acceptable financial management system and adheres to Federal and applicable State financial management standards.		**State Agency Action (continued)** expenditure tracking which may include: • Guidance • staff training • consultation • and/or providing resources Provides opportunity for corrective action. Denies an independent center's request for advance funds (if applicable), or all or part of the claim for reimbursement. Denies an independent center's application to participate in the Program.

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.1 Fiscal Responsibility/ Budget (continued) and property is protected and used solely for authorized purposes. Independent center maintains a nonprofit food service, ensuring that all funds (including cash-in-lieu of commodities, if applicable) are used (1) solely for the conduct of the food service operation; or (2) to improve such food service operations principally for the benefit of the participants. Independent center has policies and procedures for Program operations.			**State Agency Action (continued)** In cases of continued noncompliance, declares independent center seriously deficient, and terminates center's participation if serious deficiencies are not corrected within specified time frame. Denies approval for participation of potential independent center that fails to demonstrate that they have the skills and a system to meet standards and fulfill requirements.

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.1 Fiscal Responsibility/ Budget (continued) The accounting system in place ensures costs incurred by the independent center are allowable and included in approved budget; advance payments, if applicable, which exceeded the amount earned for serving eligible meals are returned to the State agency; and costs are consistently treated either on an accrual or cash basis. Procurement practices as specified in FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, 7 CFR Parts 226, 3015, 3017, and 3018, OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110, and State or local requirements, if applicable, are followed and contracts contain applicable certifications (e.g., debarment and suspension and disclosure of lobbying activities).	Independent center demonstrates that it follows acceptable procurement procedures.	Number of purchases which have not adhered to proper procurement practices.	

Standard 2. Financial Management

2.2 Claims. Independent center processes claims accurately and in a timely manner.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.2 Claims Accurate claims and claim amendments are submitted based on the number of eligible meals served to enrolled, eligible children in their respective income classification. Such a system should ensure that: • reimbursement does not exceed 2 meals and 1 snack (or l meal and 2 snacks) per child per day; • only meals served to enrolled children with documented attendance are claimed; • a menu that meets meal pattern requirements is available for each meal claimed;	Independent center demonstrates that it has adequate procedures and financial controls (e.g., sufficient claim edits) for submitting an accurate claim.	Percentage of correctly approved free and reduced price applications. Amount of overclaims or underclaims during a 12-month period. If applicable, number of times in 12-month time frame that claims for reimbursement are submitted late to the State agency. Number of revised claims for reimbursement submitted by independent center in 12-month time frame. Number of payments made to an ineligible proprietary center.	**State Agency Action** Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.2 Claims (continued) • meal counts taken at the point of service are maintained for all meals claimed; and • only meals served during time frame of organized child care are claimed. Correct income eligibility documentation is maintained for all children claimed in the free and reduced price categories. As required by Federal and/or State agency Guidance, such income documentation is complete (all required elements are completed by the household), current (not older than one year old), and approved for the appropriate reimbursement category (documented with a center official signature and date).		Percentage of children incorrectly claimed due to income eligibility determination errors.	

Standard 2. Financial Management

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
2.2 Claims (continued) Reimbursement is not claimed for meals served to children in excess of the center's authorized capacity, unless appropriate documentation of shift feeding is available. Only approved meal types are claimed. Only children 12 or under, migrant children through age 15 or individuals who have documented disabilities are claimed. Independent center is accurate and on time in submitting its claim. Proprietary center eligibility is verified monthly and claims are only submitted in the months in which they are eligible.			

Standard 3: Program Operations. Independent center accountably and appropriately operates a Program to provide nutritious meals to children.			

3.1 Meal Service. Independent center's meals meet meal pattern requirements.
3.2 Nutrition. Independent center's meal service is moving towards compliance with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid* recommendations. (Recommended)
3.3 Sanitation. Independent center practices appropriate sanitation measures.
3.4 Safety and Well-Being. Independent center practices appropriate measures to ensure the well-being of the children in care.

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.1 Meal Service Independent center serves meals to all participants in accordance with the meal pattern requirements specified in 7 CFR 226.20. Menus and other food service records (as required by the State agency) are maintained to document compliance with these requirements. If operating a pricing Program, center collects payment in accordance with its approved policy Statement. Meals served include creditable foods for all required components in appropriate quantities and textures for the ages of children being served.	Independent center staff demonstrates knowledge and understanding of meal service requirements including State and/or local sanitation and health requirements relating to food service. See <u>Standards for Child Care Centers</u>.	Percentage of meals claimed (as recorded on menu) that meet meal pattern requirements. Percentage of meals claimed (as observed by State agency) that meet meal pattern requirements. For modified meals that are claimed, percentage that are documented with a medical Statement.	**Independent Center Action** Trains its staff. Evaluates in-office review of procedures and makes necessary improvements. **State Agency Action** Requires production and/or purchase records of centers. Refer to Performance Improvement Plan, 1.3 Training, State Agency Action, page 10.

Standard 3. Program Operations

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.1 Meal Service (continued) If applicable, meals are modified to meet individuals' required dietary modifications and special needs. The meals furnished by a food service management company/or vendor meet all meal and contract requirements. Independent center has policies and procedures for Program operations.			

Standard 3. Program Operations

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.2 Nutrition (Recommended) Independent center plans and serves meals with the goals of: • serving meals that are appealing and meet appropriate food and nutrient standards and guides including the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Pyramid*; • offering a variety of nutrients, colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes and flavors; • introducing new foods; and • providing good sources of Vitamin A three times per week, and good sources of Vitamin C and iron daily.	(Recommended) Independent center staff can evaluate and plan menus with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, *Food Pyramid* and nutrient standards.	(Examples) Percentage of menus reviewed that: • complies with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*; • reflects a variety of nutrients, colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes and flavors; • meets the recommended number of servings from the *Food Pyramid* for vegetables, fruits, and grain products; and • contains sugars and sodium in moderation.	

Standard 3. Program Operations

Standard	Approval/Continuing Participation Criteria	Performance Measures	Performance Improvement Plan
3.2 Nutrition (continued) • Nutrition related activities are incorporated into daily activities and communication with children and parents.			
3.3 Sanitation Independent center practices appropriate sanitary measures while preparing and serving meals.		Number of sanitation findings noted on State agency monitoring visit. Problems sited by State or local health department have been corrected.	**State Agency Action** Requires independent center staff to attend training or provide technical assistance to center staff.
3.4 Safety and Well-Being Staff recognizes signs of abuse/neglect and reports instances to appropriate authorities.			**Independent Center Action** Cooperates with State agency recommended action when imminent danger is suspected or present.

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PART II -

PART III. Operational Standards for Child Care Centers

Introduction

This Guidance establishes the Standards of Merit that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed for child care center staff[1]. The purpose of these **Standards** is to assist State agencies,[2] sponsoring organizations,[3] and center staff in evaluating whether they are administering a safe and quality child care food Program. The criteria for the **Standards** have been formatted into **Goals** which define the Program objectives that center staff should strive to meet. Proficiency in meeting the **Goals** of the **Standards** is measured by application of a series of specific **Practices**. Thus, taken together, the **Standards**, **Goals** and **Practices** can be used by State agencies or sponsoring organizations as a training tool and by child care center staff as a self-evaluation of how well they are complying with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) objectives.

Standards

The **Standards** that center staff, sponsors and State agencies should be striving for are identified in three areas:

1) Administration and Operations
2) Meal Service and Nutrition
3) Health, Safety and Well-being

While some of the **Standards** fall outside the boundaries of what is typically defined as meal or food service, USDA believes that the development of and compliance with **Standards** in these additional areas is essential to establishing and maintaining a safe and quality child care food Program.

Goals

Under each **Standard, Goals** have been identified that further define and explain the knowledge and behavior expected of center staff. USDA believes that, when center staff meet these **Goals**, they are operating a quality Program. Also, achievement of these **Goals** can be one indicator

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[1] In this Guidance, child care center staff (or "center staff" as they are also referred to in the Guidance) means any employee of a child care center who administers or participates in the CACFP and who is responsible for the purchase, preparation, service, or clean up of meals and/or food. Child care center staff may participate in the CACFP as independent child care centers or under the auspices of a sponsoring organization.

[2] In this Guidance, State agency means the agency responsible for overseeing the administration of the CACFP by independent centers.

[3] In this Guidance, sponsoring organization means the agency responsible for overseeing the administration of the CACFP by sponsored centers.

that the State agency or sponsor is administering the CACFP in accordance with State and Federal requirements.

Practices

Practices are used to evaluate the quality of the center's meal service. The **Practices** include CACFP regulatory requirements as well as recommendations for improvement of your Program. The **Practices** identified that are regulatory requirements must be adhered to by center staff regardless of whether this Guidance is used. The other **Practices** listed are recommendations that center staff should strive to meet and, in some instances, **must** meet if required by State and/or local regulatory agencies.

Several of the **Practices** are listed under more than one Standard. These **Practices** are repeated under multiple **Standards** because they have more than one meaning, depending on the **Standard** they address. Also, this Guidance is designed to be used in a variety of ways. For example, it can be used as an entire "package" for obtaining a Standards of Merit Certificate, or each **Standard** can be used as a "stand alone" piece for training purposes.

The ratings for these **Practices** are divided into three levels of performance:

1) Not Met (center staff failed to meet the expected level of performance);
2) Partially Met (center staff met some, but not all at the expected level of performance); and
3) Fully Met (center staff met all at the expected level of performance).

Achievement Checklist and Training Resources

Specific **Practices** have been identified in this Guidance; however, the ability to achieve them will require the user to assess proficiency using their professional judgment supported by the **Training Resources,** which accompany each **Goal**. The list of **Training Resources** included is to be used by State agencies or sponsors for training purposes and by center staff as a reference. The **Training Resources** listed are ones that were either developed by USDA or by other government agencies with significant input from USDA. State agencies, sponsoring organizations, and center staff are encouraged to make additions to the **Training Resources** to meet their individual needs. For information on how to obtain the **Training Resources**, sponsors and independent centers may contact their State agency and center staff may contact their sponsoring organization.

As mentioned previously, this Guidance can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used by the State agency or sponsor as a formal training tool and/or by center staff as a self-assessment guide. In either case, when all **Practices** under a **Goal** are met, the individual **Goal** has been achieved. Similarly, when all **Goals** under a **Standard** have been met, the **Standard** has been achieved. An **Achievement Checklist** has been included to assist the user in tracking accomplishments. Center staff are to "check off" whether they have met, partially met, or not met each **Practice.** If center staff have established that they have not met or have only partially met a **Practice**, they can refer to the **Training Resources** to reinforce their knowledge or understanding of the underlying principles of a **Standard** or **Goal**. If center staff do not meet a

Practice after reviewing the suggested **Training Resources**, State agencies or sponsors may offer additional training specific to the area that needs improvement. Once center staff are confident that they understand and are complying with the **Practice**, they are to re-assess their achievement.

The overall objective of this Guidance is to define training and technical assistance needs as well as to assess the center staff's operation of the CACFP. Presently, CACFP child care center staff are receiving an average of fourteen hours per year of formal training on a variety of CACFP related subjects. These include food safety and sanitation, types and amounts of food to serve, meal counts, food storage, and menu planning. In an effort to improve Program integrity, management and regulatory compliance, USDA recommends that center staff continue their fourteen hours per year of formal CACFP related training. This number is a recommendation that might need to be adjusted depending on a center staff's performance record.

In addition to the recommended fourteen hours of formal annual training, USDA encourages State agencies and sponsoring organizations to continue their training of center staff while conducting on-site reviews. USDA also encourages child care center staff to attend formal CACFP related training courses given by qualified sources. Examples of qualified training sources are a community or State college, county Extension office, local health department or hospital, county parks and recreation department, professional association, etc. USDA recommends that State agencies and sponsoring organizations maximize the amount of "formal" training (as opposed to training provided during a review visit) in an effort to educate center staff under conditions with minimum distractions.

Time Frames for Completion

An achievement assessment is an ongoing process. There should be no restrictions placed on the length of time it takes child care center staff to complete the self-assessment. Center staff should be encouraged to conduct this assessment at "their own pace". This will enable staff to be confident of their understanding while being in compliance with the CACFP goals. However, the State agency or sponsor on-site verification should not be conducted until center staff have completed the entire self-assessment. In addition, center staff are encouraged to re-evaluate themselves with or without another on-site verification of compliance by the State agency or sponsor. This evaluation should be conducted on an annual basis to ensure continuous compliance with Program objectives.

Obtaining a Standards of Merit Certificate

This Guidance should be used first by State agencies or sponsors as a training tool to teach center staff about the Program goals, the benefits of meeting these goals, and the methods for achieving these goals. Once training is completed, center staff (with the assistance of the State agency or sponsor) should develop an individualized timeline schedule (i.e., the Standards of Merit Timeline Chart) for studying and completing all of the self-assessment tasks. Upon approval of the plan by the State agency or sponsor, center staff will use this Guidance as a self-evaluation tool to assess the degree of accomplishment in all three defined areas. Upon the completion of the center staff's self-assessment, State agencies or sponsors will conduct an on-

site visit (i.e., for sponsors, it can be as part of one of the three required annual review visits) to verify the information included in the self-assessment. Once the State agency or sponsor has verified that center staff have achieved the criteria identified in all three areas, the State agency may issue a Standards of Merit Certificate. Further, the sponsor may apply for a Standards of Merit Certificate from the State agency on behalf of center staff. A prototype certificate is included in this Guidance for use by the State agency. State agencies are encouraged to re-format this certificate as needed to meet their individualized needs.

Additional Uses for this Guidance

In addition to using this Guidance material for the purpose of conducting a Standards of Merit Program, State agencies, sponsoring organizations and center staff may use it to establish and maintain a safe and quality child care food Program. Some examples of additional uses include:

- State agencies use for training sponsors;
- State agencies and sponsoring organizations use for training center staff;
- State agencies, sponsoring organizations and center staff use for self-training;
- State agencies use as part of an assessment of the quality of a sponsor's training Program;
- State agencies and sponsoring organizations use to assess center staff's knowledge as well as the quality of their feeding Program; and
- Center staff use as a self-assessment of their knowledge as well as the quality of their feeding Program.

Although this Guidance may be used to meet various needs of CACFP administrators and participants, it is recommended that State agencies refrain from issuing a Standards of Merit Certificate unless the recommended procedures listed previously are followed.

How to Do the Self-Assessment

What is the self-assessment?

The self-assessment is a comprehensive self-evaluation of several aspects of the CACFP operation in child care centers.

How is the self-assessment used?

The self-assessment is used by child care center staff to systematically evaluate their Program and identify areas in need of improvement. After improvements are made, the results are reported to the State agency or sponsoring organization to determine whether center staff have earned a Standards of Merit Certificate.

What are the benefits of the self-assessment?

Taking an honest look at the CACFP as it operates today is the first step toward making the improvements that child care center staff need. One way to take an honest look is through the self-assessment. The self-assessment helps center staff, the sponsor, and State agency analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Program, and focus attention on areas in need of improvement. It also helps them congratulate themselves for achieving and maintaining those areas that are clearly strengths.

How should the self-assessment be conducted?

This Guidance describes steps required of all CACFP child care center staff, sponsoring organizations and State agencies participating in the self-assessment process. CACFP participants can be as creative as possible in adding other dimensions. There is no one right way to conduct the self-assessment. However, there is a **wrong** way.

What is the **wrong** way to conduct the self-assessment?

- The State agency or sponsor acts alone telling child care center staff what they must do.

- Child care center staff simply check off that they meet the **Standards** without thoughtful consideration and critical self-examination.

- Child care center staff receive only criticism for what they are doing wrong without acknowledgment for what they are doing well.

- Food preparation and meal services are not observed closely by State agencies or sponsors to learn what really happens.

- The self-assessment is rushed without adequate time given to reflect on and make necessary improvements.

- The process is threatening and center staff become defensive.

Who does the self-assessment?

The self-assessment is designed to involve the State agency, sponsoring organization and child care center staff. The word *self* refers to each person's involvement in examining her or his own contribution to the Program.

What resources will be needed to conduct the self-assessment?

Under each **Goal**, **Training Resources** are identified as reference materials. This list can also be used by State agencies or sponsors for training purposes as well as by center staff as a reference in instances where they are unsure of the meaning or the underlying principles of a **Standard** or **Goal**. Sponsors and independent centers may contact their State agency and center staff may contact their sponsoring organization for information on how to obtain the **Training Resources** listed. State agencies, sponsoring organizations and center staff are encouraged to make additions to the list of **Training Resources** as needed.

How long will it take?

The self-assessment is designed to be self-directed. The length of time is determined by the Program and the improvements center staff and the sponsor or State agency wish to make. The information that is assessed by the State agency or sponsor must be current and reflect the existing situation, not what it was when the self-assessment began nor center staff future plans.

What are the self-assessment steps?

State agencies or sponsors and child care center staff are expected to work as a team in completing the assessment. The assessment process involves four steps:

Step 1—Training. State agencies or sponsors provide training to center staff for the purpose of reviewing the expected standards and goals. When center staff, a sponsor or State agency is unsure of the meaning or purpose of the **Practice** identified they should refer to the recommended **Training Resource** for clarification.

The training can be conducted by State agencies or sponsors on a group basis (i.e., for sponsors, it can be as part of an annual training session to meet CACFP regulatory requirements). It also can be conducted by State agencies or sponsors on an individual basis (i.e., for sponsors, it can be as part of the required three annual site reviews).

Step 2—Standards of Merit Timeline Chart. State agencies or sponsors and center staff work together to develop an individualized plan for completing all self-assessment tasks. A Standards of Merit Timeline Chart is enclosed to identify target dates for completing each **Standard**. There should not be restrictions placed on the length of time it takes child care center staff to complete each **Standard** or **Goal**. Center staff should be encouraged to conduct a self-assessment of each

Standard or **Goal** at "their own pace" to ensure that they understand and are complying with the objectives of the CACFP.

Step 3—Self-Assessment. Child care center staff conduct a self-assessment to determine how well they are meeting the established **Standards** and **Goals**. An **Achievement Checklist** has been included to assist the user in tracking accomplishments. Center staff are to "check off" whether they have met, partially met, or not met each **Practice** by the established date**.**

If center staff have determined that they have not met or have only partially met a **Practice**, they may refer to the **Training Resources.** These materials are to be used as a reference in order to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of the underlying principles of a **Standard** or **Goal**. If center staff are not meeting a **Practice** after reviewing the suggested **Training Resource(s)**, State agencies or sponsors should offer additional training specific to the area that needs improvement. Once center staff are confident that they understand and are complying with the unmet or partially met **Practice**, they are to re-assess their achievement.

Step 4—State Agency or Sponsor Review of Self-Assessment. State agencies or sponsors make an on-site visit (for sponsors, it can be one of the three required annual review visits) to verify the accuracy of the center staff's self-assessment. If the State agency or sponsor determines that center staff have not met or have only partially met a **Practice**, State agencies or sponsors should offer immediate on-site training specific to the area that needs improvement. Once the additional training is completed, center staff are given the opportunity to demonstrate that they can meet the unmet **Practice**. If center staff still cannot meet the **Practice,** the State agency or sponsor and center staff should establish a revised achievement date. The State agency or sponsor will conduct a second on-site review (for sponsors, the review can be one of the three required annual review visits) to verify that center staff are currently meeting the **Practice.** Once the State agency or sponsor has established that center staff are meeting all **Standards**, the State agency shall issue or the sponsor shall apply for a Standards of Merit Certificate.

Standards of Merit Timeline Chart

The purpose of this chart is to help child care center staff develop and individualized a plan for obtaining a Standards of Merit Certificate. Upon completion of initial center staff training by the State agency or sponsor, identify dates for the completion of each center staff self-assessment task (i.e., **Practice**). Also, enter the date of the State agency or sponsor follow-up review of the center staff self-assessment.

Standard and Goal	Center staff self-training	Practice achievement	Re-assessment (if Practice not fully met)	State agency or Sponsor on-site verification
1. Administration and Operations **Center Staff Comply with CACFP Administrative Requirements:** Center staff know and comply with Program administrative requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____
Center staff comply with State requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____
Center staff comply with Sponsor's administrative requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____

Standard and Goal	Center staff self-training	Practice achievement	Re-assessment (if Practice not fully met)	State agency or Sponsor on-site verification
2. Meal Service and Nutrition **Center Staff Comply with CACFP Meal Requirements and Serve Nutritious Meals:** Center staff know the CACFP meal pattern requirements for children twelve months of age and older	_____	_____	_____	_____
If applicable, center staff know the CACFP infant meal pattern requirements for children under twelve months of age	_____	_____	_____	_____
Center staff have knowledge of nutrition and nutrition education	_____	_____	_____	_____
Center staff comply with CACFP meal service accommodations for children with medically documented individual dietary needs	_____	_____	_____	_____

PART III -   **Standards of Merit Timeline Chart**

Standard and Goal	Center staff self-training	Practice achievement	Re-assessment (if Practice not fully met)	State agency or Sponsor on-site verification
2. Meal Service and Nutrition (Continued) Center staff may, in compliance with the meal pattern, make accommodations for children who have individual dietary requests	_____	_____	_____	_____
Center Staff Plan and Prepare Meals That Meet CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements: Center staff plan menus that comply with the CACFP meal pattern Center staff purchase foods to meet the CACFP meal pattern that considers cost and quality Center staff prepare and serve CACFP meals demonstrating proficiency in basic food preparation techniques	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

PART III -   **Standards of Merit Timeline Chart**

Standard and Goal	Center staff self-training	Practice achievement	Re-assessment (if Practice not fully met)	State agency or Sponsor on-site verification
3. Health, Safety, and Well-being **Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices:** Center staff store foods properly Center staff properly prepare, hold, and serve foods Center staff keep the child care facility and equipment clean and sanitary	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Center staff Promote the Safety and Well-being of the Children in Care: Center staff maintain a safe environment for children and caretakers	_____	_____	_____	_____

PART III - **Standards of Merit Timeline Chart**

Standard and Goal	Center staff self-training	Practice achievement	Re-assessment (if Practice not fully met)	State agency or Sponsor on-site verification
3. Health, Safety, and Well-Being (Continued) Center staff understand the various stages of physical development and the impact on feeding Center staff encourage positive eating attitudes and behaviors in children	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _ _____ _

PART III -   **Standards of Merit Timeline Chart**

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Administrative Requirements

Goal Administration	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met			Training Resources
Center staff know and comply with Program administrative requirements.	Follows meal claim and recordkeeping requirements				• Child Care Center Handbook • CACFP Regulations • CACFP Food Chart
	• maintains daily attendance records	____	____	____	
	• keeps accurate daily meal counts by meal type	____	____	____	
	• maintains daily menus by meal type	____	____	____	
	• maintains meal substitution records	____	____	____	
	• maintains medical statement records for all substitutions related to medical or special dietary needs	____	____	____	
	• ensures that all meals claimed comply with the appropriate meal patterns				
	• collects child enrollment forms and updates	____	____	____	
	• complies with eligibility requirements for claiming meals (free, reduced-price and paid/over income)	____	____	____	
	• claims only meals approved for reimbursement	____	____	____	
	• complies with appropriate procurement requirements for food service management companies and other services	____	____	____	
	• with State agency approval, ensures that meals provided by school food authorities comply with School Meals Initiative regulations	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Administrative Requirements

Goal Administration	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met			Training Resources
(continued from previous page)	Demonstrates knowledge of meal requirements/limitations as outlined in agreement • reimbursement does not exceed two meals and one snack per child per day • reimbursement is not claimed for meals served to children in excess of the authorized capacity • only children 12 years or under, migrant children through 15 years or individuals that have documented disabilities, as defined by the state, are claimed Complies with monthly eligibility requirements for Title XX participation (for-profit child care centers only) Reports meal changes (types/times) promptly Complies with Civil Rights requirements	—— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— ——			• Child Care Center Handbook • CACFP Regulations

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Administrative Requirements

Goal Administration	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
Center staff comply with State requirements.	• Maintains current license/approval status • Informs the State agency or Sponsor when continued licensing/approval is interrupted • Does not exceed licensed or authorized capacity • Complies with the terms and conditions of the agreement with the State agency (administrative reviews, audits, fiscal requirements)	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____	• Child Care Center Handbook • CACFP Regulations

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Administrative Requirements

Goal Administration	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
Center staff comply with Sponsor's administrative requirements.	• Complies with training requirements • Complies with monitoring requirements • Submits accurate claims in a timely manner	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____	• Child Care Center Handbook • CACFP Regulations

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Food Requirements and Serve Nutritious Meals

Goal Nutrition	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Training Resources
Center staff know the CACFP meal pattern requirements for children twelve months of age and older.	• Prepares and serves all meals and snacks in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the CACFP	____	____	____	• Child Care Center Handbook • Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • Nutrition Guidance • CACFP Food Chart • Food Buying Guide • What's In a Meal? • CACFP Regulations
	• Prepares menus in accordance with the CACFP meal pattern	____	____	____	
	• Recognizes age appropriate needs (for example, center staff do not serve skim or low fat milk to children under two years of age)	____	____	____	
	• Plans one month of menus utilizing the CACFP meal patterns	____	____	____	
	• Prepares meals with at least the minimum amounts of food required to be served to each age group	____	____	____	
	• Knows that non-creditable items cannot be counted as part of their reimbursable meal				

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Food Requirements and Serve Nutritious Meals

Goal Nutrition	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Training Resources
If applicable, center staff know the CACFP infant feeding requirements for children under twelve months of age.	• Consults with parents before serving solid or new foods to infants and before switching from formula/breast milk to whole milk	——	——	——	• CACFP Regulations • Feeding Infants • Food Buying Guide • Breastfed Babies • What's in a Meal? • Center Nutrition Guidance • Child Care Center Handbook
	• Prepares and serves all reimbursable meals and snacks in accordance with the requirements of the CACFP for each age group	——	——	——	
	• Plans one month of menus utilizing the CACFP infant meal patterns	——	——	——	
	• Recognizes age appropriate needs (for example, center staff do not serve baby food to children over 12 months of age) while preparing menus	——	——	——	
	• Prepares meals with at least the minimum amounts of food required to be served to each age group	——	——	——	
	• Knows that non-creditable items cannot be counted as part of a reimbursable meal	——	——	——	

NOTES:

Standard — Center staff Comply with CACFP Food Requirements and Serve Nutritious Meals

Goal Nutrition	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
(continued from previous page)	• Serves foods within the infant meal pattern that are of a texture and consistency appropriate to age group and child's development	____ ____ ____	• Child Care Center Handbook • Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • Nutrition Guidance • CACFP Food Chart
	• Claims meals utilizing breast milk or parent-provided formula served to infants four months of age or older only when the other required/optional meal component or components are supplied by the center staff (Note: Centers may not claim for meals using parent-provided formula or breast milk served to infants birth through 3 months of age as there are no additional components that are required for reimbursement for this age group)	____ ____ ____	
	• Serves breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula unless it is necessary for a parent to provide other formula for reasons documented by a medical authority	____ ____ ____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Food Requirements and Serve Nutritious Meals

Goal Nutrition	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
Center staff have knowledge of nutrition and nutrition education.	• Serves a variety of foods to include a minimum of one serving daily of a fruit, vegetable, or juice high in vitamin C; a food high in vitamin A at least three times a week; and foods that are a good source of iron daily • Displays an understanding of the Food Guide Pyramid and its applicability to meal planning • Considers the Dietary Guidelines in preparing menus for children ages two years and older • Understands and uses food labeling when buying foods and preparing meals • Demonstrates basic knowledge of the developmental characteristics of children related to feeding • Incorporates nutrition related activities into on-going functions • Communicates with parents to understand individual child's nutritional needs, feeding behaviors and habits • Offers water throughout the day	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____	• Food Buying Guide • Dietary Guidelines • Healthy Food Choices • Food Guide Pyramid • What's In a Meal? • Feeding Infants

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Comply with CACFP Food Requirements and Serve Nutritious Meals

Goal Nutrition	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
Center staff comply with CACFP meal service accommodations for children with medically documented individual dietary needs.	• Meets special dietary needs of children in care (due to allergies, disabilities, chronic illnesses, etc.)	____ ____ ____	• Special Needs Guidance • Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • Child Care Center Handbook • What's In a Meal?
Center staff makes, in compliance with the meal pattern, accommodations for children who have individual dietary requests.	• Meets individual dietary requests of children in care (such as ethnic, religious and vegetarian preferences, etc.)	____ ____ ____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Plan and Prepare Meals that Meet CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements

Goal Meal Service	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Met Not Met			Training Resources
Center staff plan menus that comply with the CACFP meal pattern.	Plans one month of menus meeting the CACFP meal pattern for children and/or infants	____	____	____	• CACFP Regulations • Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • Child Care Center Handbook
	Demonstrates knowledge of crediting:				
	• self prepared foods	____	____	____	
	• commercially prepared foods	____	____	____	
	• combination foods	____	____	____	
	Considers the following when planning menus:				
	• variety/cycle menus	____	____	____	
	• seasonal foods	____	____	____	
	• texture, shape, color, flavor	____	____	____	
	• temperature	____	____	____	
	• children's acceptability	____	____	____	
	• introduction of new foods	____	____	____	
	• cultural/ethnic foods	____	____	____	
	• developmentally appropriate foods	____	____	____	
	• nutritional value of foods	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Plan and Prepare Meals that Meet CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements

Goal Meal Service	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Met Not Met			Training Resources
Center staff purchase foods to meet the CACFP meal pattern that consider cost and quality.	• Purchases food in sufficient quantities to adequately meet the CACFP quantity requirements • Purchases and serves quality foods (that have been properly inspected) when and where applicable/required (i.e., government-inspected meats and poultry, pasteurized dairy products) • Serves no home-canned foods • Maintains at a minimum an annual inventory for menu planning, purchasing and food cost control	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____			• CACFP Food Chart • Healthy Food Choices • What's In a Meal? • Food Buying Guide

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Plan and Prepare Meals that Meet CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements

Goal Meal Service	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met / Partially Met / Not Met			Training Resources
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Center staff prepare and serve CACFP meals demonstrating proficiency in basic food preparation techniques.	• Prepares sufficient amounts of foods to meet required components and portion sizes for all age groups present	____	____	____	• Center Nutrition Guidance
	• Uses standardized recipes to ensure sufficient amounts of planned components	____	____	____	• Nutrition Video
	• Determines amount of food necessary to prepare for the day's planned menu with a minimum amount of waste	____	____	____	• Child Care Center Handbook
		____	____	____	
	• Uses food preparation skills and techniques as well as cooking methods to retain nutrients				• What's In a Meal?
	• When serving meals family style, follows USDA requirements	____	____	____	
	• Maintains food production records	____	____	____	
	• Demonstrates proficiency in food preparation skills and techniques appropriate to food service operation	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices

Goal Sanitation	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
Center staff store foods properly.	• Stores dry goods, frozen, and refrigerated foods at the proper temperatures (i.e., 40° F for refrigerated foods and 0° F for frozen foods) • Checks freezer and refrigerator thermometer(s) daily to verify proper food storage temperatures • Promptly stores frozen and refrigerated foods after purchasing • Rotates food using "First In, First Out" storage procedures • Discards leftovers within two days of initial service	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____	• Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • Feeding Infants • Breastfed Babies

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices

Goal Sanitation	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
(continued from previous page)	• Discards food after expiration date • Establishes and implements alternate frozen and refrigerated food storage plan in the event of a long term power outage • Stores food in containers that are labeled and covered with tight fitting lids • Stores food off of floor and away from cleaning supplies	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____	• Preventing Foodborne Illness • What's In a Meal? • National Health and Safety Performance Standards

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices

Goal Sanitation	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Met Not Met			Training Resources
Center staff properly prepare, hold, and serve foods.	• Washes hands and arms with liquid soap and running water prior to food preparation, handling, or serving	____	____	____	• Center Nutrition Guidance
	• Washes fruits and vegetables thoroughly prior to use	____	____	____	• Nutrition Video
	• Washes tools and utensils (with hot soapy water) used to prepare one food item before using them again to prepare another	____	____	____	• Feeding Infants • Breastfed Babies
	• Scrubs cutting boards with hot water and detergent and sanitizes between use for different foods	____	____	____	
	• Does not prepare, store, or serve food in diaper-changing area	____	____	____	
	• Does not serve home-canned food, food from damaged cans, or food from cans without labels	____	____	____	
	• Staff with open cuts, colds, or other communicable diseases do not prepare or serve food	____	____	____	
	• Staff wear hairnets when preparing and serving food	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices

Goal Sanitation	Practices	Achievement Checklist:			Training Resources
		Met	**Partially Met**	**Not Met**	
(continued from previous page)	• Thaws all frozen potentially hazardous foods(i.e. chicken) in refrigerator, microwave, or other local Health Department approved methods (i.e., not at room temperature)	____	____	____	• Preventing Foodborne Illness
	• Heats all leftover foods to l65°F or higher as rapidly as possible	____	____	____	• What's In a Meal?
	• Cooks food as near to serving time as possible and holds food at 140°-165° F prior to and throughout meal service	____	____	____	• National Health and Safety Performance Standards
	• Labels, dates and stores leftovers promptly in the refrigerator after service (i.e., other than in cooking container(s) and within two hours of the meal service) and discards food that has been served, but not eaten	____	____	____	
	• Stores **all** foods away from raw meats	____	____	____	
	• Establishes plan for holding refrigerated foods below 45° F during field trips, picnics, etc.	____	____	____	
	• Washes and sanitizes table surface before and after eating; serves food on plates, etc.; and does not place food on a bare table or high chair top	____	____	____	
	• Air dries dishes after cleaning and sanitizing	____	____	____	
	• Discards leftover baby food in jar				
	• Discards leftover breast milk, infant formula or milk in bottle	____	____	____	
	• Maintains proper hot (140-165°F) and cold (below 45°F) temperatures during holding period for all meals delivered to center	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices

Goal Sanitation	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met	Training Resources
Center staff keep the child care facility and equipment clean and sanitary.	• Cleans all areas (i.e., floors, surfaces, carpets, shelves, equipment, etc.) regularly • Cleans and disinfects frequently touched toys daily for infants and toddlers and weekly for older (nondiapered) children • Cleans bathrooms daily, (or more often, as needed) and supplies with liquid soap and single use towels • Defrosts and cleans refrigerators, freezers, and microwaves on a regularly scheduled basis • Cleans and sanitizes all dishes and pots in commercial dishwasher or three compartment sink • Air dries dishes after cleaning and sanitizing	____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____	• Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • National Health and Safety Performance Standards

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Adhere to Appropriate Health and Sanitation Practices

Goal Sanitation	Practices	Achievement Checklist:			Training Resources
		Met	**Partially Met**	**Not Met**	
(continued from previous page)	• Requires children to wash hands and arms with liquid soap and running water immediately before eating	____	____	____	• Preventing Foodborne Illness
	• Provides each child with clean individual eating and drinking utensils	____	____	____	
	• Washes hands after each diaper changing	____	____	____	
	• Keeps animals out of food preparation, food storage and eating areas, and washes hands after handling animals or animal wastes	____	____	____	
	• Keeps child care facility free from pest infestation	____	____	____	
	• Stores all garbage away from food preparation area in non-absorbent, washable garbage cans	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Promote the Safety and Well-Being of the Children in Care

Goal **Safety and Well-Being**	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met			Training Resources
Center staff maintain a safe environment for children and caretakers.	• The facility has an adequate number and type of working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, and center staff know how to use them	____	____	____	• CACFP Regulations • Feeding Infants • Breastfed Babies • Center Nutrition Guidance
	• Establishes and implements emergency procedures in the event of a fire, medical or other emergency situations	____	____	____	
	• Stores cleaning supplies, medicines, pesticides, and other toxic substances out of reach of children and away from food	____	____	____	
	• Makes appropriate safety modifications to facility	____	____	____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Promote the Safety and Well-Being of the Children in Care

Goal Safety and Well-Being	Practices	Achievement Checklist:			Training Resources
		Met	**Partially Met**	**Not Met**	
(continued from previous page)	• Demonstrates knowledge of basic first-aid, stores first-aid kit in an easily accessible area, and demonstrates knowledge of age appropriate CPR and the Heimlich maneuver	____	____	____	• Nutrition Video • Preventing Foodborne Illness • National Health and Safety Performance Standards • Child Care Center Handbook
	• Demonstrates an understanding of foodborne illnesses, recognizes the physical symptoms in a child, and follows the appropriate procedures when a child becomes ill	____	____	____	
	• Recognizes the signs of abuse/neglect, and reports instances to the appropriate authority				
	• Furnishings, play equipment, and materials are sturdy, free of sharp points or corners, splinters, protruding nails or bolts, loose rusty parts, hazardous small parts, or paint that contains lead or other poisonous materials	____ ____	____ ____	____ ____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Promote the Safety and Well-Being of the Children in Care

Goal **Safety and Well-Being**	Practices	Achievement Checklist: Met Partially Not Met Met			Training Resources
Center staff understand the various stages of physical development and the impact on feeding.	Identifies normal sequence of large and small motor skill development • sucking/swallowing • rotary chewing • hand to mouth (using a spoon, drinking from a cup, self-feeding, etc.) • balance (sitting in chair) Serves the appropriate textures of food for different levels of development • modifies textures of foods (mashes, purees, etc.) • cuts toddler and infant foods into small pieces • does not serve foods that are potential choking hazards	____ ____ ____ ____	____ ____ ____ ____	____ ____ ____ ____	• Center Nutrition Guidance • Child Care Center Handbook • Feeding Infants • Breastfed Babies • National Health and Safety Performance Standards • What's In a Meal?
		____ ____ ____	____ ____ ____	____ ____ ____	

NOTES:

Standard — Center Staff Promote the Safety and Well-Being of the Children in Care

Goal Safety and Well-Being	Practices	Achievement Checklist:			Training Resources
		Met	**Partially Met**	**Not Met**	
Center staff encourage positive eating attitudes and behaviors in children.	Recognizes common meal behaviors and discusses them with parents • refusing new foods • preferences • food jags (changes in appetite) Discourages eating when playing, lying down, or riding in vehicles Encourages socialization • manners • sharing • communication skills Encourages a positive environment • serves as a good role model • avoids distractions during meal time • has age appropriate equipment (chairs, dishes, utensils) • has ample time for children to eat • supervises meals • encourages, not forces, children to eat and does not use food as a reward or punishment • sits and eats with children when possible	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___			• Center Nutrition Guidance • Nutrition Video • Breastfed Babies • Feeding Infants • National Health and Safety Performance Standards • What's In a Meal?

Training and Materials Resources

Resources Available from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service
(703) 305-2590 OR http://www.usda.gov

7 CFR Part 226 (CACFP Regulations)

FNS Instruction 113-4, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement in the Child Care Food Program

FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, Financial Management—Child and Adult Care Food Program

Other applicable FNS Instructions

*   Child and Adult Care Food Program Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Homes, September 1995

**   Child and Adult Care Food Program Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Centers, September 1995

Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Video, September 1995

*   Child and Adult Care Food Program Day Care Homes Handbook, October 1994

**   Child and Adult Care Food Program Child Care Centers Handbook, Revised August 1995

Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs: Guidance for School Food Service Staff, Revised September 1999

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, PA-1331, January 1984
(Out of print but will become available on the Healthy School Meals Resource System—
http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov:8001—in the Fall of 1999.)

Resources Available from Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP)
Publications Hotline (202) 606-8000 OR Phone (202) 418-2312 OR http://www.usda.gov/cnpp
(Orders from CNPP for single copies only, order quantities from Government Printing Office)

USDA's Food Guide Pyramid Book, Revised 1996

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, HGB-232, Fourth Edition, 1995

Resources Available from Government Printing Office (GPO)
Phone (202) 512-1800

Making Healthy Food Choices, HGB-250 (English), 1999
Making Healthy Food Choices, HGB-250S (Spanish), December 1994

Resources Available from National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI)

Phone (800) 321-3054 OR FAX (800) 321-3061

Building for the Future: Nutrition Guidance for the Child Nutrition Programs
FNS-279 (English), April 1992, NFSMI Order # FNS-279

Breastfed Babies Welcome Here Packet, October 1993, NFSMI Order # FNS-1518

What's In a Meal, Second Edition July 1996, Third Edition January 1999, NFSMI Order # EX15-95

Food, Family and Fun: A Seasonal Guide to Healthy Eating, 1998, NFSMI Order # FCS-298

Go, Glow, Grow: Foods For You, 1996, NFSMI Order # FCS-1554

Tickle Your Appetite for Child Care, 1998, NFSMI Order # FCS-307

Child Care Recipes—Food For Health and Fun, FNS-304, 1999

Food Guide Pyramid Poster for Children 2 to 6 years of age

Resources Available from the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service
Phone (202) 720-9352 # OR http://www.fsis.usda.gov

The Fightback Brochure (4 Simple Steps to Food Safety) (An update of "A Quick Consumer Guide to Safe Food Handling" HGB-248, 1990)

Preventing Foodborne Illness: A Guide to Safe Food Handling, HGB-247, September 1990

Basic Food Handling, 1997

Other Resources

National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, 1992, by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Currently being revised—Available from the National Maternal and Child Health Clearing House at (703) 821-8955

*   Specific to Child Care Homes
** Specific to Child Care Centers

Revised September 1999

State Department of Education

Standards of Merit Certificate
Awarded to

_____

"For successfully achieving the Child Care Standards of the Child and Adult Care Food Program Task Force Initiative in an effort to improve integrity, management, and regulatory compliance at all levels of Program administration."

_____   _____
Date   *Child and Adult Care Food Program Administrator*

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Center Review Form and Instructions

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM

This form is designed to be used primarily by the State agency in monitoring sponsoring organizations and independent centers.

Box: Record date(s) of review. Lines are provided to record date, arrival time, and departure time for two days.

Items 1-3: Self-explanatory.

Item 4: Check all that apply. If clarification is needed, refer to the definitions of "independent center" and "sponsoring organization" in CFR Part 226.2.

Item 5: Enter the number of CACFP centers administered by type. If clarification is needed, refer to the definitions of "child care center", "outside-school-hours-care center" and "Proprietary Title XX center" in CFR Part 226.2.

Item 6: Note to State agency: If "Pricing" is checked be sure appropriate documents are on file so the State agency can conduct verification. Refer to 7 CFR Part 226.23(h) for further instructions.

COMPLETE DOCUMENTS ON FILE

This section includes documents the reviewer should obtain at the beginning of the administrative review. The reviewer should determine which month's claim(s) for reimbursement is to be verified. All of these documents should be current.

Items 7-20: These items should be available for review, including any amendments to the Management Plan.

Item 10: To be eligible to participate, institutions must be public agencies, private non-profit organizations, or certain private for-profit organizations. Documentation which supports the IRS status of the independent center or sponsoring organization should be available for review. For further guidance, refer to the CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook, August 1995.

Items 13-14: Institutions should be aware of and comply with applicable State or local laws and the Federal procurement standards. Documentation which supports the proper procurement of goods or services should be on file. For further guidance on procurement and contracting requirements, refer to the CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook, August 1995, and other appropriate Federal and State guidance.

Item 15: Sponsoring organizations only: A separate application and signed agreement, if applicable, is required for each sponsored center.

Items 16-18: Documentation (i.e., meal counts, menus, attendance records, income forms) from the past year of operation should be available for review. If this is a sponsoring organization of multiple centers, supporting documentation should include monthly meal count reports from each center.

Item 19: Documentation (directives from State, official State memoranda, etc.) from the past year of operation should be available for review.

Item 20: Documentation that they are currently providing nonresidential day care services for which they receive compensation.

Item 21: Self-explanatory.

CIVIL RIGHTS DATA

The following are USDA requirements for civil rights compliance. The reviewer should follow State agency procedures for handling Civil Rights violations.

Items 22-29: For additional guidance on Civil Rights requirements, see FNS Instruction 113-4, *Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement in the Child Care Food Program.* For any "NO" responses, record finding on the summary sheet on page 10.

Item 26: Either the USDA "…And Justice For All" poster or other poster approved by FNS.

Items 27-29: Self-explanatory.

PARTICIPATION DATA AND ELIGIBILITY

This section addresses the eligibility of centers and children to participate in the Program. For further guidance on eligibility, refer to the CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook, August 1995. For further guidance on eligibility determinations from the applications for free and reduced price meals, refer to FNS-274, *Eligibility guidance for School Meals Manual.*

Item 30: Review month to be determined by the reviewer.

Items 31-33: Record the number of centers reported on the Claim for Reimbursement and verify the centers were approved to participate. If the number of centers reported on the Claim for Reimbursement for the review month exceeds the number of centers verified, check "NO" for Item 33 and record findings on page 10. Refer to the State agency disallowance policy.

Item 34: The reviewer will verify all approved meal types for all centers. Indicate whether all meal types claimed by each center are approved per the agreements.

Item 35: Review enrollment records for centers to be reviewed. At the discretion of the reviewer, an expanded sample of enrollment records may be reviewed. Determine that a complete and current enrollment form is available for each child claimed. For information on enrollment forms, refer to appropriate Federal and State agency guidance.

Item 36: Verify that all children in the centers to be reviewed are within the regulatory age limits. At the discretion of the reviewer, an expanded sample of age verification documents may be reviewed. Ensure that each child claimed meets regulatory age limits, per the definition of child in CFR Part 226.2. Children ages 12 and under, children of migrant workers ages 15 or under and disabled persons of any age, if the majority of enrollees are ages 18 or under, and are eligible to participate in the CACFP.

Item 37: By verifying appropriate documentation at the centers to be reviewed, ensure that the institution is using the State-approved income eligibility application and the current income eligibility guidelines. The income guidelines are revised and issued annually by USDA.

Item 38: Determine if all income eligibility applications were correctly approved for free or reduced-price meal eligibility.

PROPRIETARY TITLE XX CENTERS ONLY

Item 39: An approved proprietary Title XX center can claim and be reimbursed only for meals served in those months when 25 percent of the enrolled children, or 25 percent of its licensed capacity, whichever is less, are Title XX beneficiaries. Complete the table as appropriate and check "NO" if meals were claimed for any month where this criteria was not met. Refer to appropriate Federal and State agency guidance for clarification of proper Title XX documentation. If the center operates in shifts, refer to the State agency for guidance.

CLAIM FOR REIMBURSEMENT VERIFICATION

This section involves verifying the eligibility of all meals claimed during the review month. The reviewer will analyze all records or a sample of records, as determined by the State agency.

Menus
Item 40: The reviewer will verify all daily menus in all centers. Review daily menus submitted by each center during the review month. All menus, including infant menus, must meet the meal pattern requirements.   For further guidance on meal pattern requirements, refer to the CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook, August 1995. If no menus exist, refer to the State agency disallowance policy.

Item 41: Review discrepancies for centers to be reviewed. Based on the reviewer's verification of menus for the review month, answer "NO" if there is any discrepancy between the sponsor verified and reviewer verified menus. List discrepancies. (For

example, the sponsor disallowed meals for 4 days in which the menu did not meet meal pattern requirements. The reviewer found 2 additional days in which the menu did not meet meal pattern requirements. The discrepancy is the number of meals claimed on the two additional days from those menus that did not meet meal pattern requirements.)

Meal Counts
This section reviews whether the institution is ensuring that meal counts are accurate and correctly consolidated and reported. For further guidance and recommendations on meal counts, refer to the <u>CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook</u>, August 1995.

Item 42: Verify daily point of service meal counts for centers to be reviewed. Consolidate the information gathered from all center reviews, and list any findings on page 10. The State agency may also require that a sample of other center records be reviewed.

Item 43: The institution must review all meal counts for all centers for accuracy. Examples of effective edits are listed on page 11.

Item 44: Add totals for all centers' claims and compare to the institution's Claim for Reimbursement to verify the accuracy of the Claim for Reimbursement. Use the appropriate table on page 5 to list discrepancies between sponsor reported and reviewer verified meal counts.

Item 45: The reviewer will verify either all of the meal counts or a sample, as directed by the State agency. The reviewer will verify counts for each meal claimed during the review month, to ensure that the institution is correctly adding daily meal counts by meal type and reimbursement rates. If sampling is used, and significant problems are found in the sample, the State agency should expand the review to encompass all centers.

Item 46: Record the institution's total meal count adjustment based on numbers 30-38 and properly document and verify numbers 39-45. Verify by adding the reviewer meal count adjustment(s) listed on page 9.

OTHER CLAIM DATA
Item 47: Review documentation that relates to the institution's claim for reimbursement. If applicable, verify whether all costs have been accurately reported on the claim, and ensure that all costs are allowable. List discrepancies on page 10. Determine whether the institution receives income to its food service Program, such as through vending meals, and enter other sources of income available to the institution. The reviewer should use information provided by the State agency claims processing system.

Items 48-49: If there are any discrepancies noted in Item 46 or 47, indicate "NO," and explain. Include findings on summary sheet on page 10.

FISCAL INTEGRITY AND PROCUREMENT

Item 50: If the institution does not receive advance funds, indicate "N/A."

Items 51-52: Institutions must keep accurate records of their operating and administrative costs to document the nonprofit status of their food service. For further guidance, refer to the <u>CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook</u>, August 1995, FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, *Financial Management - Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and appropriate State guidance. This applies in those States that pay lesser of costs vs. rates.

Item 53: The reviewer should evaluate procurement documentation and determine whether the institution is in compliance with applicable State or local laws and the Federal procurement standards. For further guidance on procurement and contracting requirements, refer to the <u>CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook</u>, August 1995 and other appropriate Federal and State guidance, including FNS Instruction 796-2, Rev. 2, 7 CFR Parts 226, 3015, 3017, and 3018, and OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110.

Item: 54a: For prior month's claim, perform a cursory review of all invoices. Determine if food and non-food purchases are reasonable and allowable. Determine if food purchases appear to be reasonable and allowable and substantiate the menus and quantities served. Verify documentation which may include daily meal production records.

Item 54b: Self-explanatory.

TRAINING

This section contains review questions concerning training the institution has conducted for centers and staff. For further guidance and recommendations on training, refer to the <u>CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook</u>, August 1995.

Items 55-59: Review training documentation and determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the institution's training. Determine that the institution has met the training requirements as contained in 7 CFR 226.

Item 60: Record institution suggestions for future CACFP training.

Item 61: Determine whether the institution is providing assistance to appropriate center staff on the principles of menu planning, nutrition, dietary guidelines, etc. This is particularly relevant when the menus do not consistently meet meal pattern requirements, do not demonstrate variety, etc.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS ONLY

Items 62-63: Self-explanatory.

Item 64: The sponsor should have documentation that all centers were visited prior to participating in the CACFP.

Item 65: The sponsor should be using a State agency approved review form, or have prior approval from the State agency to modify the form. If the State agency does not mandate a review form, mark "N/A".

Item 66: All monitoring reviews should be documented with a completed review form.

Item 67: Each center should be reviewed three times per year. Each center should be reviewed during the first six weeks of operation, and not more than six months should elapse between reviews. For further guidance on review requirements, refer to the CACFP Child Care Centers Handbook, August 1995, and appropriate State guidance.

Item 68: The sponsor should be following the schedule described in the management plan.

Item 69: Review reports should contain problems noted, and corrective action to be taken by the center. The sponsor should require and document corrective action necessary to prevent the problem from recurring.

Item 70: The sponsor should have a procedure to conduct follow-up visits if problems are noted, to ensure that the center has corrected the problem(s).

Item 71: The sponsor should have a procedure in place to address recurring problems. Continued problems should trigger further actions by the sponsoring organization, such as follow-up visits, unannounced visits, parental contacts, suspension, and termination. The reviewer should refer to appropriate State agency procedures, if available.

Item 72: Effective corrective action means the problem found at the time of review has been addressed and corrected. If a sponsor finds the center repeatedly having the same problem(s), then corrective action has not been effective.

CENTER REVIEW(S)

Item 73: Discuss any findings from the center reviews with the sponsor. Any findings from the center reviews should be noted in the summary of findings on page 10.

CURRENT ISSUES

Item 74: Based on the interview give a narrative of any specific concern, project, innovation, or other issue that the reviewer or institution believes is relevant to Program operations.

SUMMARY OF ADJUSTMENTS

This section records all meal count discrepancies noted during the review.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section is a summary of all administrative findings. The reviewer should ensure that the summary reflects all findings noted in the body of the reports. Findings should be discussed at the exit conference, and both reviewer and institution representative should sign.

EDITS

The process the institution uses to verify the correct amount of reimbursement funds earned should involve editing meal count information to ensure accuracy. This list contains recommendations of effective edits. The reviewer should refer to appropriate State agency requirements and/or recommendations, if available.

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CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM

Date(s) of Review	Arrival Time(s)	Departure Time(s)

1. Institution	Agreement Number:
2. Address	Telephone Number:
3. Name of Person Interviewed:	Title:
4. Type of Institution: ❑ Independent Center ❑Public ❑ Private for Profit (Title XX) ❑Nonprofit ❑ Sponsoring Organization	5. Number of CACFP Centers Administered by Type _____ Child Care Centers (Federal tax exempt, nonprofit) _____ OSHCC _____ Proprietary Title XX Centers
5. Type of Program: ❑ Pricing ❑ Non-pricing	

COMPLETE DOCUMENTS ON FILE

Document	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
7. Application				
8. Agreement				
9. Approved Free and Reduced Price Policy Statement				
10. IRS Determination				
11. News Media Release				
12. Management Plan				
13. Procurement Documentation				
14. Contracts				
15. Center Application (for each approved center)				
16. Monthly Claims for Reimbursement (including all supporting documentation)				
17. Program Income Records				
18. Program Expense Records				
19. State Agency Memorandums				
20. Title XX Documentation				

21.　　The institution/sponsor maintains all program records for three years after the date of submission of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which they pertain, or if an audit is outstanding, until the audit is closed.　　　❑YES　　　❑NO

CIVIL RIGHTS DATA

22.   The institution collects racial/ethnic data for enrolled children at each center annually and keeps this information on file for the required time period.   ❏YES   ❏NO

23.   The institution announces publicly that admission is open to all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.   ❏YES   ❏NO

24.   The institution allows equal access to its program, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, to all attending children.   ❏YES   ❏NO

25.   All publications and other forms of communication, such as radio and TV announcements, used to inform the general public, parents of beneficiaries, and potential beneficiaries about the program, include the required nondiscrimination statement and the procedure for filing a complaint. (Note: Radio or TV announcements 30 seconds or less may use the phrase, "This is an equal opportunity program.")
          ❏YES   ❏NO

26.   The nondiscrimination poster "...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL" is posted in a conspicuous place.
          ❏YES   ❏NO

27.   Informational materials are provided in the appropriate translation concerning the availability and nutritional benefits of the program, as needed.   ❏YES   ❏NO

28.   The institution makes CACFP information available to the public upon request.
          ❏YES   ❏NO

29.   Materials provided by the institution which explain the CACFP to parents include the nondiscrimination statement and the procedure for filing a complaint.
          ❏YES   ❏NO

PARTICIPATION DATA AND ELIGIBILITY

30.   Review Month: _____
31.   Number of centers reported on the Claim for Reimbursement for the review month: _____
32.   Number of approved centers verified as participating in the review month: _____

33. The sponsor only claimed reimbursement for approved centers. ❑YES ❑NO   If "NO," list the center(s) that were claimed but not approved and number of meals. Record required corrective action on page 10.

34. The sponsor only claimed reimbursement for approved meal types.   ❑YES ❑NO
     If "NO," list the center(s) and meal types that were claimed but not approved. Record required corrective action on page 10.

35. Enrollment records are on file to support all children who are enrolled. ❑YES ❑NO
     If "NO," list the children who were claimed and not supported by enrollment records and record required corrective action on page10.

36. Children enrolled are within the regulatory age limits. ❑YES ❑NO   If "NO," list the children who were claimed who are not within the regulatory age limits and record required corrective action on page 10.

37. The institution uses the current income eligibility statement and guidelines and parent/guardian letter approved by the State agency. ❑YES   ❑NO   If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

38. Complete and correctly approved income eligibility statements are on file for each child claimed for free or reduced-price meals during the review month. ❑YES   ❑NO   If "NO," list the children who were claimed for free or reduced-price meals without a complete and correctly approved income eligibility statement and record required corrective action on the Income Eligibility Discrepancy Review form. Complete the chart and document the number of children claimed by type by the sponsor or independent center and the discrepancies. Record discrepancies on the Income Eligibility Discrepancy Review form and refer to the State agency disallowance policy.

	Free	Reduced	Paid
# Claimed by Type			
# Verified by Type			

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM Agreement Number: ____
CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM ARF-
4

PROPRIETARY TITLE XX CENTERS ONLY

39. **Month**	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Site 11	Site 12
# of Enrolled Children												
Licensed Capacity												
# of Title XX Beneficiaries												
% of Title XX												

Meals are served and claimed at proprietary Title XX centers only during the calendar months when at least 25% of the enrolled children or licensed capacity, whichever is less, are Title XX beneficiaries. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

CLAIM FOR REIMBURSEMENT VERIFICATION

MENUS

40. Daily, dated menus are on file for all meals claimed. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

41. The sponsor reviews menus and accurately verifies menus for meal pattern requirements prior to compiling the Claim for Reimbursement. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

MEAL COUNTS

42. Daily point of service meal count records are maintained for each enrolled child at each center for each serving day of the month. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

43. The institution implements "edits" that ensure accurate meal counts. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain.

44. The institution correctly consolidated the total meal counts for each meal type and category and submitted an accurate Claim for Reimbursement. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain or record in the chart on page 5.

45. The institution correctly totaled daily meal counts by meal type and category. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record in the chart on page 5.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM
5

Agreement Number: ____
ARF-

46. *Use the following 2 charts if the institution is reimbursed by using actual meal count multiplied by eligibility category.*

	Consolidation of Meal Adjustments											
	Breakfast						Lunch					
				+ or -						+ or -		
	F	R	P	F	R	P	F	R	P	F	R	P
Institution Reported												
Reviewer Verified												

	Consolidation of Meal Adjustments											
	Supper						Snack					
				+ or -						+ or -		
	F	R	P	F	R	P	F	R	P	F	R	P
Institution Reported												
Reviewer Verified												

Use this chart if the institution is reimbursed using blended rates or claiming percentages.

	Consolidation of Meal Adjustments							
	Breakfast		Lunch		Supper		Snack	
		+ or -		+ or -		+ or -		+ or -
Institution Reported								
Reviewer Verified								

OTHER CLAIM DATA

47.	Not Reported	Documentation				Reported Correctly		Comments
		Available		Correct				
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Total number of days food service was provided								
Average Daily Attendance								
Food Service Operation Costs:								
Administrative								
Food								
Non-Food								
Direct Labor								
Indirect								
Income								

48. Data reported on the Claim for Reimbursement was supported by acceptable documentation. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

49. The institution accurately reported all data on the Claim for Reimbursement. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain and record required corrective action on page 10.

FISCAL INTEGRITY AND PROCUREMENT

50. Advance payments are maintained in a non-interest bearing account. ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A If "NO," explain.

51. The institution operates a non-profit food service operation. ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A If "NO", explain.

52. The institution's cost justified its reimbursement. ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A If "NO", explain.

53a. Competitive bidding is used for purchases with a total value greater than $10,000. ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A If "NO", explain.

53b. Documentation is on file to support the small purchase method of procurement. Proper procurement procedures are used when purchasing and documentation is on file. ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A If "NO", explain.

54a. Documentation is on file to support routine food purchases. The institution's menus justified the purchases of food items. Proper procurement procedures are followed for all purchases. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO", explain.

54b. Documentation is on file to support the method of procurement used. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO", explain.

TRAINING

55. The institution has documentation (attendance sheet) to verify that annual training was provided to each center. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain.

56. The institution has copies of annual training agendas. ❑YES ❑NO If "NO," explain.

57.   The training topics facilitate meeting the goals of the child care center standards.   ❑YES❑NO
        If "NO," explain.

58.   Describe the actions taken by the institution to ensure all appropriate center staff attend training.

59.   The institution has incorporated center staff recommendations for future training topics.
        ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A   If "NO," explain.

60.   Institution suggestions for State agency training.

61.   The institution provides ongoing assistance to applicable center staff on the principles of menu planning,
        nutrition, dietary guidelines, etc. ❑YES   ❑NO   If "NO," explain.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS ONLY

62.   The sponsor disburses advances to the centers within 5 working days of receipt from the State agency.
        ❑YES ❑NO   ❑N/A   If "NO," explain.

63.   The sponsor disburses the full amount of advance to the center. ❑YES ❑NO   ❑N/A   If "NO," explain

64.   The sponsor conducted pre-approval visits to all new child care centers. ❑YES ❑NO   ❑N/A
        If "NO," explain.

65.   The sponsor uses the review form required/approved by the State agency. ❑YES❑NO   ❑N/A
        If "NO," explain.

66.   Documents are on file to support sponsor monitoring efforts. ❑YES   ❑NO   If "NO," explain.

67.   The sponsor has conducted and documented all required reviews during the last twelve months.
        ❑YES ❑NO   If "NO," explain.

68.   The sponsor has implemented the monitoring schedule as described in the management plan for the program year. ❏YES   ❏NO   If "NO," explain.

69.   The sponsor maintains complete and accurate records of corrective actions taken.   ❏YES   ❏NO If "NO," explain.

70.   The sponsor conducted follow-up reviews when necessary. ❏YES   ❏NO   If "NO," explain.

71.   Describe how the sponsor ensures that effective corrective action occurs.

72.   Describe procedures implemented by the sponsor for addressing centers with ongoing noncompliance.

CENTER REVIEW(S)

73.   The *Center Review Form(s)* was (were) discussed with the institution's administrator.   ❏YES   ❏NO If "NO", explain.

CURRENT ISSUES

74.   Describe innovations, new projects, current concerns or other issues specific to the institution.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM

Agreement Number:

ARF-9

Summary of Adjustments

Review Item #	Center Name	Breakfast	Lunch	Supper	Snacks

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM   **Agreement Number:** _____
CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM

EDITS

The process used by an institution to determine the accuracy of the Claim for Reimbursement, involves several edits. Check the box for each item listed below that is implemented by the institution.

❑   A current center application is on file with the institution.

❑   A current income eligibility statement is on file with the institution for each child claiming for free or reduced price meals.

❑   Income eligibility statements are correctly approved/denied by the institution.

❑   Each center is currently licensed or alternately approved.

❑   An enrollment record/form is on file to support each child whose meals are claimed for reimbursement.

❑   Each center only claims meals/snacks for which they have been approved.

❑   Children's complete names are listed on meal count records.

❑   The total number of meals/snacks reimbursed is counted correctly by the institution.

❑   Meals/snacks claimed are supported by recorded menus or production records.

❑   If applicable, menus recorded on review forms are the same as on the recorded menu.

❑   If applicable, meal attendance recorded on review forms is the same as the recorded meal count records.

❑   Meals/snacks claimed meet the meal/snack pattern requirements.

❑   Children for whom meals are claimed are within the regulatory age limits.

❑   Only the allowable number of meals/snacks are claimed per child per day.

❑   Each center is at/within capacity.

❑   A maximum of 28/29 days are claimed in February, 30 days for September, April, June and November.

❑   Attendance patterns are noted; few or no absences are questioned.

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SAMPLE

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORM

Agreement Number: _____
ARF-10

Summary of Findings

Review Item #	Brief Description of Finding	Corrective Action (C.A.) Needed	C.A. Due Date	Follow-up Visit Date	Date Corrected

Institution Representative Signature_____   Date:_____
State Agency Reviewer Signature_____   Date:_____

Center Administrative Review Form and Instructions

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHILD CARE CENTER REVIEW FORM

Below are instructions for the use of this form.

Box: Record date of review. Circle all that apply. Is this a first, second, or third, and unannounced, or 90 day review. Record arrival and departure time.

Items 1-3: Self-explanatory.

Item 4: Enter facility license information. If alternately approved, see State agency alternate approval criteria and procedures.

Item 5: Check the meal type(s) the facility is approved to serve.

Item 6: Check all types of programs the facility operates. "Child Care Center" is public or private, non-profit. "OSHCC" is outside school hours care center. If "Other", describe.

Item 7: Per the current license.

Item 8: Complete the Enrollment Roster Worksheet on page 7. If applications are not on file and correct for each child, check "NO".

Item 9: Regulatory age limits are defined under the definition of "children" in 7 CFR Part 226.

CIVIL RIGHTS
Please use the FNS-345-1 (Civil Rights Racial Data Collection Form, Child Care Food Program) for completing the required Civil Rights information. The reviewer should follow State agency procedures for handling civil rights violations. For additional guidance on civil rights requirements, see FNS Instruction 113-4, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement in the Child Care Food Program.

HEALTH/SAFETY/SANITATION

Items 10-18: Determine if reasonable health, safety and sanitary conditions exist in the center. Provide a description of any problem noted in Item 18. Any serious health and/or safety and/or sanitation problem(s) should be discussed with the staff and immediately brought to the attention of the sponsoring organization (if applicable) and the appropriate local and/or State agencies.

TRAINING/MONITORING

Items 19-21: Sponsors are required to conduct training annually. These questions are designed to obtain information on the effectiveness of sponsor training and to provide the sponsor feedback to effect improvements to their training programs. If this is an independent center, note any training conducted by the center for its staff. Documentation on file should include an agenda, a list of attendees, and copies of training certificates.

Item 22: Refer to the last review conducted by the sponsor or State agency. "Effective corrective action" is achieved when the center does not demonstrate similar problems on the current review. If similar problems appear on the current review, indicate "NO" and explain the problems. Note corrective action required on the Summary of Findings on page 6.

DAY OF REVIEW - OBSERVATION OF MEAL SERVICE

Item 23: Self-explanatory.

Item 24: Observe and record the food items and serving sizes prepared and served to meet the required meal pattern requirements. (Infant menu to be recorded in Item 30.)

Item 25: Compare food items served on the day of review to the written menu prepared by the center. Menus should accurately reflect which food items were served to meet the meal pattern requirements. Menu substitutions should be appropriate and recorded on the menu.

Item 26: Observe and determine if the meal contains all the required components. If "NO," record the number of meals with missing components disallowed and describe the technical assistance provided. For further guidance on meal pattern requirements, refer to 7 CFR Part 226.20; FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 2; Family Style Meal Service in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and appropriate State agency guidance.

Item 27: Observe and determine that the required components were prepared and served in sufficient quantities. The meal service may be pre-plated or family-style. For further guidance on family-style meal service in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, see FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 2, Family Style Meal Service in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Item 28: Meals served to children should incorporate a combination of colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes, and flavors. If "NO," provide technical assistance to encourage variety and enhance eye-appeal of meals. For further guidance, see the USDA-FCS handbook, "Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Centers."

Item 29: A positive and pleasant meal environment promotes good eating habits for children. If "NO," provide technical assistance to encourage the center to create a more

pleasant meal environment. For further guidance, see "Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Centers."

Item 30: If infants are served and claimed, record food items and serving sizes prepared and served.

Item 31: Infant meals consisting solely of food provided by parents are NOT reimbursable. The center MUST provide at least one required component of a meal (infant formula, infant cereal or baby food, for example) for that meal to be claimed for reimbursement and documentation to support a parents' choice to provide formula must be on file.

MEAL SERVICE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Item 32: Menus should be complete and accurate. Review menus to ensure that all meal components were served. If menus are missing or are missing components, check "NO" and explain.

Item 33: Modifications in the meal pattern for medical reasons must be accompanied by a signed statement obtained from a recognized medical authority. For further guidance on menu variations/substitutions, see FNS Instruction 782-13, Guidelines for Policy Statement Serving Meals or Milk Without Separate Charge.

Item 34: Required documentation is established by State or local agency policy, and may include daily meal production records, receipts, invoices, etc.

Item 35: Observe meal service to determine whether an accurate count is taken at the point of service. If "NO," determine and record the cause for the inaccurate count and describe the technical assistance provided. An accurate system is based on an actual count of children served and must consistently yield correct results. Examples of meal count methods that are NOT accurate are plate counts, use of enrollment/attendance data for meal count, other figures derived from enrollment and/or attendance data, etc.

Item 36: Meals served to adults are NOT to be counted as meals served to children and may not be claimed.

Item 37: Obtain a copy of the meal counts by type for each of the five previous days and record the counts in the chart provided. Compare each day to the day of review count. Evaluate the counts to determine if there is an unreasonable discrepancy between the counts from the previous days and the day of review count. If the counts do not appear reasonable, mark "NO", and obtain and record an explanation and indicate if the explanation is acceptable.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – DAY OF REVIEW

The purpose of this form is to summarize review findings and corrective actions needed. It may also be used for subsequent follow-up visits and to track progress toward meeting corrective action.

CENTER REVIEW MONTH FORM

REVIEW MONTH - MENUS

Item 1: Determine if all meals claimed during the review month contained all of the required components. If "NO," record the number of meals with missing components disallowed and describe the technical assistance provided. For further guidance on meal pattern requirements, refer to 7 CFR 226.20, FNS Instruction 783-9, Rev. 2, Family Service Meal Service in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and other appropriate State agency guidance.

Item 2: The center staff should have a working knowledge of the principles of nutrition, menu planning and food preparation. Meals served to children should also incorporate a combination of colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes, and flavors. If "NO", provide technical assistance to encourage variety and enhance eye-appeal of meals. For further guidance, see the USDA-FNS handbook, "Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Centers."

REVIEW MONTH - ELIGIBILITY

Item 3: Self-Explanatory.

Item 4: Determine whether each child for whom meals were claimed during the review month had a complete and current enrollment form. For information on enrollment forms, refer to Federal and State agency guidance.

REVIEW MONTH - MEAL COUNTS

Item 5: Determine whether complete and accurate meal count records are available for each serving day of the review month. An accurate counting system is one based on an actual count of children served and must consistently yield correct results. If "NO," determine and record the cause for the inaccurate count and describe the technical assistance provided.

Item 6: Obtain a copy of the meal counts by type for each serving day in the review month. Compare each day's count to the day of review count. Evaluate the counts to determine if there is an unreasonable discrepancy as defined by the State between the review month and the day of review count. If the counts do not appear reasonable, record "NO", obtain and record an explanation and indicate if the explanation is acceptable. Record any meal adjustments in the space provided.

Items 7a-b : Determine whether the center has claimed the approved meal types and no more than 2 meals and 1 snack or 1 meal and 2 snacks for each eligible child for each serving day. Refer to the copy of the current sponsor/center agreement for further guidance. If "NO," record the explanation and any meal adjustments in the space provided.

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CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER REVIEW FORM

SAMPLE

Date of Review	1	2	3	UN	90 Day

Arrival Time: _____ Departure Time: _____

1. Name of Institution	Agreement Number:
2. Name of Center: Telephone Number:	
3. Reviewer(s)	

4. License and Enrollment Information

   License Number: _____   Expiration Date: _____   Capacity: _____

   Other/Alternate Approval: _____ Enrollment: _____ Age of Children: _____

5. Approved Meal Type(s): ❑ Breakfast ❑ A.M. Snack ❑ Lunch ❑ P.M. Snack ❑ Supper ❑ Evening Snack

6. Types of Programs: ❑ Child Care Center ❑ OSHCC ❑ Head Start ❑ Title XX ❑ Migrant ❑ Other

7. The center is at/within licensed capacity, age limits, and provider/child ratio at the time of review.
   ❑YES ❑NO   If "NO", explain.

8. The children in attendance and participating in the meal service have complete and current enrollment forms.
   ❑YES ❑NO   If "NO", explain on the Enrollment Roster Worksheet, on page 7.

9. The meals claimed are served to children who are within regulatory age limits.   ❑YES ❑NO
   If "NO", explain.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Refer to the Instructions for Child Care Center Review Form on page 1.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM   **Center**   ~~Name:~~
CENTER REVIEW FORM   **CRF-2**

HEALTH/SAFETY/SANITATION

	Yes	No
10. The refrigeration units are clean and maintained at required temperatures.		
11. Food is properly stored in the refrigeration units and in dry areas.		
12. Food is stored at least 6" off floor.		
13. There is no evidence of rodent or insect infestation.		
14. Cleaning supplies and other toxic materials are safely stored out of the reach of children and away from food.		
15. There are no obvious fire, health and/or safety hazards observed in the center.		
16. Food service was conducted in compliance with generally accepted health and sanitation practices.		
17. The storage areas are secure from theft.		
18. Comments:		

TRAINING/MONITORING

19.   The center staff have attended CACFP training within the last year.   ❏YES   ❏NO

      Date: _____

20.   The center has implemented ideas/information provided during training.   ❏YES   ❏NO   ❏N/A

21. Center staff recommendations for future training topics/needs or training improvement ideas are:

22. Has effective action been achieved for any problem(s) noted during the last review? ❑YES   ❑NO ❑N/A
   If "NO," explain.

DAY OF REVIEW - OBSERVATION OF MEAL SERVICE

23. Circle meal observed and record applicable meal times.

	Breakfast	**A.M. Snack**	**Lunch**	**P.M. Snack**	**Supper**
Scheduled Meal Service Time:					
Meal Service Time Observed:					

24. Record the food items and serving sizes.

1 - 12 Year Olds		
Meal Components	**Food Item**	**Serving Size**
Milk		
Meat/Meat Alternate		
Fruit/Vegetable		
Fruit/Vegetable		
Bread/Bread Alternate		
Other		

25. The menu documentation corresponds to the meal observed. ❑YES   ❑NO   If "NO," explain.

26. The meal observed contains all required components.   ❑YES   ❑NO
   If "NO," list the missing components and describe technical assistance provided.

27. The required quantities of food items are prepared, available and served.   ❑YES   ❑NO
   If "NO," list the components prepared and served in insufficient quantities and describe technical assistance provided.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM   Center Name: _____

CENTER REVIEW FORM   **CRF-4**

28. The observed meal provides a variety of colors, temperatures, textures, shapes, sizes, and flavors.
    If "NO," explain   ❑YES   ❑NO

29. The meal service occurs in a positive/pleasant environment.   ❑YES   ❑NO
    If "NO," explain.

30. Record the food items served and serving sizes for infant meals.

Infants			
Meal Components	**Food Item and Serving Size**		
	Birth through 3 Months	**4 through 7 Months**	**8 through 11 Months**
Iron fortified Formula Breast Milk/Whole Milk			
Infant Cereal			
Fruit/Vegetable			
Meat/Meat Alternate			

31. At least one required component of the infant meal pattern is supplied by the center for claimed infant meals.
    ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A   If "NO," explain.

MEAL SERVICE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

32. Daily, dated menus for both children and infants, as applicable, are available and up-to-date at the center, for all approved/claimed meals for the current month. ❑YES   ❑NO   If "NO," explain.

33. Medical statements and/or State agency approvals are on file for all substitutions related to medical or special dietary or religious needs. ❑YES ❑NO   ❑N/A   If "NO," explain.

34. Documentation is available to support the minimum required quantities of food items.   ❑YES ❑NO
    If "NO," explain.

35. An accurate meal count was taken at the point of service.   ❑YES   ❑NO
    If "NO," explain and describe the technical assistance provided.

36. An accurate, daily meal count was taken for program and non-program adults. ❑YES ❑NO ❑N/A
    If "NO," explain.

37. List the meal counts for the same meal type observed on the day of the visit for each of the 5 preceding serving days.

    Day of Review Meal Count:<u>   </u>

Date	# of Meals Counted

Do the meal counts for the prior five days appear reasonable when compared to today's meal count?   ❑YES ❑NO
If "NO", obtain and record an explanation.

Describe required corrective action on the Summary of Findings on page 6.

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CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER REVIEW FORM

Center Name: _____

CRF-6

Summary of Findings - Day of Review

Review Item #	Brief Description of Finding	Corrective Action (C.A.) Needed	C.A. Due Date	Follow-up Visit Date	Date Corrected

Center Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reviewer Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Enrollment Roster Worksheet
Center Review Form

Name of Center:_____   Address: _____

Agreement Number:_____   _____

Participant's Name (List separately each participant attending this center when error is noted.)	No Current Enrollment Form	Over Allowable Age for Reimburse ment
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

REVIEW MONTH: _____ - MENUS

1.   Based on menu records, all meals **claimed** for reimbursement during the review month contained the required meal components.   ❑YES   ❑NO

If "NO," complete the chart below, and explain and describe technical assistance provided to the center staff. Record required corrective action on Summary of Findings on page 10.

Date	Meal Type	Missing Component	# of Meals Claimed

2.   The center staff demonstrated knowledge of the principles of nutrition, menu planning and food preparation by serving:

	Yes	No	Comments
A variety of foods			
Fresh/frozen fruits and vegetables			
Foods high in vitamin A, 2-3 times weekly			
Foods high in Vitamin C daily			
Foods high in Iron daily			
Menus with a variety of color, texture, and temperature, shape, size			
Moderate amounts of salt/sodium/sugar			
Moderate amounts of fat/cholesterol			

❑YES   ❑NO   If any items are answered "NO," describe technical assistance to be provided.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
CENTER REVIEW MONTH FORM

Center Name: _____

SAMPLE

CRF-9

REVIEW MONTH - ELIGIBILITY

3. Indicate whether the meal counts for each day of the review month were within the licensed capacity, age limits and the provider/child ratio requirements. If children are cared for on more than one "shift," provide documentation of the licensed capacity, age limits and the provider/child ratio requirements for each shift. Provide shift documentation if any qualifying meal is over capacity. ❏YES ❏NO   If "NO," explain:

4. The meals claimed during the review month are served to children with a complete and current enrollment form. ❏YES ❏NO   If "NO," explain.

REVIEW MONTH - MEAL COUNTS

5. Complete and accurate meal count records are available for each serving day of the review month and were submitted in a timely manner. ❏YES   ❏NO   If "NO," explain.

6. Meal counts for the review month appear reasonable when compared with the day of review meal count. ❏YES ❏NO   If "NO," explain.

7a. The center claimed the approved meal types, no more than 2 meals and 1 snack per child per day for eligible children who were claimed during the review month.
    ❏YES ❏NO ❏N/A

7b. The center claimed the approved meal types, 1 meal and 2 snacks per child per day for eligible children who were claimed during the review month.
    ❏YES ❏NO ❏N/A

Summary of Adjustments Related to Eligibility and Meal Counts - Corrective Action Required			
Date	Description of Problems	Meals Claimed	Meal Adjustment (+ or -)

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SAMPLE

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM   Center Name: _____
CENTER REVIEW MONTH FORM   CRF-10

Summary of Findings - Review Month

Review Item #	Brief Description of Finding	Corrective Action (C.A.) Needed	C.A. Due Date	Follow-up Visit Date	Date Corrected

Center Staff Signature: _____   Date: _____

Reviewer Signature: _____   Date: _____

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