

Obligation to Offer Infant Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

PURPOSE: To ensure that all children, including infants, who are enrolled in for child care have access to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meals.

SCOPE: All organizations and family day care homes participating in the CACFP.

DESCRIPTION: Child care centers and family day care homes participating in CACFP must offer program meals to all eligible children who are enrolled for care in their facilities.

A facility may not avoid this obligation by stating that the infants are not “enrolled” in CACFP, or by citing some logistical or cost barrier to offering an infant meal. The decision to offer program meals must be based on whether the child is enrolled for care, not whether the child is enrolled for CACFP. Section 226.2 of the CACFP regulations defines enrolled child as “a child whose parent or guardian has submitted to an institution or family day care home a signed document which indicates that the child is enrolled for child care.”

As long as the infant is in care during the meal service period, the facility must offer the infant a meal and/or snack that complies with program requirements. An infant’s parents or guardian may decline what is offered and supply the infant’s meals and snacks instead. The key factor is that the infant be provided access to CACFP meals.

Institutions and family day care homes that do not comply with this instruction will be declared seriously deficient which could lead to program termination.

This policy is effective May 31, 2002.

SOURCE: FY 2002 CACFP Policy Memorandum #17.