

The Edible Editorial

March 2026


Growing Healthy Habits, One Bite at a Time

March is that awkward in-between month. One day it's snow boots, the next day kids are insisting it's shorts weather. Perfect time to shake up menus, get outside when we can, and lean into fresh, colorful foods.




March Spotlight: National Nutrition Month®

This month is all about building healthy habits that actually stick.

Easy Wins for Providers

-  **Color of the Week Challenge:** Pick one color each week.
 - Week 1: Green (peas, kiwi, spinach, zucchini)
 - Week 2: Orange (sweet potatoes, carrots, mango)
 - Week 3: Red (strawberries, tomatoes, red peppers)
 - Week 4: Purple (blueberries, purple cabbage)

Important March Dates

- March 2 — Read Across America Day 
- March 17 — St. Patrick's Day 
- March 20 — First Day of Spring 

Menu Inspiration

Breakfast Boost

- Cinnamon oatmeal with apples and milk
- Whole-grain waffles with warm berry topping and milk

Smart Snacks

- Greek yogurt + fruit

- Hummus with cucumbers

Reminder: At lunch and supper, serve **two different vegetable or a fruit & a vegetable**. Variety matters.

St. Patrick's Day Fun (The Healthy Way)

Skip the neon frosting. Try:

- Spinach banana smoothies
- Kiwi & green grape fruit cups

Add a simple activity:

- Count shamrocks
- Hunt for “gold coins” (plastic lids work beautifully)

Spring Into Movement

As weather allows, take advantage of fresh air.

Quick Movement Ideas

- “Hop like a bunny” transitions
- Obstacle course with cones or cushions

Nature walk scavenger hunt

On March 30, celebrate **Take a Walk in the Park Day** by stepping outside and talking about how exercise helps our hearts and muscles grow strong.

Family Engagement Idea

Send home a **March Healthy Habits Challenge:**

This week, families can:

- Try one new vegetable
- Take one family walk
- Let their child help prepare one meal

Small habits at home reinforce what you're modeling every day.

National CACFP Week is March 15-21, 2026

What is National CACFP Week?

CACFP Week is a national education and information campaign sponsored annually the third week of March by the National CACFP Association. The campaign is designed to raise awareness of how the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program works to combat hunger. The CACFP brings healthy foods to tables across the country for children in child care centers, homes, and afterschool programs as well as adults in day care.

This year, we're highlighting how the CACFP is **Stirring Up Goodness** across the country, with its positive impact and the people who make it happen, one meal at a time.



Adding Goodness to Every Meal

The Child and Adult Care Food Program stirs up goodness every day by providing healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to over 4.5 million children and adults. Here are six different ways that you can stir goodness into your own menus.

Add a Burst of Color on the Plate



Adding more color helps provide a balance of vitamins and minerals.

- » Rotate produce by season for variety and cost savings.
- » Aim to have at least two different colors on each plate.
- » Serve each color at least once per week.



Choose More Whole Grains

Simple swaps for whole grains boost fiber and provide long-lasting energy.

- » Serve two whole grain-rich grains per day for more fiber.
- » Opt for whole grain-rich bread instead of white bread.
- » Pair favorite fruits with oatmeal in the morning.

Power Up with Protein Variety



Protein supports growth and helps keep bellies fuller for longer.

- » Offer lean meats and limit processed options.
- » Add yogurt and cheese for calcium-rich meat alternates.
- » Try out some plant-based options like tofu or lentils.

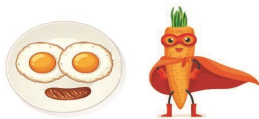


Keep Flavor Simple and Healthy

Limiting sugar and sodium does not have to mean that you are limiting flavor.

- » Use herbs and spices like cinnamon, garlic or basil.
- » Try citrus juice or vinegar to brighten flavors.
- » Roast or bake foods for different textures and taste.

Make Mealtime Fun & Inviting



Presentation matters, especially for young eaters trying out new foods.

- » Practice family style dining if you're able.
- » Use fun names like "Super Spinach" or "Mighty Milk."
- » Let kids create patterns on plates, like faces or animals.



Involve Kids in the Process

Kids are more likely to try a new food if they've helped choose or prepare it.

- » Let kids help pour and mix ingredients.
- » Encourage feedback when introducing a new food.
- » Have children set the table before mealtimes.



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Oscar's Bodacious Broccoli Bites - Recipe for Homes

CACFP Crediting Information: 1/4 cup = 1 vegetable. Makes 8 servings.

Ingredients:

2 cups broccoli, trimmed
2 large eggs
1/2 cup ground or Panko bread crumbs
1/2 cup cheddar or Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Steam broccoli until tender.
2. In a bowl or food processor, combine eggs, bread crumbs, cheese and seasonings.
3. Coat steamed broccoli evenly with the mixture.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes.

Rainbow Veggies - Recipe for Homes

CACFP Crediting Information: 1/2 cup = 1 vegetable. Makes 10 servings.

Ingredients:

1 cup red beets
1 cup orange carrots
1 cup yellow bell pepper
1 cup green celery
1 cup purple cabbage

Directions:

1. Slice vegetables of various colors.
2. Give each child a plate with 1/2 cup of a variety of rainbow vegetables, with at least one color of veggie to try.
3. Have them arrange their vegetables in the shape of a rainbow in color order.
4. Serve with milk for a complete snack.

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 2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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M A B C H

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 what can you make with a shoe box?</p>	<p>2 DR. SUESS' birthday, read your favorite book</p>	<p>3 dance or exercise to music</p>	<p>4 make a healthy snack together</p>	<p>5 make up a story about dinosaurs</p>	<p>6 talk about LONG and SHORT</p>	<p>7 decorate a cup with seeds and dirt, make a crazy grass head</p>
<p>8 daylight savings begins; set clocks ahead one hour!</p>	<p>9 how TALL are you?</p>	<p>10 name things you wear on your feet</p>	<p>11 cut and glue... create a masterpiece</p>	<p>12 how much do you weigh?</p>	<p>13 follow directions and make jello!</p>	<p>14 draw some triangles</p>
<p>15 count all of your shoes! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6...</p>	<p>16 visit the LIBRARY</p>	<p>17 HAPPY St. Patrick's Day!</p>	<p>18 match numbers, shapes or colors in a deck of cards</p>	<p>19 talk about caring for your teeth</p>	<p>20 FIRST day of SPRING!</p>	<p>21 draw a picture of SPRING flowers</p>
<p>22 Help wash the windows</p>	<p>23 READ a book about SPRING</p>	<p>24 play ball outside</p>	<p>25 Talk about the beginning, middle and end of the day</p>	<p>26 plant flower seeds in dirt... watch them grow</p>	<p>27 wiggle, open, bend and name body parts</p>	<p>28 Look for signs of SPRING</p>
<p>29 take parents to the play-ground swing high day</p>	<p>30 name foods that are good for your teeth</p>	<p>31 visit a park</p>				

Certificate of

Awesomeness

Thank you for your commitment to the **Child and Adult Care Food Program**

and to the health and well-being of the children in your care.

CACFP is an indicator of **quality child care.**

Presented to

Mid Michigan Child Care Food Program

Presented by





We're Stirring Up Goodness Through the CACFP!

We participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which means your children get daily access to healthy and nutritious foods at no extra cost to you!


Celebrating CACFP Week March 15-21, 2026

Time to Celebrate!

Dear Parents,

One of the most important lessons a child will learn is to embrace healthy eating habits, which we encourage by participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The theme of CACFP Week this year is "Stirring Up Goodness," which focuses not only on how the CACFP provides nutritious meals to children all across the country, but also highlights the role it plays in building connections within communities.

Together, we can work to establish and encourage healthy eating habits and help children develop to their fullest potential. Receiving nutritious meals early in life is critical to positive lifelong habits.

Questions? Contact us at anytime! 

Mid Michigan Child Care Food Program

P.O. Box 610, Freeland, MI 48623

www.midmichigancc.com



What does CACFP mean for you and your children?

Research shows that child care providers who participate in the CACFP offer more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats than providers who do not participate in the CACFP.



These high quality meals mean children are getting many of the nutrients needed to stay healthy and active. This helps build a strong immune system.

Children served a nutritious diet, as required by the CACFP, are also more likely to be healthy, happy, and develop at a normal physical, emotional and intellectual pace.

CACFP providers create an atmosphere that instills a positive, curious attitude about food from the earliest years.

Participation means that not only are well-balanced meals and snacks served, but that other requirements such as safety regulations, child-to-staff ratios, and other health guidelines are being followed.

To remain in the program, homes and centers are continually monitored and held to the highest health and nutrition standards.



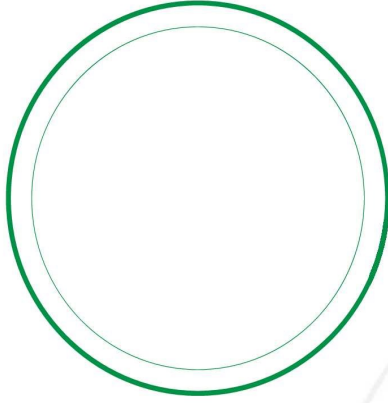
www.CACFPWeek.org

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Go on a Taste-Testing Adventure!



Before getting started, write down the child's name and the food they are exploring at the bottom of the page. Now the adventure can begin! Have the children draw the food in the starting plate. Each time they try the food, write down the meal, snack or taste-testing activity in the boxes provided. Have children circle/color the face that expresses how they felt about the food being explored.



Activity/Meal #3

Activity/Meal #4

Activity/Meal #5

Activity/Meal #6

Activity/Meal #7

Activity/Meal #1

Activity/Meal #2

Name _____

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I became a **Taste Explorer** by trying _____ **seven times!**