

The Edible Editorial

October 2026

Happy October! Crisp mornings, colorful leaves, and a month packed with the kind of holidays little ones love most. October is also Children's Health Month and National Farm to School Month — a great excuse to talk with children about where food comes from and what helps our bodies feel good. As cold and flu season creeps in, it's the perfect time to revisit hand-washing routines and healthy habits. Thank you for the warmth and consistency you bring to the children in your care every single day!

OCTOBER MONTHLY THEMES

- National Apple Month
- National Pizza Month
- National Popcorn Poppin' Month
- National Farm to School Month
- Children's Health Month
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- Head Start Awareness Month

OCTOBER HOLIDAYS & SPECIAL DAYS

October 1 — First Day of the New Federal Fiscal Year
Not a children's holiday, but a good bookkeeping reminder for you! See the Policy Update section below.

October 4 — World Animal Day
Read animal books, practice animal movements, and sort toy animals by farm, forest, and ocean. Pairs perfectly with a barnyard-themed snack.

Early October — Fire Prevention Week
Practice your fire drill, review your evacuation route, and read a firefighter story. Let children try on a play helmet and talk about how firefighters are helpers, not something to fear. Check your smoke detector batteries while you're at it.

October 12 — Indigenous Peoples' Day / Columbus Day
Share age-appropriate stories and art from Native cultures. The "Three Sisters" — corn, beans, and squash — are a wonderful, creditable food connection for older preschoolers.

October 14 — National Dessert Day
A great day to talk about sometimes foods vs. everyday foods. Serve a fruit-based "dessert" like baked cinnamon apples and let children decide if it tastes like a treat.

October 16 — World Food Day

Talk simply about sharing and making sure everyone has enough to eat. Some programs collect a few pantry items with families — a gentle first lesson in community care.

October 24 — National Food Day

Hold a "try it" taste test with one new fruit or vegetable. No pressure to swallow — just look, smell, and touch counts as a win with cautious eaters.

October 31 — Halloween

Costumes, parades, and pumpkin everything! See the Provider Tip below for keeping celebration treats from derailing your creditable meals.

OCTOBER MEAL & SNACK IDEAS

All ideas below are designed to fit CACFP meal pattern requirements.

1. APPLE MONTH BREAKFAST

Whole grain oatmeal (grain) + warm diced apples with cinnamon (fruit) + milk. Let children stir in their own apples — ownership goes a long way with picky eaters.

2. MINI PIZZA LUNCH

Whole grain English muffin half (grain) + tomato sauce and chopped peppers (vegetable) + mozzarella cheese (meat/meat alternate) + pear slices (fruit) + milk. It's National Pizza Month — children build their own!

4. PUMPKIN PATCH SNACK

Clementine or mandarin segments arranged as a "pumpkin" with a small pretzel stick stem (fruit + grain). (Additional pretzels will need to be served to meet portion size requirements.) Adorable, creditable, and takes about 90 seconds to plate.

5. SPIDER SANDWICH LUNCH (HALLOWEEN)

Whole grain bread cut into a circle (grain) + turkey or cheese (meat/meat alternate) + eight cucumber-strip "legs" and two olive "eyes" (vegetable) + grapes, halved lengthwise (fruit) + milk.

7. THREE SISTERS BOWL

Corn and black beans (vegetable/meat alternate) + diced butternut squash (vegetable) + a whole grain roll (grain) + milk. A warm, hearty lunch tied to Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Updated Reimbursement Rates

How Much Will I Receive?

A child care provider serving breakfast, lunch and a snack to five children would be reimbursed between \$150 and \$300 per month, depending on the reimbursement rates. The amount you receive is based on a two-tier reimbursement scale (not dependent upon DHHS tier status).

These reimbursement rates are in effect from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Rates payable for each meal *may be* adjusted by USDA each July.

DAY CARE HOME REIMBURSEMENT RATES

Whether you will qualify for Tier I or Tier II rates will depend on a number of factors, such as the location of your child care home, your household income or the income of the families enrolled in the program. In addition, if your household income falls within USDA income guidelines, you may be eligible for reimbursement for your own children ages 12 and younger. For more information on the two-tier system, income guidelines or anything regarding reimbursement call us at 1-800-742-3663, or email rachel@midmichigancc.com.

Daycare Homes	Tier I	Tier II
Breakfast	\$1.74	\$0.62
Lunch/Supper	\$3.31	\$1.99
Snacks	\$0.98	\$0.27

DAY CARE CENTER REIMBURSEMENT RATES

An additional \$0.32 cents cash-in-lieu of commodities is paid for each lunch and supper served.

Mid Michigan Child Care Centers, Inc. will automatically deduct an administrative fee of 15% from the monthly meal reimbursement for centers.

Daycare Centers	Free (A)	Reduced (B)	Paid (C)
Breakfast	\$2.54	\$2.24	\$0.42
Lunch/Supper	\$4.76	\$4.36	\$0.45
Snacks	\$1.30	\$0.65	\$0.12

Taco Soup –Recipe for Centers

CACFP Crediting Information: 1 cup soup provides 1 oz. equivalent meat/meat alternate and 3/4 cup vegetable. Makes 25 servings.

Ingredients:

2 lb. 2 oz. Beef, ground, raw (no more than 15% fat)
1/4 cup Chili powder
1/4 cup 1 Tbsp. Cumin, ground
2Tbsp. Garlic powder
2 tsp. Onion powder
1 tsp. Red pepper, crushed
2 tsp. Pepper, black, ground
1 lb. 2 oz. Onion, fresh, diced
1 qt. Water
1/4 cup Ranch dressing, dry powder mix
1 qt. 2 1/2 cups Tomatoes, crushed, canned, no-salt added
2 cups Salsa, canned, low-sodium
2 1/2 cups Corn, canned, no-salt added
2 qt. 1 1/4 cups Kidney beans, canned, no-salt added, drained, rinsed

Directions:

1. Brown ground beef uncovered over medium-high heat in a large stock pot.
2. Add spices. Stir well.
3. Remove beef mixtures and set aside for Step 6.
4. Using the same pot, cook onions uncovered over medium heat for 5-7 minutes or until soft. Reduce heat to low.
5. Add water, ranch dressing mix, crushed tomatoes, salsa, corn, and beans. Stir well. Simmer uncovered over low heat for 2 minutes.
6. Add seasoned ground beef and stir. Simmer uncovered for an additional 15-20 minutes.
7. Heat to 165 degrees F for at least 15 seconds.
8. Serve immediately or cover and place in a warmer until ready for service.



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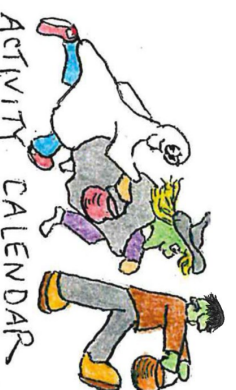
To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
 2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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October



ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
make sets of five with different coins draw a picture of each other jump up high 5 times use paint and vegetables to make prints	PRACTICE STOP, DROP and ROLL what will you be when you grow up? scrunch down low and stretch up high	October is FIRE PREVENTION MONTH check with your local fire department for SAFETY TIPS READ a book about FIRE SAFETY practice writing your NAME chop, tear and cut vegies into a fresh salad create a sculpture with craftsticks, footprints and glue	take a walk, name shapes take fans of 14 copying dance moves HELP mom and dad fold clothes make up a story about pumpkins, draw pictures	practice a family fire drill (we did it!) collect leaves and sort, BIG and little play dress up with old clothes CARVE FAMILY pumpkins sing a spooky song!	tell someone why you're nice (they are special) peel an orange, count the pieces follow directions, make oatmeal cookies make fresh squeezed orange juice take some leaves and jump in!	make a delicious fruit salad visit the LIBRARY (I love books) talk about TALL and SHORT practice zipping make a HALLOWEEN doo!
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Small Hands Crafting

Make a pumpkin mosaic! Cut out orange pieces of construction or tissue paper. Have the children glue the pieces of paper all over a paper plate. When they are ready, they can glue on a brown rectangle for the stem and green leaf. Add black shapes to make a jack-o-lantern too.

This is a great way to practice fine motor skills and talk about all the different shapes.

Use triangles, circles, ovals, rectangles, or diamonds.

There are no rules for noses!



Happy Halloween

Did you know that eating mindfully at meal time is a part of proper nutrition?

Eating slowly and mindfully can be a challenge these days as our schedules are busy and our lifestyles have us on the go. Eating slowly gives us ample time for our brain to tell our belly it's full, which prevents overeating. And just the act of chewing longer increases the absorption of important nutrients and allows our body to create more of the enzymes required for properly digesting food. Focus on eating and avoid distractions such as television and phone calls. By savoring every bite, you're more likely to feel satisfied sooner. Serve appropriate portions and take smaller bites - and don't inhale! The more times you chew, the more you'll taste each bite and the less likely you'll feel the need to reach for more. Families are encouraged to use mealtime as an opportunity to connect, and the sheer act of stopping in between bites to respond or ask questions helps in eating at a slower pace.

Because your childcare participates with CACFP, they are learning all about proper nutrition.



Pumpkin Games Movement on Halloween

Try these pumpkin games to get little bodies moving!

Pumpkin Scavenger Hunt

Create your own pumpkin patch with numbered paper pumpkins around the room or playground. Have your children work together to find all of the pumpkins.

Pumpkin Bowling Using small pie pumpkins, have your children gently roll the pumpkin to knock down pins made of toilet paper rolls or water bottles.

Pumpkin Ring Toss Place a few pumpkins across a room or play yard at varying differences. Have your kids try to throw a ring around the pumpkin.

Pumpkin Relay Can the team get all of the pumpkins over to the other side first? Divide your group into two teams and individually they will take turns running their pumpkin across to the other side.

Pumpkin Bread

- 1 can pumpkin (15 ounce)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup yogurt, low-fat plain
- 1 1/2 cups flour (all purpose)
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup raisins

In a large mixing bowl, beat together pumpkin, sugar, oil, and yogurt. In a medium bowl, combine the flours, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, and salt; add to pumpkin mixture, stirring until just moistened. Stir in raisins. Pour into 2 greased 9x5x3 inch loaf pans and bake for about 1 hour at 350 degrees. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes; remove from pan and cool completely.

*Recipe from
USDA Mixing
Bowl*

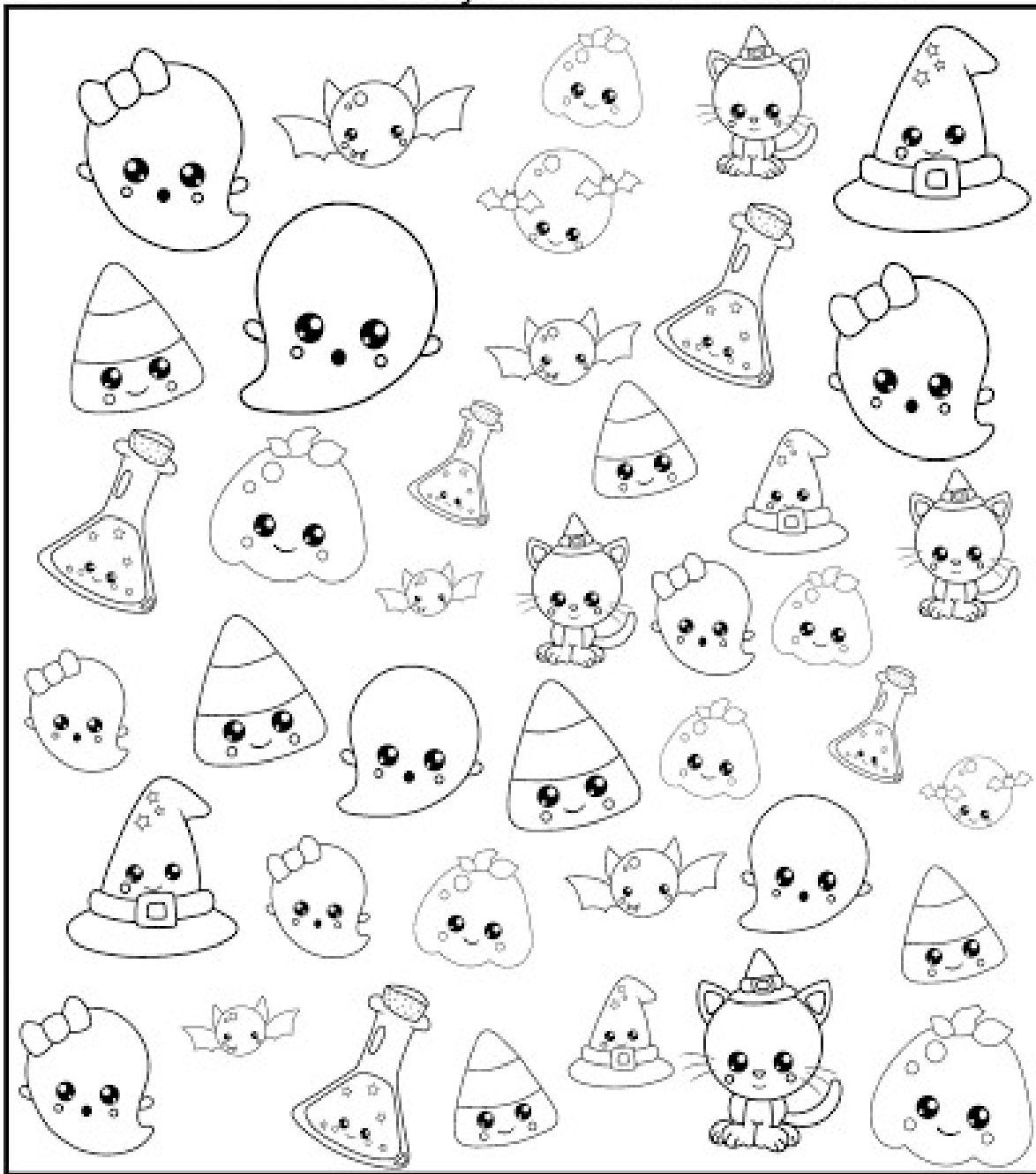


CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.

www.cacfp.org

Count It!

Write your answers down below.



 _____	 _____	 _____	 _____	 _____
 _____	 _____	 _____	 _____	How many pictures in all? _____