

The Edible Editorial

April 2026

Welcome to April! Spring is officially here, bringing longer days, fresh produce, and wonderful opportunities to engage children in learning through food, nature, and play. This month is packed with meaningful observances and the perfect chance to reinforce healthy eating habits through CACFP. Let's make it a great one!

Holidays & Special Observances

April 1: April Fool's Day

A lighthearted day for silly jokes and laughter—a great reminder that play is an important part of healthy child development.

April 2: World Autism Awareness Day

Wear blue and foster inclusive, sensory-friendly environments. Consider how your menus and spaces support all children.

April 5: Easter Sunday

A beloved holiday for many families. Celebrate with spring-themed activities, egg decorating, and colorful fruits and vegetables!

April 7: World Health Day

The WHO's annual observance—a perfect time—in to conversations about nutrition, movement, and wellness with children and families.

April 22: Earth Day

Explore sustainability themes! Talk about where food comes from, start a classroom garden, or take a nature walk to observe spring.

Child Abuse Prevention Month:

Display blue pinwheels as symbols of hope and safe, nurturing childhoods. Reinforce that every child deserves to feel safe and cared for.

Fun April Activities

- **Rainbow Egg Taste Exploration:** Hard-boil eggs and pair with colorful veggie dippers—red peppers, orange carrots, yellow hummus. Talk about the colors of the rainbow and what makes food healthy.
- **Earth Day Scavenger Hunt:** Head outside and look for signs of spring—budding leaves, earthworms, birds' nests. Give children a simple checklist and talk about how plants and animals prepare for warm weather.
- **Seed-to-Sprout Planting Project:** Plant radish, lettuce or herb seeds in cups. Children observe growth daily and learn how food grows from the ground.

Spring Meals & Snack Ideas

- **Breakfast:** Fluffy scrambled eggs provide protein; whole grain toast covers grains; fresh strawberries cover the fruit component. Serve with milk.
- **Lunch:** Sliced turkey, romaine lettuce, shredded carrots, and diced tomatoes in a whole wheat tortilla. Serve with milk and fresh apple slices.
- **Snack:** Low-fat plain yogurt layered with fresh strawberries and a whole grain granola.
- **Snack:** Hummus provides a creditable meat/meat alternate. Pair with celery, cucumber, and whole grain pita for a nutritious snack.

HOW TO HAVE GREAT REVIEWS

Throughout the course of your career as a Child Care Provider participating with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), you may be visited by a reviewer from your state agency - The USDA Regional Office or the OIG (Office of Inspector General). If your child care home is chosen by random selection, a reviewer will visit with, or without, your sponsor's Consultant. Review visits are required by the Child and Adult Care Food Program to monitor for program compliance, health and safety precautions, and so forth. Since reviews may be conducted at any time, it is best to always be prepared. Anyone who comes to visit your home for the purpose of the CACFP will have ID tags for your safety. The following are a sample of questions generally asked by state reviewers.

Are menus up-to-date?

You will be reimbursed for only those meals and snacks for which components are written on the attendance sheet/menu prior to, at meal service, or if you have under 12 children, and you have never been Serious Deficient, at the end of the day. Writing components on the attendance sheet/menus after meal service/end of the day will result in the meal or snack being crossed off and a loss of reimbursement.

Do you take attendance at point of service?

Point-of-service is any time after a meal or snack has been placed on the table and before the last child is finished eating. Meals and snacks for which attendance is taken before or after point-of service will be crossed off and will not be reimbursed. Point-of-service is only required if your daycare has more than 12 children or you have been previously found to be Seriously Deficient. Point-of-service meal attendance is required for center based care.

Do you take attendance at the end of the day?

End of the day attendance is an option for providers that have fewer than 12 children and have never been found Serious Deficient. For this option, you must mark your attendance within a single working day.

Is your paperwork complete?

The reviewer will ask to see copies of all CACFP-related paperwork, such as Child Registration Letters, a Shift Change Form, your Agreement/Home Application, etc. We suggest you keep all paperwork in an easily accessible place, such as your Food Program Envelope.

Do you serve meals and snacks to the children in your care, at no separate charge to the parents/guardians?

One responsibility as a Child Care Provider participating with the Child and Adult Care Food program is that you will provide nutritious meals and snacks to the children in your care and not charge a separate fee for meals and snacks. Charging for food is a violation of federal regulations and may result in termination for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Remember that you may claim two meals and one snack, or one meal and two snacks, per child, per day, up to your license capacity.

Is your child care license posted in a visible spot in your home?

In order to provide child care and participate with the Child and Adult Care Food Program, your child care home must be licensed by the state. You cannot be reimbursed for meals and snacks served while unlicensed.

Do you serve nutritious meals and snacks to the children in your care, regardless of age, sex, national origin, color, or disability?

The purpose of the Child and Adult Care Food Program is to ensure that children being cared for in child care homes are served a variety of foods for health, growth, and development. By serving foods allowed by the CACFP meal pattern requirements, you can be assured that the children are getting essential nutrients.

Why is it important to call your CACFP sponsor's office if you are away from the home at a meal time?

You must always call our office if, during day care hours, you are leaving the home during a meal time. This is important because we would not want a Federal, State, or Sponsor reviewer to stop at your home unannounced without prior notice of your absence.

Arroz Con Queso (Rice with Cheese) - Recipe for Centers

CACFP Crediting Information: 3/4 cup = 1 oz. equivalent meat/meat alternate, 1/4 cup vegetable, 0.5 oz. equivalent grain. Makes 25 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 qt. 2 cups Water
- 1 lb. Brown rice, long-grain, regular, dry, parboiled
- 3 Tbsp. 1/3 tsp. Fresh green onions, diced
- 2 1/3 cups 2 tsp. Fresh yellow onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup Fresh jalapeno peppers, chopped
- 3 3/4 cups Fresh red bell peppers, diced
- 12 oz. Frozen corn, thawed, drained
- 6 oz. Canned green chilies, mild, chopped
- 1 qt. 3/4 cup Canned low-sodium pinto beans, drained, rinsed
- 2 cups 2 Tbsp. 1 tsp. Nonfat sour cream
- 2 1/2 cups Low-fat (1%) milk
- 1 lb. Low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2/3 cup Fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup Whole-wheat flour
- 1 Tbsp. Fresh garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp. Ancho chili powder
- 2 tsp. Garlic powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 Tbsp. sugar

Directions:

1. Boil water.
2. Place 2 1/2 cups 1 Tbsp. brown rice in steam table pan.
3. Pour boiling water over brown rice. Stir. Cover pan tightly.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes.
5. Remove cooked rice from oven and let stand covered for 5 minutes. Stir rice. Set aside.
6. Combine onions, jalapenos, peppers, corn, chilies, pinto beans, sour cream, milk, half of cheese, cilantro, flour, minced garlic, ancho chili powder, garlic powder, salt and sugar in a large bowl. Stir well.
7. Pour vegetable mixture over pan of rice. Stir well.
8. Sprinkle 2 cups cheese over pan.
9. Bake at 350 degrees F for 25-30 minutes.
10. Portion with 3/4 cup.



In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.




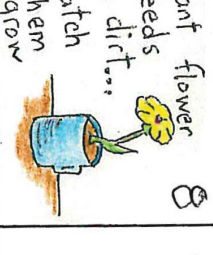

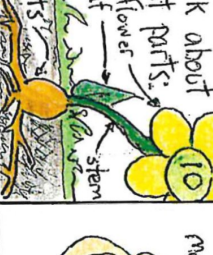



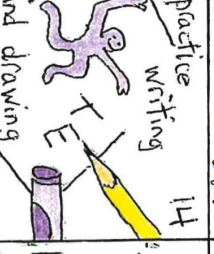
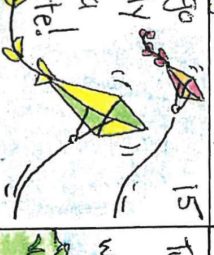


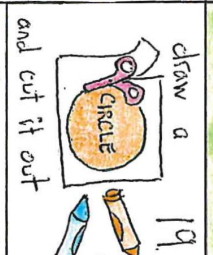
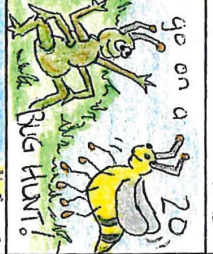
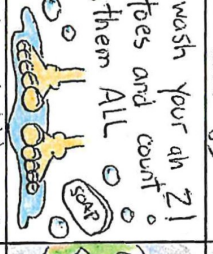





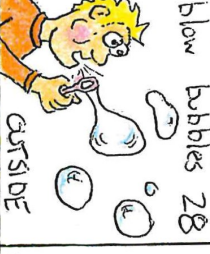


Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>HAPPY EASTER! 5</p>	 <p>READ a book about... 6</p>	 <p>make playdough: 1 cup flour 2 spoons salt a little water 7</p>	 <p>plant flower seeds in dirt... watch them grow 8</p>	 <p>talk about a house 9</p>	 <p>talk about plant parts: flower leaf stem roots 10</p>	 <p>draw a bug... make up a bug story 11</p>
 <p>count to three in SPANISH! 1 2 3 12</p>	 <p>practice writing 14</p>	 <p>go fly a kite! 15</p>	 <p>Turn over a rock what's under it? 16</p>	 <p>Make sets of 5 with jelly beans 17</p>	 <p>walk through your neighborhood, pick up litter 18</p>	
 <p>draw a circle 19</p>	 <p>wash your feet and count them ALL 21</p>	 <p>EARTH DAY! recycle 22</p>	 <p>Have a family Sing-a-long 23</p>	 <p>plant a tree, hug a tree 24</p>	 <p>find some rectangles in your house 25</p>	
 <p>visit the LIBRARY 26</p>	 <p>See what shapes clouds can make 27</p>	 <p>blow bubbles 28</p>	 <p>Count all family shoes! 29</p>	 <p>how tall are you? 30</p>		

Small Hands Crafting

All you need are coffee filters, blue and green washable markers, and water! Flatten the coffee filter and have your kids color it with the markers. Use a squirt bottle to spray water two or three times directly on the center of the filter. Watch with your kids as the water spreads to create a unique earth day design!



Earth Day

Did you know the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care?

Not only that, but the CACFP also works to help make child care more affordable for many low-income families. Each day, 3.3 million children receive nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP. The program also provides meals and snacks to 120,000 adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers. CACFP reaches even further to provide meals to children residing in emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to youths participating in eligible afterschool care programs.

CACFP makes the world a better place for children!

**NATIONAL
CACFP SPONSORS
ASSOCIATION**

Seeds of Renewal: Movement on Earth Day

Start with Johnny Appleseed. Have your kids learn gardening movements while you share the story of the man who planted apple trees across the northeast in the early 1800s. First have them reach down and touch their toes as they gather apples from the ground and then stand back up to put them in their shoulder sack. Next have your kids walk in one spot as they travel the country looking for new places to plant apple trees. Then have them make large circle motions with their hand, one side at a time, as they pretend to toss the apple seeds across the ground. Finally, have the kids bend over and tamp down the soil to ensure the seeds grow.

Crunchy Carrot Salad

Color your plate with carrots! This salad can accompany any meal.

1 pound raw fresh carrots (washed and scrubbed or peeled, shredded)

1/2 cup raisins

8 ounces low-fat vanilla or lemon yogurt

Mix all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour. Toss again before serving.

Source: What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl



CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.

www.cacfp.org

CACFP is an indicator of quality child care.

Rainbow Plate

Color each of the food items, then cut out all the pieces. Take a paper plate and paste different food items to your plate to create a rainbow of healthy foods.

