

The Edible Editorial

July 2026

Happy July! Summer is in full swing, and Michigan's fields and orchards are bursting with some of the best fresh produce of the entire year.

This month is a perfect opportunity to introduce children to seasonal fruits and vegetables right from our own backyard — cherries, peaches, raspberries, cucumbers, and so much more. We hope your summer is going smoothly and that the children in your care are enjoying healthy, delicious meals. Thank you for your continued dedication to CACFP and to the families you serve!

JULY MONTHLY THEMES

- National Blueberry Month
- National Picnic Month
- National Watermelon Month
- Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month

JULY HOLIDAYS & SPECIAL DAYS

July 4 — Independence Day

A festive day to celebrate with red, white, and blue foods! Strawberries, blueberries, and plain yogurt make a colorful and CACFP-creditable patriotic snack. Use the holiday to talk about community and sharing with children.

July 15 — Give Something Away Day

Encourage children to think about food generosity — how food banks, community gardens, and sharing meals bring people together. A simple discussion about helping neighbors can go a long way.

July 28 — National Hamburger Day

An opportunity to explore proteins with children! Ground beef, turkey burgers, or bean patties on a whole grain bun are all great CACFP-creditable options. Let children help assemble their own toppings for a fun, hands-on meal.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE

1. TASTE THE RAINBOW — Set out a few different Michigan fruits (cherries, raspberries, cucumber slices, peach wedges) and let children taste, describe, and rate them. Use simple words: sweet,

sour, crunchy, soft. Great for vocabulary and adventurous eating!

2. SEED EXPLORATION — Save the seeds from a cucumber, squash, or peach pit and let children examine them up close. Talk about how plants grow from seeds and where their food comes from.

3. INDOOR PICNIC — On especially hot days, bring the picnic inside! Lay out a blanket, serve lunch picnic-style, and talk about summer foods. Children love the novelty of eating on the floor.

4. FRUIT PATTERN SORTING — Use halved berries, cherry halves, and sliced fruit pieces to create patterns on a plate before eating. Combines early math skills with a fun food introduction activity.

PROVIDER TIP OF THE MONTH — SUMMER FOOD SAFETY

Hot weather means food safety needs extra attention. Here are a few reminders for keeping meals safe during July:

- Keep cold foods cold. Perishable items like yogurt, cut fruit, and meat should not sit out for more than 1 hour when the temperature is above 90°F.
- Store fresh produce properly. Most whole fruits do well at room temperature until cut; once sliced, refrigerate and use within 1–2 days.
- Watch for wilting greens. Heat accelerates spoilage. Check produce daily and remove anything that looks or smells off before serving to children.
- Hydration matters. Remind children to drink water throughout the day, especially during outdoor play.
- When in doubt, throw it out. If you're uncertain whether a food is still safe to serve, err on the side of caution.

POLICY UPDATE: MILK CHANGES COMING TO CACFP — EFFECTIVE JUNE 8, 2026

Big news for providers this month! USDA published a final rule on May 8, 2026 that expands the types of milk you may serve to children in the CACFP.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

Starting June 8, 2026, CACFP operators may offer whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk to participants ages 2 and older, in addition to the low-fat (1%) and fat-free options that have always been allowed.

IS THIS REQUIRED?

No — this is a flexibility, not a mandate. You are not required to change what you currently serve. If your program is already working well with low-fat or fat-free milk, you may continue as-is. This rule simply gives providers more options.

WHY THE CHANGE?

The update follows the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, signed into law in January 2026, and aligns CACFP with the new 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which now include full-fat dairy as part of a healthy dietary pattern.

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN UNDER 2?

There are no changes for children under 2 years of age. Whole milk remains the requirement for 1-year-olds, and infants continue to follow their own feeding guidelines.

WANT TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

USDA is accepting public comments on this final rule through June 8, 2026 at www.regulations.gov (docket number: FNS-2026-0067).

If you have questions about how this change applies to your program, please don't hesitate to reach out to your sponsor. We're here to help you navigate any updates with confidence!

Barbecue Chicken or Turkey Salad—Recipes for Homes

CACFP Crediting Information: 2/3 cup (two 1/3 measuring cups) Barbecue Chicken/Turkey Salad provided 3/8 cup vegetable and 1 oz. equivalent meat. Makes 6 servings.

Ingredients:

1/3 cup or 2 1/3 oz. Ranch dressing
3/4 cup or 6 oz. White onion, diced
1 tsp Paprika
1/2 tsp Chili powder
3/4 cup or 7 oz. Ketchup
1/8 tsp Garlic powder
1/4 cup or 1 1/2 oz. Brown sugar
1/8 cup or 1 oz. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp Salt-free seasoning
1 1/4 cup or 6 oz. Cooked, diced chicken or turkey
1 tsp Ancho chili powder OR 1 tsp Mexican seasoning mix
1/4 cup or 1 oz. Green onions, diced
1/3 cup or 1 1/2 oz. Red onions, diced
1/2 cup or 4 oz. Celery diced
6 (1/3 oz. each) Iceberg lettuce leaves
2 medium or 6 oz. Fresh tomato, sliced
6 mini Whole-grain rolls, 1 oz. each (optional)

Directions:

1. Set aside ranch dressing for step 5 and refrigerate.
2. Barbecue Sauce: Combine white onion, paprika, chili powder, ketchup, garlic powder, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper, and salt-free seasoning in a large stock pot.
3. Simmer sauce uncovered over medium heat and stir occasionally for 15-20 minutes.
4. Combine barbecue sauce, ranch dressing, chicken or turkey, ancho chili powder or Mexican seasoning mix, green onion, red onion, and diced celery in a large bowl. Stir well. Pour into a small baking dish and refrigerate.
5. Place lettuce leaf on each plate.
6. Portion 2/3 cup barbecued chicken salad on top of lettuce leaf.
7. Place sliced tomatoes on top of barbecue chicken salad.
8. If desired, serve on a whole-grain roll.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
draw on a sidewalk with chalk 5 make MUD pies 12 dirt + water = mud but DON'T eat them! count the signs on your block 19 water 26 Some flowers	look for butterflies 6 sing your favorite songs 13 Can you walk and balance a book on your head 20 play "Kick ball" 27	shuffle to the LEFT and shuffle to the RIGHT 7 NEW MOON, a great night to look at the STARS! 14 taste something sweet, sour and salty 21 READ a book together! 28	NATIONAL ice cream month enjoy a cone 1 make sets of five with blocks or beads 8 try a new vegetable for snack 15 visit the LIBRARY 22 clap and tap to music 29	make up a new dance and share it with the family 2 EAT a grilled cheese sandwich 9 put some ice on the sidewalk... what happens? 16 name BIG and small things in your house 23 give someone a BIG bear hug! 30	make and fly a paper airplane 3 practice writing and drawing 10 crawl on the ground, look for bugs! 17 pretend you're the grown-up and your parents are the kids! 24 turn on the hose and cool down 31	CELEBRATE Independence Day! 4 count the cans in your kitchen 11 have a family barbecue 18 play a game with the whole family 25

Small Hands Crafting

On a piece of white card stock, stamp a child's hand covered in blue paint into the middle. After the hand print dries, give the child red and blue paint and let them paint their own firework around their hand. This will be a great holiday keepsake!



Independence Day

Did you know that as a CACFP participant, your child care provider teaches healthy eating habits?

As part of teaching healthy eating habits, it is important to provide a comfortable, welcoming environment at meal time. This environment should be one that children can be involved in the meal time process. Ask for help setting the table. Use small pitchers for drinks that will allow children to help pour. Encourage children to serve themselves as they are able and to try new foods. This is a great time to use positive role models to show younger children what to do.

As you're eating, take time to share your day as your child shares their own experiences. Enjoy the conversation and the time together!

Fun with Water: Movement on Independence Day

The month of July is a hot one and a great, fun way to cool off is in the water. Tell the children to bring their suits, towels and sunscreen for a day to get wet. Supply a variety of water toys.

- Fill up buckets of water. The kids can paint the sidewalk with old paintbrushes or use sponges and let them have a car wash cleaning all of the outside toys.
- Fill up water bottles and let the kids spray anything outside, including each other.
- Turn on the sprinklers and let the kids run free.
- Have the kids run back and forth filling up a bucket using a smaller cup or bucket.

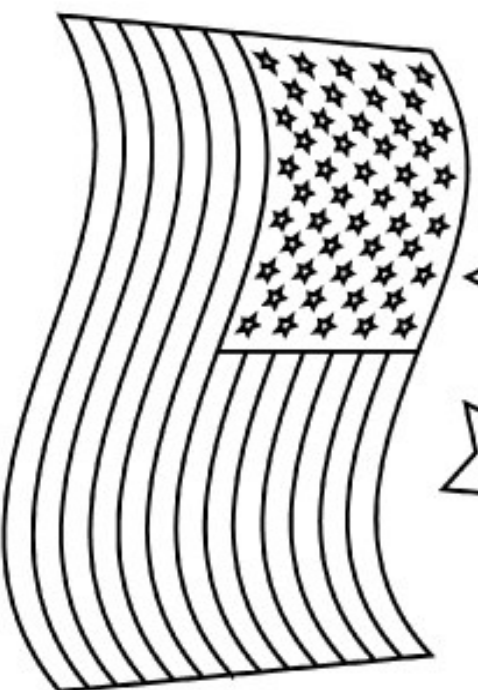
Simple Coleslaw

- 6 cups cabbage (shredded)
- 1 carrot (cleaned, peeled, and shredded)
- 2 tablespoons light mayonnaise (optional)
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar (or white vinegar)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon mustard (or dry mustard seed)
- 2 teaspoons celery seed (if you like)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Place the shredded cabbage and carrots in a large bowl. In a separate bowl add mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, mustard, and salt. If using celery seed, add that too. Mix the cabbage and carrots well with the dressing. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour before serving. Delicious side dish for grilled lean meats!

Recipe from USDA Mixing Bowl.





HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!



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WORD SCRAMBLE

GFAL

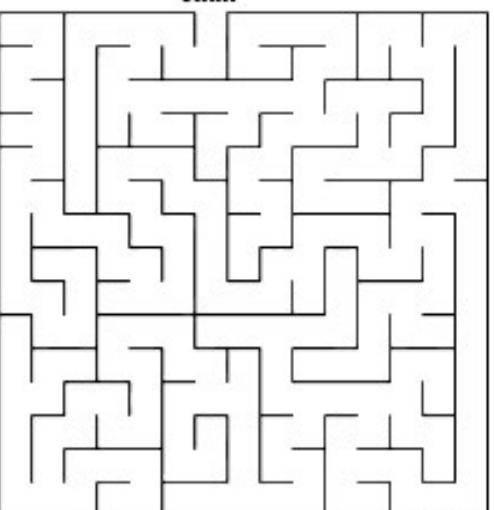
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