

potpourri

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As 2023 ends, we welcome the providers joining us from the "Nutrition for Children" food program in Illinois – we're happy to serve you! ACD is excited to participate in the "10 Cents a Meal" grant again this year (check your email for details). I want to take this opportunity to shine a light on our dedicated and hard-working staff at ACD. Our team works diligently to ensure you have the best experience possible participating on the CACFP.

Reminder of the month: If you are transitioning from manual claiming to online claiming; **do not transition in the middle of the month.** You must complete the month on one method and transition to the new method on the first of the next month.

ACD offices will be closed:

- **Christmas Day and the day after, Monday, Dec. 25 and Tuesday, Dec. 26** with offices reopening Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 8 a.m.
- **New Year's Day and the day after, Monday, Jan. 1 and Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024** with offices reopening Wednesday, Jan. 3 at 8 a.m.

From all of us at ACD, we wish you a joyous Hanukkah, a merry Christmas, a meaningful Kwanzaa and a happy holiday season.

Denise Meyer
Denise Meyer
Executive Director

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Diverse Holiday Meals

Celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas & Kwanzaa with these recipes

Hidden Veggie Latkes

4 servings
pjlibrary.org

Ingredients

1 large russet potato, peeled
1 large zucchini, peeled
1/2 head of cauliflower
1/2 yellow onion
1 clove of garlic, finely minced
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
2 large eggs
1 tsp. Kosher salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
Vegetable oil for frying

- Grate potato, zucchini, cauliflower, and onion. Use food processor to make this step faster.
- Wrap vegetable mixture in cheesecloth or lightweight kitchen towel and squeeze out as much liquid as possible.
- In large bowl, combine vegetables with garlic, flour, baking powder, eggs, salt, and pepper.
- In frying pan heat 1/2” of oil on medium-high.
- Carefully drop heaping tablespoon of latke mixture into oil.
- Fry for two minutes, flip and fry the other side.
- Transfer each latke to a paper towel-lined platter.
- Serve while warm.

○ Vegetable

■ Image: Kislev/Canva

Brown Rice Salad

24 servings
kidspot.com.au

Ingredients

1 tsp. olive oil
1/2 butternut squash, cubed
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. ground coriander
1 (8 oz.) bag microwaveable brown rice
1 tsp. honey
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
Lemon juice
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 handful arugula
Seeds of 1 pomegranate
1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled

- Preheat oven to 350°F and line baking tray with baking paper. Toss squash in cinnamon, cumin seeds, ground coriander and one teaspoon oil. Lay on baking tray and bake 40 minutes or until cooked through. Set aside to cool.
- Cook rice according to packet instructions. Set aside to cool.
- Prepare dressing: combine one tablespoon oil, honey, mustard and lemon juice.
- Serve salad: Combine cooked vegetables, rice, arugula, pomegranate seeds and feta cheese; coat with dressing.

○ Fruit

○ Vegetable

○ Grain/Bread Product

Sweet Potato Bread

24 servings
eatright.org

Ingredients

Vegetable cooking spray
1-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup wheat germ
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup oatmeal (not instant)
1 cup packed brown sugar
1-3/4 cup cooked, mashed sweet potato
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 cup orange juice
1 carrot, grated
1 cup raisins, packed

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray two 9x5x3-inch loaf pans with cooking spray.
- Combine flour, wheat germ, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, oats and brown sugar in a large bowl; set aside.
- In medium bowl, mix remaining ingredients, then add wet mixture to dry ingredients and stir just until combined.
- Spoon batter evenly into pans. Bake 45-50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.
- Cool then cut into 24 slices.

⊕ Fruit

⊕ Vegetable

⊕ Grain/Bread Product

Safety Note: Closely monitor children while using hot frying pan.



	CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG Biscuit & Egg Sandwich 2. Cantaloupe 3. Milk	1. WG Bagel 2. Raspberries*** 3. Milk	1. WG Waffles 2. Orange Wedges 3. Milk	1. Oatmeal 2. Blueberries*** 3. Milk	1. WG Cereal 2. Bananas 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Grilled Chicken Breast 2. WG Bun 3. Vegetable Soup 4. Grapes*** 5. Milk	1. Meat Sauce 2. Spaghetti Noodles 3. Cauliflower 4. Pears 5. Milk	1. Salmon Patties 2. Cheesy Rice 3. Broccoli 4. Applesauce 5. Milk	1. Shredded Chicken & Cheese 2. Tortilla 3. Salsa 4. Corn 5. Milk	1. Honey Glazed Tofu 2. Quinoa 3. Green Peas 4. Strawberries 5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Hummus 2. WG Crackers 3. Apple Slices 4. Cherry Tomatoes*** 5. Milk	1. Edamame*** 2. WG Rice Cake 3. Pineapple 4. Red Pepper Slices 5. Milk	1. Hard Boiled Egg*** 2. WG Crackers 3. Peaches 4. Baby Carrots*** 5. Milk	1. Peanut Butter 2. WG Graham Crackers 3. Honeydew 4. Celery*** 5. Milk	1. String Cheese 2. WG Pretzels 3. Mandarin Oranges 4. Cucumber Slices 5. Milk
(*) Choose two food groups from “Snacks” list.				(**) MT may be substituted for GN/BP up to 3x a week. (***) Choking hazard for children under age 4.		
FT: Fruit VG: Vegetable GN: Grain WG: Whole Grain MK: Milk BP: Bread Prdt. MT: Meat/Meat Alternate						



REMINDERS:

- ACD offices will be closed Dec. 25 & 26 for the Christmas holiday and Jan. 1 & 2, 2024 in observance of New Year’s Day.
- Check expiring enrollments & submit new enrollments by Dec. 8 (MI) & Dec. 15 (IL)
- November first claim due: Dec. 12 (MI) & Dec. 18 (IL)
- October final claim due: Dec. 27 (IL/MI)
- Complete “Holiday Note” form with required signatures if caring for children on a holiday.

2024 Child Health Trends

Mental health, allergies, prevention & equity are top focus areas

In a few weeks, we welcome a new year. As a provider, you've likely begun to plan meals and snacks to serve; staffing; and financial resources needed in 2024.

While these are important aspects of running a childcare business; so is meeting and managing the health needs of the children in your care.

This month's article offers insight into some of the top childhood health trends and issues expected in 2024 that providers (and parents/caregivers) should be aware of.



Mental Health

The COVID pandemic raised the risk of depression in children and adolescents. Post-pandemic, mental health problems such as anxiety and depression substantially increased in this age group due to changes to routines, isolation, family stress or contracting COVID-19. In 2024, it is expected healthcare providers will include mental health screenings as part of the treatment of physical ailments.

Food Allergies

The prevalence of food allergies is increasing in the U.S. These allergies can result in chronic illnesses and even be life-threatening. With the introduction of sesame as a major food allergen early this year coupled with research showing that 92% of parents of a child with food allergies reported that they “always” or “occasionally” feel fearful about their child's safety; prevention of food allergies is expected to be a key childhood health focus area in 2024.

Preventive Healthcare

This proactive approach is expected to continue in 2024 by healthcare professionals with a focus on treating preventable conditions through a focus on exercise, wellness, immunizations and early screenings for conditions such as iron deficiency, undernutrition, child abuse and speech/language delays.

Food Insecurity & Health Equity

According to USDA forecasts, in 2024 food prices are predicted to increase. As prices go up, many families on already-tight budgets will find it tougher to feed their children – resulting in childhood hunger which affects more than nine million American children. Connected to food insecurity is the topic of healthy equity. Alongside the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, various health organizations and agencies are expected to increase efforts to ensure health equity (a fair and just opportunity to attain the highest level of health) for underserved and marginalized populations with a particular focus on children within these populations.

■ **Image (pg. 4):** Billion Photos/Canva ■ **Graphic (pg. 4):** Chanakarn Kwang/Canva

■ **Source:** bridgespanmedicine.com | nestlenutrition-institute.org | globalwellnessinstitute.org | blog.mykidreports.com | forbes.com | christophejauquet.com | whatsnext.nuance.com | musictherapy.org | woodforestmd.com | ers.usda.gov

■ **Image:** JNemchinova/Canva

Modifying Meals & Snacks for Disabled Children

Environment, equipment and food are key

Nutritious food helps children grow and thrive. For children with disabilities, feeding difficulty is more common, putting them at risk for malnutrition.

If you care for a child with disabilities, modifying the eating environment, equipment and food can improve their nutrition and decrease the likelihood of malnutrition.

Modify Environment

Eliminating distractions at meal times allows children to focus on eating at meal and snack times. This means turning off the TV, tablets, radio or any other noise or screen distractions.

As a provider, you set the mood for meal and snack times. Keep a positive, calm attitude. Provide a comfortable, supportive seat appropriate for the child's developmental stage. This means they should not be slouching, which increases the chance of choking while eating. To prevent this, use pillows or towel rolls to prop children up as needed.

Modify Equipment

Consider using silverware, cups, bowls and plates conducive for children who can self-feed. This includes divided plates, sippy cups with handles, sporks (a spoon and fork combination) and coated spoons for children prone to biting hard.

Modify Food

Depending on the needs of the child, certain food and beverage consistencies may need to be modified. This includes thickening beverages or pureeing food for swallowing issues or grinding solid foods for dental or chewing problems.

For children without chewing or swallowing issues, food can be modified in ways that make it easier to pick up with fingers, for children able to self-feed. Examples include:

- Hard-boiled eggs cut in half in place of scrambled eggs
- Tater tots in place of mashed potatoes
- Apple slices in place of applesauce

Follow guidance from the parent/caregiver to understand which modifications are most beneficial for a child with disabilities.

■ Image: Fertnig/Canva



Creamy Ramen Noodle Soup

8 servings

This soup is packed with nutrients that aid the immune system while providing an ample dose of antioxidants from the greens.



Ingredients

1 tbsp. olive oil
 1/2 medium onion, diced
 2 tsp. garlic, minced
 2 tsp. ginger paste
 1 cup shredded carrots
 13.5 oz. coconut milk
 1 quart chicken bone broth
 1 pound cooked chicken
 1 packet of ramen noodles (omit seasoning packet)
 2 cups fresh (or 1 cup frozen) greens
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/8 tsp. pepper



- In a large pot over medium heat, saute onions in oil for 3-5 minutes until translucent.
- Add garlic and ginger, cook for one minute.
- Add carrots, coconut milk, bone broth and chicken. Turn to low, cover and cook for 20 minutes.
- Add in ramen noodles. Cook for three minutes.
- Add the greens, stir and cook for an additional two minutes. Sprinkle in the salt and pepper.
- Serve one cup (8 ounce ladle) and enjoy!
- **Optional:** Break up noodles when dry (before adding to the pot) for shorter noodles. Swap out greens for peas or another green veggie.
- **Nutrition Information (1 cup):** 195 calories, 6 grams fat, 11 grams carbohydrate, 1.2 grams fiber, 24 grams protein.

- ⊕ **Vegetable**
- ⊕ **Grain/Bread Product**
- ⊕ **Meat/Meat Alternate**

Safety Note: Test the temperature of the soup before serving. For children unable to eat soup, drain the broth and serve the noodles, chicken and vegetables in bite-size pieces separately.

■ **Image:** (top) [thehungerdiaries.com](https://www.thehungerdiaries.com) | (bottom) [Layer-Lab/Canva](https://www.Layer-Lab.com) (right) [Billion Photos/Canva](https://www.BillionPhotos.com)

HOLIDAY SPENDING



Spend wisely this holiday. The holidays can be a blur with to-do and grocery lists often blowing budgets. Stay on budget with these tips.

- **Prioritize your spending:** Prioritize spending into “essential” and “non-essential” costs. For example, groceries may be a high priority while dining out might be a low priority.
- **Try a prepaid card:** You can only spend the money you load onto a prepaid card which helps avoid overspending.
- **Organize a potluck:** If cooking for a large group, ask each household to bring a single dish. This helps share the labor and cuts your grocery bill.
- **Try outlet stores:** Shopping at outlet retailers offers well-known brands at a discount that can save money on gifts such as clothes, accessories and footwear.
- **Play Secret Santa:** This is a great way for a group of people to anonymously exchange presents at a set budget. Websites and “apps” are available that let each person create a wish list so their Secret Santa has an idea of what to buy.

■ **Source:** [nerdwallet.com](https://www.nerdwallet.com)

Holiday Snacking

Help children snack healthy during the holidays

With so many food options around during the holidays, it's easy for children (and adults) to grab snacks loaded with tons of added sugars, unhealthy fats and artificial ingredients.

Ensure children snack healthy this holiday season with nutrient-rich snack options. Here are a few ideas:

- Yogurt
- Fruit***
- Edamame***
- Smoothies
- Apple with peanut butter***
- Cheese and crackers***
- Hummus and veggie sticks***
- Popcorn***
- Roasted chickpeas***
- Trail mix***
- Hard boiled egg***

■ **Source:** oac.edu.au | healthline.com

■ **Images:** oac.edu.au | Canva (Elena Photo, Billion Photos, Danny Smythe & Maxlashcheuski)

Safety Note: (***) Choking hazard for children under age 4.



Q: Are baby pouch food products allowed in CACFP?

Yes. Commercially prepared infant foods packaged in a jar, plastic container, pouch or other packaging are creditable in CACFP.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry warns that sucking on baby food pouches may cause tooth decay and an increased risk for dental cavities that can lead to early tooth loss.

Consider squeezing the food from the pouch onto a spoon or the infant's tray/plate instead of allowing them to suck the food from the pouch.

■ **Source:** fns.usda.gov
fns-prod.azureedge.us

Post CACFP questions on [facebook.com/acdkidsorg](https://www.facebook.com/acdkidsorg). We'll answer questions monthly on "Potpourri."

Snowy Chocolate Pinecone

This adorable chocolate pinecone snack looks like the real thing! With no baking required; they make for a great edible craft for kids to make this holiday season.

- 3 cups Chex™ Chocolate cereal (or comparable cereal like Chocolate Fiber One™)
- 6 pretzel sticks (use thick dipping stick style)
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup Nutella®
- 3 tbs. butter, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar



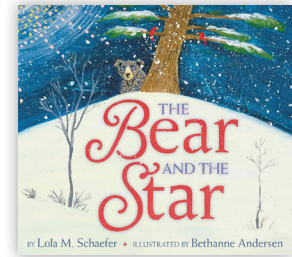
- Mix peanut butter, Nutella®, butter and powdered sugar in a bowl.
- Take pretzel stick and mold some of the peanut butter mixture around it, forming a slight cone shape.
- Holding it steady by using the tip of the pretzel as a handle, start inserting cereal pieces into the peanut butter mixture mold in a symmetrical pattern around the stick.
- Add more cereal pieces, staggering them as you go upward, until you get near the top.
- Cut several cereal pieces into triangles and add those to the top (most pinecones get smaller toward the end).*
- If your pinecone is getting too tall, cut off the top of the pretzel and add a dollop of peanut butter mixture to cover it.
- Insert a few more triangle pieces of cereal into the top of the pinecone.
- For a “snowy” effect, dust the pinecone with powdered sugar.
- Enjoy by plucking apart, piece-by-piece!

🍞 Grain/Bread Product

Safety Note: (*) Carefully supervise or monitor children when using sharp object to cut cereal and/or pretzel pieces.

■ **Craft/Image:** handmadecharlotte.com

December marks a time of celebration and hope for the new year ahead. These books reflect just that – ideal for holiday season story time.



The Bear and the Star by Lola M. Schaefer

With themes of empathy, hope and peace, this picture book is a perfect pick for holiday season story time.



The Shortest Day by Susan Cooper

This book evokes the joy and community found when light, thankfulness and festivity are celebrated.

■ **Books:** amazon.com

Online Safety

Protect children from internet harm

Although December is declared “Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness” Month; there is another safety issue this month that deserves attention: **online safety**.

The internet is a great tool. However, for children, the simple act of surfing the web presents unique challenges because of their natural innocence, curiosity and fear of punishment.

Below are general online safety tips for providers and parents/caregivers to follow and share with children to help keep them internet safe during the holidays (and year round):

- **Place “public-use” or the family computer/laptop in a common area.** Doing this can reduce the chance that a child will talk to strangers or visit inappropriate websites.
- **Use kid-friendly search engines.** Regular search engines can return inappropriate content. Install search engines designed to only return kid-friendly results such as KidTopia and KidRex.org.
- **Teach children to keep personal information private.** Tell a child to never tell a stranger or post personal information online such as phone numbers, addresses and credit cards.
- **Encourage thoughtful sharing.** Set standards for what a child can and cannot do online. Don't wait until something bad happens to start creating guidelines. Set clear rules, expectations and consequences for the (in)appropriate use of technology; and check in frequently with children to ask questions.
- **Choose social networking sites and online friends wisely.** Some sites let kids make friends with people they don't know. Online friends are not the same as real in-person friends. Tell children to never agree to meet an online friend in-person or give out personal information.
- **Talk to your kids about internet use.** Regularly talk to children about how they use the internet. Encourage a child to go to a trusted adult if they encounter a problem or get into trouble online. It's best they go to a trusted adult instead of hiding it.

■ **Source:** kidshealth.org | cisa.gov | du.gcfglobal.org | beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com

■ **Image:** ClarkandCompany/Canva



December 2023

Submit quiz answers to your Field Monitor to receive FREE training credit.
Do not (e)mail quiz to the ACD office.

1. According to USDA forecasts, in 2024 food prices are predicted to decrease:

- a. True
- b. False

2. What equipment can be used for a child with disabilities during meals?

- a. Deep bowl
- b. Spork
- c. Tray
- d. Uncoated spoon

3. Healthy holiday snack options include (select all that apply):

- a. Smoothies
- b. Trail Mix
- c. Oreo® Cookies
- d. Popcorn

4. It is OK for children to share phone numbers and home addresses online:

- a. True
- b. False

5. Baby pouch food products are not CACFP approved:

- a. True
- b. False

6. Feeding difficulty is uncommon for children with disabilities:

- a. True
- b. False

7. Preventive healthcare is a childhood health trend expected to continue in 2024:

- a. True
- b. False

8. Children should be carefully supervised or monitored children when using sharp objects:

- a. True
- b. False

9. Health equity is an issue that is connected to food insecurity and nutrition:

- a. True
- b. False

10. Thinning beverages is an example of how meal modifications can be made for children with disabilities:

- a. True
- b. False

11. Sucking on baby food pouches may cause tooth decay in infants:

- a. True
- b. False

12. What percentage of parents of a child with food allergies reported “always” feeling fearful about their child’s safety?

- a. 19%
- b. 92%
- c. 12%
- d. 29%

13. A prepaid card can help prevent overspending during the holidays:

- a. True
- b. False

14. December is “Safe Food and Gifts Awareness” Month

- a. True
- b. False

15. An example of a kid-friendly search engine is:

- a. SesameStreet.org
- b. KidTopia
- c. KidsRocks
- d. Kids.org



The Association for Child Development educates parents and caregivers about nutrition to promote the development of children and establish healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.



As a nonprofit, ACD has been operating for more than 45 years in Illinois and Michigan. A large part of our work involves serving more than 36,000 children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – a program ensuring children have access to nutritious meals.

Alongside this critical work, ACD looks to make a greater impact by expanding our mission to include a safety component focused on decreasing the risk of harm or injury in homes children are cared for through outreach, education and safety products.

Support ACD's efforts to prevent child injury.

Donate today at www.acdkids.org.