

potpourri

March 2026

Volume 52 | Issue 3



What's Inside?
CACFP Week
National Nutrition Month
Nutrition Education
Laundry & Detergent Safety
& More!

Potpourri is published monthly by the Association for Child Development (ACD), a sponsor of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Child care providers sponsored by the ACD for participation with the CACFP receive Potpourri free of charge. No portion of Potpourri may be reprinted without the consent of ACD.

MICHIGAN

P.O. Box 1491; East Lansing, MI 48826
 3496 E. Lake Lansing Rd., Suite 150
 East Lansing, MI 48823
 Phone: 800-234-3287 or 517-332-7200
 Fax: 517-332-5543
 E-mail: mifrontdesk@acd-kids.org

ILLINOIS

P.O. Box 7130; Westchester, IL 60154-7130
 4415 Harrison St., Suite 535
 Hillside, IL 60162
 Phone: 800-284-5273 or 708-236-0863
 Fax: 708-236-0872
 E-mail: Illinois@acd-kids.org

POTPOURRI CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Gerrity
 Nicolas Gisholt

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March is a special month for child nutrition as we celebrate CACFP Week, a time to recognize the vital role the Child and Adult Care Food Program plays in supporting healthy meals for children in daycare settings. CACFP Week gives us the opportunity to shine a light on the everyday impact this program has on children, families, and the dedicated providers who serve them.

Through CACFP, children receive nutritious, balanced meals that support healthy growth, learning, and development. Just as important, the program empowers childcare providers with guidance, resources, and reimbursement that make serving high-quality meals more sustainable. The meals you prepare each day are helping children build healthy habits that last a lifetime.

CACFP Week is also a chance to celebrate you, the providers who turn guidelines into warm meals and welcoming experiences. Your commitment ensures that nutrition is not just a requirement, but a meaningful part of a child's day.

As we recognize CACFP Week this March, thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to child nutrition. Together, we are making a lasting difference - one meal, one child, and one day at a time.

Denise Meyer

Denise Meyer
 Executive Director

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Let's Eat Some Fiber!

Fiber is a beneficial part of kids' diets!

Roasted Chickpeas

6-8 servings

health.choc.org

Ingredients

Chickpeas:

Three 15-ounce cans of chickpeas

3 tbsp vegetable oil

Option 1 Taco Seasoning:

3/4 tsp chili powder

1/4 tsp ground coriander

1/4 tsp ground cumin

1/4 tsp granulated garlic

1/4 tsp granulated onion

Kosher salt

Option 2 Vinegar-Lime Seasoning:

2 tsp distilled vinegar

Zest of 1 lime

Kosher salt

Option 3 Onion-Garlic Seasoning:

1 tsp granulated garlic

1 tsp granulated onion

Kosher salt

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Put a few layers of paper towels on your work surface. Strain and rinse the chickpeas in a strainer, then shake off as much water as possible. Transfer them to the layer of paper towels, top with more paper towels and pat them gently and roll them around a bit to dry. Discard any papery skins that have peeled off or are about to peel off. Slide the chickpeas onto a large, rimmed baking sheet and let stand at room temperature for at least 30 minutes.
- Roast the chickpeas, stirring them occasionally to keep them from burning in spots, until a little shriveled and crispy, about 45 minutes. Start checking them at around 35 minutes to make

sure they are not burning.

- Meanwhile, make the seasoning mixes. For the Taco Seasoning: Mix the chili powder, coriander, cumin, granulated garlic and onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a small bowl.
- For the Vinegar-Lime Seasoning: Mix the vinegar, lime zest and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a small bowl.
- For the Onion-Garlic Seasoning: Mix the granulated garlic and onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a small bowl.
- When the chickpeas are done, divide them evenly among three medium bowls. Toss each batch with 1 tablespoon of the oil, then toss 1 batch with each of the seasoning mixes.
- Return the chickpeas to the baking sheet, keeping each batch separate. Roast them for three minutes, just to cook the seasonings slightly. Let cool completely on the pan on a rack, about 30 minutes, then transfer to airtight containers. The chickpeas will keep for one day and will soften slightly as they sit.

⊕ **Meat/Meat Alternate OR**

⊕ **Vegetable**

Blueberry Morning Glory Baked Oatmeal

6-8 servings

health.choc.org

Ingredients

2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

1/3 cup unsweetened shredded coconut

1 medium apple, grated

1 medium carrot, grated

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 tsp salt

2 cups milk of your choice

1/4 cup pure maple syrup

1 egg

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

1 cup fresh blueberries, divided.

If using frozen berries thaw them slightly.

1/4 cup pecan pieces for topping, optional

1/3 cup coconut flakes for topping, optional

Instructions

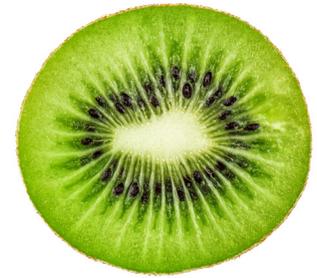
- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease an 8×8 – inch baking dish with cooking spray.
- In a medium bowl, combine the oats, coconut, apple, carrot, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Set aside.
- Whisk together the milk, maple syrup, egg and vanilla in a small bowl. Set aside.
- Arrange 1/2 cup of the blueberries along the bottom of the baking dish. Pour the oat mixture over the top of the blueberries evenly. Pour the milk mixture over the top of the oat mixture as evenly as possible. Tap the baking dish on the counter a couple of times to evenly distribute.
- Top the oatmeal with the pecans, remaining blueberries and coconut flakes.
- Bake 35-45 minutes or until golden brown and set. Cool on a wire rack and serve.

Note: Can be made the night before.

⊕ **Grain** ⊕ **Fruit**

Meals & Menus

CACFP Requirements



CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG Waffles 2. Strawberries 3. Milk	1. Scrambled Eggs w/Whole Wheat Toast 2. Oranges 3. Milk	1. WG Granola w/Yogurt 2. Blueberries*** 3. Milk	1. WG Banana Muffin 2. Kiwi Slices 3. Milk	1. Oatmeal 2. Diced Peaches 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Baked Chicken 2. Brown Rice 3. Steamed Broccoli 4. Apple Slices 5. Milk	1. Turkey/Cheese Sandwich 2. WG Bread 3. Lettuce & Tomato Slices 4. Bananas 5. Milk	1. Beef/Vegetable Chili 2. WG Cornbread 3. Green Beans 4. Diced Peaches 5. Milk	1. Baked Fish Sticks 2. WG Roll 3. Carrot Coins 4. Pineapple Chunks 5. Milk	1. WG Cheese Ravioli w/ Tomato Sauce 2. WG Pasta 3. Cucumbers 4. Strawberries 5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Mozzarella Cubes 2. WG Crackers 3. Bananas 4. Sweet Peppers*** 5. Milk	1. Hummus 2. WG Pita 3. Pear Slices 4. Celery*** 5. Milk	1. Yogurt 2. WG Cereal 3. Mango 4. Snap Peas*** 5. Milk	1. Nut/Seed Butter 2. WG Rice Cakes 3. Grapes (Halved)*** 4. Zucchini Sticks 5. Milk	1. Hard-Boiled Egg 2. WG Roll 3. Watermelon Cubes 4. Spinach 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:

January 2026 final claim due: **March 23, 2026 (Mon.)**

- Please remember to submit enrollments/renewals in a timely manner.
- Please open any mail that comes from ACD. Also, please check your email and spam folders for news and information from us.
- Please remember to mark children out of school and to call in daycare closures.
- Send enrollments to: **Michigan:** mifrontdesk@acd kids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543
Illinois: ilcustomerservice@acd kids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

Stirring Up Goodness

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 Sponsors 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, the CACFP's theme 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.

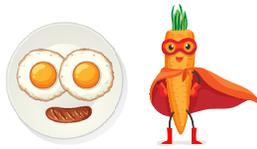


Keep Flavor Simple and Healthy

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.

Engaging Children in Nutrition Education

Teaching young children about nutrition doesn't have to feel like a lesson—it can be an enjoyable, hands-on experience that builds lifelong healthy habits. Early childhood is a critical time to introduce positive messages about food, especially in childcare settings where meals and snacks are part of the daily routine.

Programs participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) already provide balanced meals that meet nutrition standards. Nutrition education is a natural extension of these meals and helps children understand why healthy foods matter.

Make Nutrition Hands-On and Fun

Children learn best through play and exploration. Involving them in food-related activities builds curiosity and reduces picky eating.

Simple ideas include:

- Letting children help wash fruits and vegetables
- Talking about colors, shapes, and textures on their plates
- Sorting foods into groups like fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins
- Reading age-appropriate books about food and where it comes from

These activities reinforce CACFP meal components while keeping learning age appropriate.

Use Mealtime as a Teaching Moment

Meals and snacks offer daily opportunities for nutrition education. Caregivers can model positive behaviors by eating the same foods and speaking enthusiastically about them.

Try using phrases like:

- "Carrots help our eyes stay healthy."
- "Milk helps build strong bones."
- "Whole grains give us energy to play."

Avoid pressure or forcing children to eat. Encouragement and repeated exposure are key.

Keep It Consistent and Age-Appropriate

Short, repeated messages are more effective than long lessons. For infants and toddlers, simply naming foods is enough. Preschoolers can begin learning basic concepts like "everyday foods" that help their bodies grow strong.

Why It Matters

Engaging children in nutrition education supports:

- Healthy growth and development
- Positive relationships with food
- Better acceptance of CACFP-compliant meals

By making nutrition education interactive, supportive, and fun, childcare providers play a powerful role in shaping healthy habits that can last a lifetime.



Cheesy Bean Tostada

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

3/4 cup refried beans, low-sodium
6 corn tortillas (6 inches or at least 14 grams)
1/4 cup + 2 tbsp cheddar cheese, shredded

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. Spread 2 Tbsp of beans on each corn tortilla.
3. Sprinkle 1 Tbsp of cheese evenly over the beans on each tortilla.
4. Place on ungreased baking sheet and bake for 7 minutes or until cheese is melted. Heat to 140 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
5. Serve 1 tostada immediately, or keep warm at 140 °F or higher.

One tostada provides 1/2 oz eq. grains, 3/4 oz eq. meats/meat alternates

Safety notes: *Keep children away from the hot oven.*

⊕ Grain ⊕ Meat/Meat Alternate



Cheesy Broccoli Tots

Yield: 8 more servings

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cup frozen broccoli florets, thawed
1 1/2 cup mashed potatoes
1 1/2 cup shredded cheese
1/2 cup whole grain breadcrumbs
1 egg
1 tsp onion powder
Cooking oil spray

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Chop the broccoli into small pieces.
3. In a large bowl, add all ingredients together and mix until all is well combined. Scoop 1 tbsp of mixture and form into a tot shape, repeat. Line the tots on a greased baking pan. Using the cooking oil spray, spritz each tot with oil.
4. Bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.

Five tots provide 1/4 cup vegetable and 3/4 oz eq meat alternate.

Safety notes: *Keep kids away from the hot oven.*

⊕ Meat/Meat Alternate ⊕ Vegetable



Watch for Shrinkflation!

Shrinkflation is when the price of an item hasn't changed, but there is less in the package than you're used to. When this happens, manufacturers have basically raised their prices by giving you a fraction of the amount.



For example:

Pepperidge Farm GoldFish: The 30-ounce carton was reduced by almost 10% and is now only 27.3 ounces

Tide Oxi laundry detergent: Large jugs went from 154 ounces to 146 ounces.

Charmin Ultra Soft toilet paper: The company cut 30 sheets from each mega roll.

Campbell's Homestyle soup: Cans that were 18.6 ounces are now 16.1 ounces.

Huggies baby wipes: The old version had 768 wipes but the new package has 704 wipes.

You may not be able to do much about your favorite products reducing their sizes, but there are some ways to spot and lessen the effect of shrinkflation:

Compare the unit price.

Sometimes a manufacturer will engage in shrinkflation for one version of a product, but you can get a better price by buying the family-size version or a smaller box.

Consider store brand items. If you've been loyal to a brand but the prices aren't working for you anymore, widen your scope.

Enroll in a membership-based store. Consider joining a wholesaler like Costco. Annual fees start at \$60, but you can score some of the lowest prices available on popular items when you purchase them in large quantities.

Tiny Tastes, Big Benefits: Celebrating National Nutrition Month!

National Nutrition Month, celebrated each March, is a great opportunity for childcare providers to highlight healthy eating habits and build positive food experiences for young children. While nutrition education happens every day in early care settings, this month offers a chance to be more intentional and creative.

For programs participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), National Nutrition Month aligns naturally with the balanced meals and snacks already being served. It's the perfect time to reinforce healthy messages in simple, age-appropriate ways.

Make Food Learning Interactive

Young children learn best through hands-on experiences. During National Nutrition Month, consider adding small activities that connect food to learning:

- Explore fruits and vegetables by color, shape, or texture
- Read stories about food, farms, or gardens
- Talk about where foods come from during meals
- Create simple food-themed art projects
- Vote for your favorite fruits and vegetables: Show various photos of produce and ask participants to vote for their favorite vegetable and fruit. Post a tally board to record votes.

These activities help children feel comfortable with new foods and encourage curiosity.

Highlight Balanced Meals

Use mealtimes to point out how different foods help our bodies grow and stay strong. For example, you might explain that fruits and vegetables help keep us healthy, grains give



us energy to play, and milk helps build strong bones. Keep messages short and positive, and let children decide how much to eat.

Involve Families

Sharing nutrition tips with families extends learning beyond the childcare setting. Consider sending home a short newsletter, posting photos of nutrition activities, or sharing a sample CACFP-style menu to show how balanced meals are planned.

Keep It Simple and Fun

Celebrating National Nutrition Month doesn't require major changes. Small, consistent efforts, like positive language, role modeling, and exposure to a variety of foods can make a big impact.

By celebrating National Nutrition Month in developmentally appropriate ways, childcare providers help children build healthy habits, confidence around food, and a foundation for lifelong wellness.

Project 1: Tambourine

- Paper plates (9-inch coated)
- Stapler with staples
- Pony beads
- Markers
- Glue stick
- Tissue paper squares
- Optional: hole punch, pipe cleaners

STEP 1

Place pony beads on the one of the plates.

STEP 2

Sandwich the second plate on top of the first. Secure closed with staples.

STEP 3

Decorate the tambourine with markers and tissue paper squares as desired.

Optional: Use the hole punch to make holes around the outside of the tambourine, approximately 1 inch apart. Swirl the pipe cleaners through the holes for decoration.



Project 2: Tambourine

- Paper plates (9-inch coated)
- Stapler with staples
- Pony beads
- White yarn
- Markers
- Scissors

STEP 1

Cut 2 pieces of white yarn approximately 8 inches long

STEP 2

For each, tie a pony bead to the end of the yarn and string on an additional 7-10 beads. Tie a knot in the end of each piece of yarn.

STEP 3

Sandwich the plates together and staple around the edges.

STEP 4

Slide the beaded yarn on each side of the plates and staple in place so that the knot is trapped by the staple.

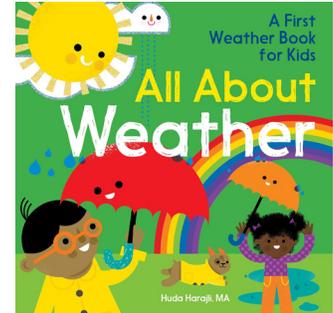
STEP 5

Decorate the rattle drum with the markers.

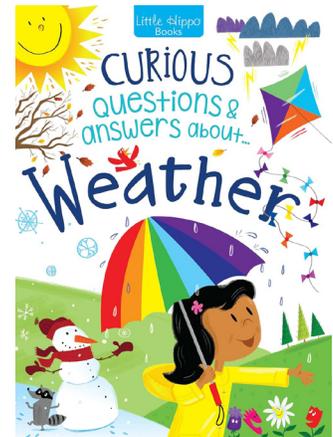


■ Source: inthebagkidscrafts.com ■ Images: inthebagkidscrafts.com

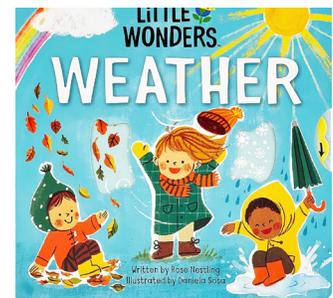
March holds the first day of spring, but the weather can be very unpredictable! Here are some books to get kids thinking about the wonderful world of weather!



In All About Weather: A First Weather Book for Kids
by Huda Harajli (Author)



Little Hippo Books Curious Questions About Weather
by Little Hippo Books (Author), Mike Moran (Illustrator)



Little Wonders Weather - Introduction to the World of Weather and Nature
by Rose Nestling (Author), Daniela Sosa (Illustrator)

■ Books: amazon.com

Poison Prevention: Laundry Room & Detergent Safety

In January and February 2024, poison centers across the U.S. received 1,423 reports of exposure to laundry detergent packets in children age 5 years and younger.

In 2015, new voluntary safety standards were created to help improve the safety of laundry packet containers. Since then, reports of young children exposed to the products have slightly decreased, but the products remain extremely toxic.

LAUNDRY PRODUCT SAFE STORAGE TIPS

Safely store laundry products before, during and after use. Other safety tips:

- Never let children handle or play with laundry detergent packets. The packets dissolve quickly when in contact with water, wet hands or spit.
- Do not remove a packet from the original container until you are ready to put it in the washing machine. Children can get hold of the packets if they are placed in the laundry basket, on top of the washer or dryer, or on a counter before use. Young children move quickly and can often reach higher than you expect. They can grab a packet and put it in their mouth in the time it takes you to reach for a pair of socks.
- Keep laundry products in their original containers with the original label on them. Close them tightly when not in use.
- Always put products away out of sight and reach of children and pets. A high, locked cabinet is best. Do not store products on top of the washer and dryer or in storage drawers under laundry machines. Remember to store spray bottles up and away, too. They are a common source of unintentional poisoning.
- Know what to do in case an injury occurs. Read and follow all instructions on the product label, including safety information.
- Never mix cleaning products. Some chemical mixtures release irritating or dangerous fumes. Do not combine detergent with ammonia or other household cleaners.
- Clean up any spills immediately and wash your hands and any items you use to pour or measure products.
- Close and lock the laundry room door when you leave the room so curious young children cannot get in.



WASHER & DRYER SAFETY

To avoid injuries from washers and dryers:

- Use child locks on front-loading washers and dryers to prevent small children from opening the doors while they are in use and also to prevent them from ever crawling in the machines.
- Do not lean on or allow children to play or hang on the doors of washers and dryers. This can cause them to tip over onto the child.
- Make a rule that the washer and dryer are not toys.



March 2026

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

1. Engaging children in nutrition education supports:

- a. Healthy growth and development
- b. Positive relationships with food
- c. Better acceptance of CACFP-compliant meals
- d. All of the above

2. What nutrient supports healthy digestion and help kids feel full longer?

- a. Carbohydrates
- b. Protein
- c. Calcium
- d. Fiber

3. February is National Nutrition Month.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Child locks should be used on front-loading washers and dryers.

- a. True
- b. False

5. Involving kids in food-related activities does not reduce picky eating.

- a. True
- b. False

6. You should always put laundry products away out of sight and reach of children and pets.

- a. True
- b. False

7. Mealtime can be a nutritional teaching moment.

- a. True
- b. False

8. How many cases of exposure to laundry detergent packets were reported in the US in January-February 2024?

- a. 912
- b. 1,423
- c. 1,956
- d. 2,242

9. Nutrition education is a natural extension of CACFP-creditable meals.

- a. True
- b. False

10. ____ supports growth and keeps bellies full longer.

- a. Carbohydrates
- b. Whole Grains
- c. Protein
- d. Water

11. Laundry detergent packets dissolve quickly when in contact with ____.

- a. Spit
- b. Water
- c. Wet hands
- d. All of the above

12. This year's CACFP week theme is "Stirring Up Goodness."

- a. True
- b. False

13. Use mealtimes to point out how different foods help our bodies grow and stay strong.

- a. True
- b. False

14. Engaging children in nutrition education does what?

- a. Forces them to eat
- b. Develops positive relationships with food
- c. Keeps them busy
- d. Teaches small motor skills

15. Presentation does not matter to young eaters trying new foods.

- a. True
- b. False



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 50 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.