



# ANCHOR

ACCELERATING NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

## CHILD CARE PROVIDERS GET WHOLE GRAIN GOODNESS WITH INTERACTIVE TRAINING



Home-based child care providers have the opportunity to help the children they care for develop a taste for healthy foods by serving them nourishing meals. The federal government will soon require those meals to become even more nutritious under a change to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Child care providers who receive CACFP funding must meet updated nutrition standards starting October 1, 2017 to retain their food subsidies. The new guidelines require a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, more whole grains, and less added sugars and saturated fat.

The American Heart Association's Accelerating National Community Health Outcomes through Reinforcing (ANCHOR) Partnerships Program in Fargo, West Fargo and Cass County, North Dakota partnered with the Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency (SENDCAA), a CACFP sponsor, to provide an in-depth, multifaceted training plan to help nearly 300 home care providers meet the new standards. CACFP is a federally-funded program administered by States. In North Dakota, the state agency that administers the program is the North Dakota, Department of Public Instruction Child Nutrition Program. The state agency contracts with Child Care Home Sponsors (FCCH) to work with licensed child care homes enrolled in CACFP. The goal is to improve and maintain the health and nutritional status of children and adults in care while promoting the development of good eating habits. In North Dakota, there are four Child Care Home Sponsor agencies including SENDCAA Food Program based out of Fargo, ND. The program focus on the two areas that are deemed the hardest to implement which are getting a daily serving of whole grains, and reducing sugar in cereals, yogurt and other breakfast items.



**“The ANCHOR North Dakota team provided a wonderful training opportunity to our child care providers They left with more confidence in label reading and choosing healthy options for their children.”**

— Heide Martin, SENDCAA Child Care Nutrition

## The Challenge

For the first time since it was created in 1968, and as part of an effort to curb the childhood obesity rate, the government revised the nutritional standards for the CACFP in 2016. In 2014 North Dakota's obesity rate in 2- to 4-year old children was 14.4 percent, up from 10.8 percent in 2000.

SENDCAA identified two areas under the new guidelines that will likely pose the biggest challenge for home child care providers: increasing servings of whole grain foods and reducing sugar consumption. A survey commissioned by ANCHOR found that many providers could not adequately read nutritional food labels nor correctly identify ingredient lists. They also lacked broad knowledge of what types of whole grain-rich products could be used to meet the revised standards.

## The Solution

ANCHOR Fargo, West Fargo, and Cass County, North Dakota partnered with SENDCAA to provide home care providers with multiple opportunities to learn about meeting the federal government's updated meal requirements. At an interactive Saturday training conference held in October 2016, a "TED Talk"-like discussion gave providers with an overview of the new CACFP requirements. Participants were then treated to samples of low-sugar, whole-grain rich cereals, fruited yogurt, and overnight oatmeal parfaits. They walked among exhibits demonstrating how to easily make the switch from commonly used refined grains to whole grain-rich foods. They also received personal instruction on how to read labels to help determine portion size, sugar content and other specific ingredients.

## Sustaining Success

Nutrition educators from SENDCAA will follow up the October conference with individual visits to home care providers. They will review information taught at the previous training and provide additional opportunities to practice reading food labels and identify whole grain foods. Providers also will receive kits that include sample labels to use as reference points and handouts they can provide the parents they work with. In addition, a "Cooking with Whole Grains" workshop has been scheduled for home child care providers interested in learning new recipes or getting tips about easy swaps that can help make child-friendly recipes healthier.

## Policy, System and Environmental Change

The revision in the CACFP nutrition standards resulted from the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. The updated criterion was published in the Federal Register in April 2016 and must be met by home child care providers by October 1, 2017.

The ANCHOR project helped give providers the skills they need to properly read labels and identify whole grain rich foods, which is critical since all providers receiving CACFP funding must soon give children at least one daily serving of whole grains. They also will be prohibited from serving breakfast cereals with more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.

## Results

ANCHOR and SENDCAA worked with 295 home care providers serving roughly 3,250 children in eight eastern North Dakota counties. Providers responded very positively to the training opportunities they received. A post survey commissioned by ANCHOR found that a majority attendees 97% considered the information discussed constructive, and 90.6% intend to take action to influence the environment and policies related to healthy food and beverages as an individual and at their child care home. They also enjoyed sampling healthy food products and learning how to read nutrition labels and identify whole grain rich foods. Providers are now armed with numerous ideas for serving healthier meals to the children in their care. More importantly, they are confident in their ability to meet the revised CACFP standards that become effective on October 1, 2017.

## Get Involved

CACFP provides nutritional education and funding to providers who serve healthy meals to individuals in their care. You can learn more information about the CACFP-sponsored agencies in your state by heading to the program's website at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/schoolstaff/childnutritionfooddistribution/childadultcarefoodprogram> And to learn more about policy opportunities visit, <http://earlycare.voicesforhealthykids.org/>.