

SB 818/ HB 2664 Offer New Options to Child Care Providers

CACFP Meal Patterns Lower Costs and Add Variety for Texas Kids

SB 818 / HB 2664 would ensure minimum standards for nutrition and meals are consistent with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture. **Aligning with CACFP guidelines can save money while also offering healthier meals and snacks to children growing and learning in child care programs during the day.**

Example 1: Child Breakfast (Age 3-5)

Current DFPS Standards

¼ cup 1% milk
¼ cup banana
¼ cup cooked cereal

CACFP (more options to choose from)

¾ cup 1% or skim milk
½ cup banana
¼ cup cooked cereal (or ½ egg or ¾ cup yogurt)

Through CACFP, meat/meat alternatives can substitute for the grain food group at breakfast three times per week and save some money (e.g. ½ egg instead of muffin or biscuit), giving child care providers more flexibility than DFPS currently allows. Under current DFPS standards, 3-to-5-year-olds must receive 3 servings of whole grains throughout the day if a child is in child care for 7 or more hours.

Example 2: Child Lunch (Age 3-5)

Current DFPS Standards

½ cup 1% milk
1 ½ oz. lean meat
½ slice of whole grain bread
½ cup of broccoli

CACFP

¾ cup 1% or skim milk
1 ½ oz. lean meat, chicken, or fish
½ slice whole grain or enriched bread
¼ cup broccoli
¼ cup orange slices

Both DFPS and CACFP allow child care providers to purchase affordable fruits and vegetables, such as the broccoli and orange slices in the examples above, by permitting low-cost canned or frozen options as an alternative to pricier fresh fruit and vegetables.

Example 3: Child Snack (Age 3-5)

Current DFPS Standards

¼ cup juice
¼ cup of carrots
3 to 5 crackers

CACFP (more options to choose from)

¼ cup juice
¼ cup of carrots

OR

½ cup 1% or skim milk
½ cup of apple slices

OR

½ slice whole grain bread
½ oz. cheese

CACFP guidelines are broken down by breakfast/lunch/snack categories while DFPS standards are broken down by total food servings a child should receive throughout the day. For example, DFPS standards require one serving of fruit throughout the day for children age 3-5 in care for more than 7 hours. As a result, if fruit is served at breakfast, it limits options for snack time. CACFP guidelines are set out by breakfast/lunch/snack categories and include a serving of fruit for breakfast and lunch (and at snack time if the program chooses). This gives more variety to kids and allows child care programs to adjust one part of their menu (e.g., breakfast) without impacting their lunch or snack menus.