

including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or Women's, Infants, and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC).

### **Connect with Local Nutrition Resources**

Child care providers are concerned about the health and well-being of children. Health and growth both depend on nutritious food choices. It is a challenge to stay current on nutrition information. Here are some ideas for connecting with local leaders in the nutrition community.

#### **Registered Dietitians**

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) is the world's largest organization of nutrition professionals, with affiliates in every state. The Association's Web site, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org), has many resources for the general public, including a link to local state affiliates at the About ADA page.

Registered dietitians (RDs) have earned a bachelor's degree in approved course work; completed a supervised experience program; passed a national examination; maintain continuing education credits; and follow a professional code of ethics. RDs work in a variety of locations including public health departments, health care facilities, and state agencies with food and nutrition programs

#### **Extension Educators**

The USDA Cooperative Extension Service has an extensive network of food and nutrition educators throughout the country. Extension family and consumer science specialists provide education and resources on a variety of topics, including food safety, basic nutrition, and managing food budgets through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

EFNEP is available through county Extension Offices. Peer educators working for EFNEP are located in communities across the nation. Check with your local Extension Service to find out how to access the classes, schedule a guest speaker, or refer families to EFNEP.

To find an Extension Office close to you, use the search function at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>.



## Local Universities and Community Colleges

An often overlooked resource is the local university or community college. If you are looking for a speaker for an education evening, consider a student or intern. Check with the college of health sciences, college of agriculture (often food and nutrition departments are part of this college), or college of education to explore options. Often students or interns need real-life experiences. Students are supervised by faculty and need to increase skills. Perhaps a student can meet a group's need for nutrition information while meeting a personal need for experience.



## Educators of Young Children

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the professional organization for anyone concerned with young children. Membership includes educators, parents, and others. Like ADA, NAEYC has state affiliates; find a listing at [www.naeyc.org/affiliates](http://www.naeyc.org/affiliates).

### Sources

American Dietetic Association. *About ADA*. Retrieved May 16, 2011, from <http://www.eatright.org/About/content.aspx?id=5974>

American Dietetic Association. *Network opportunities with affiliate groups*. Retrieved May 16, 2011, from <http://www.eatright.org/HealthProfessionals/content.aspx?id=11432>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (2010). *Cooperative extension system offices*. Retrieved May 16, 2011, from <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>

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Join a network with others interested in young children. It is a way to find others interested in child nutrition issues. Local affiliates may offer education sessions on a variety of topics including nutrition for young children.

## CACFP Sponsoring Organizations

Organizations that sponsor the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) are another nutrition resource in the local community. Check with your sponsoring organization to see if a networking group can be formed among other home providers or centers. The nutrition program guidance is the same for all providers the sponsor works with, so chances are many others have similar needs.

## Choose a Nutrition Source Wisely

Finally, be cautious and know the credentials of the source of any nutrition information. Often community classes are offered by individuals who do not share the science-based approach of RDs, Extension Educators, and other qualified nutrition professionals. Investigate before paying a course fee or spend valuable time in a session that might be lacking in solid nutrition information.