

## Let's Go to the Summer Feeding Program

School is almost out and summer is rapidly approaching. Summertime is typically an exciting and adventurous time for children. Many children spend their summer breaks having fun at various camps, on family vacations, and with relatives. In addition, many children spend their time at a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) site eating nutritious meals, playing games, and participating in enrichment activities. But, what is a SFSP?

The SFSP bridges the gap between spring and fall when schools are closed. The program provides meals and snacks to children who may not have access to healthy meals during the summer. In many homes, the food supply is often a challenge for children during the summer months when school meals are not available. When children go hungry during the summer, their performance is affected when school re-opens. Also, when children fail to receive healthy meals, the chance of illnesses increases. These two reasons illustrate why it is important to participate in the Summer Food Service Program.



### Benefits

There are three major benefits for administering a program:

1. Children 18 years or younger receive free and healthy meals.
2. Children are able to participate in summer enrichment activities, continuing to advance their skills and knowledge when school is not in session.
3. Sponsors receive reimbursements for the meals served to children at their sites.



## How Can You Help?

There are four ways to participate in the SFSP: as a sponsor, a site, a vendor, or a volunteer. In most states, a sponsor contracts directly with the state agency to manage a SFSP. A sponsor can be a non-profit organization, government agency, non-profit camps, private or public non-profit school, and universities or colleges. To be a sponsor, an organization must be administratively capable, financially responsible, and have personnel available to operate the program.

The sponsor is responsible for:

- Attending training provided by the state agency.
- Locating and recruiting eligible sites.
- Managing all human resources responsibilities (hiring, training, etc.).
- Monitoring sites.
- Preparing and filing reimbursements.

A site is the physical location where children receive meals. The physical site typically contracts with a sponsor and the sponsor manages the administrative requirements of the program. Sites are classified by the following categories: open, closed enrolled, camp, migrant, or NYSP. Check with your state agency for qualifications to become a site or a sponsor.

If you are interested in working with the Summer Food Service Program, but aren't affiliated with a sponsor or site, you can volunteer to help feed children during the summer. SFSP can always use volunteers for tutoring, physical activity, gardening, entertainment, or various other activities to help children have a great summer.

## State Agency

In most states, the state agency manages the SFSP. Always check with your state agency to obtain the most recent and up-to-date information pertaining to the SFSP. Follow the link <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/contacts/statedirectory.htm> to find your state agency contact information.

## Planning Meals During the Summer

Planning meals for the SFSP can be fun and exciting. Plan cycle menus at the beginning of the summer. This will assist in planning grocery lists, budgeting, and knowing what will be served for the entire summer. When planning meals, always “strive for balance”. Balance flavors and monitor levels of fat, sugar, and salt in the foods you are serving.

Offer a variety of food items that are full of bright colors. Always have at least three different colors on the menu each day. Add a variety of different textures to the menus including crunchy and crispy food items. Avoid serving the same food items too often as the meals may become boring to the children.



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Serve the main dish only once in a nine-day period. This method allows the dishes to be served on various days and children who only come on certain days will receive a variety of dishes.

Lastly, remember to consider how the food will appear on the plate. Will the food look appetizing on the plate? The first impression can have an effect on children eating the food.

### Quick Tips and Strategies

- Plan menus one month in advance.
- Consider using cycle menus for the summer.
- Collaborate with a local farmer to provide fresh fruits and vegetables and agricultural education for the children.
- Implement an education curriculum and plan daily activities.
- Maintain all documentation in a binder for easy access.
- Implement and practice food safety.

### Food Safety During the Summer

Summertime is exciting, but remember to implement food safety. Let's look at some basic food safety rules.

- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Receive and store food properly.
- Cook food to the correct temperatures.
- Remember the Temperature Danger Zone 40 °F-140 °F. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Prepare foods safely, implementing the Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill Best Practice Method.



### Summer Food Site Locator

If you are unable to start a program or you are seeking a program, contact your state agency or the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). FRAC has a great tool for locating Summer Food Sites by state. If your state is not available on the site locator, FRAC offers contact information for locating specific sites. For more information, check out their website at <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/summer-programs/summer-food-site-locator-2011/>.

### Resources for Managing a Program

- Toolkit: Summer Food Service Program Outreach Toolkit for Sponsors and Feeding Sites  
Website: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/SFSP\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/SFSP_toolkit.pdf)
- Website: USDA Summer Food Service Program [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/)

- Resource: The Summer Food Service Program 2012 Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/HandBooks/MonitorsGuide.pdf>
- Resource: The Summer Food Service Program 2012 Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors (Spanish Version)  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/HandBooks/sp-SiteSupervsGuide.pdf>
- Resource: CARE Connection Curriculum for Child Care Providers  
<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=199>
- Resource: A Guide to Starting the Summer Food Service Program in Your Community  
<http://www.summerfood.usda.gov/library/guide.pdf>
- Resource: Menus for Child Care  
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=196>
- Resource: More Than Mud Pies  
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=247>
- Website: MyPlate  
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>



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#### Sources

- Food Research and Action Center. (2011). Summer food site locator 2011. Retrieved from, <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/summer-programs/summer-food-site-locator-2011/>
- United States Department and Agriculture. (2012). Summer food service program. Retrieved from, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/FAQs.htm>
- United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. (2012). The summer food service program: 2012 administrative guidance for sponsors. Retrieved from, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/HandBooks/AdminGuideSponsors.pdf>

# Nutrition Highlights

## **National Message – USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines Communications Message Calendar**

The theme for May to August is *Foods to Reduce*. During this time, the selected key message is “drink water instead of sugary drinks”. Remember the theme and selected message when planning activities for everyday activities. To obtain more information, follow the link at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/MyPlate/CommunicationsMessageCalendar.pdf>

## **National Fruits and Vegetable Month**

June is National Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month. According to MyPlate, fruits and vegetables should make up half of your plate. This is a great time to talk to children about why this is important. Fruits and vegetables play an important role in maintaining healthy lifestyles. Remember to incorporate them into your daily meals.

## **2012 Summer Meals Kickoff**

USDA will host their second National Summer Meals Kickoff on June 11-15, 2012. This is an exciting event that marks the beginning of the Summer Food Service Program. On the USDA’s website, there is a toolkit that offers step-by-step instructions for outreach and marketing a program. Check out their website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/Outreach.htm>

## **NFSMI Trainings**

NFSMI has a variety of online child care courses available. All online courses are free of charge and can be accessed at any time. Check out our online courses at <http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?qs=cEIEPTIzNg==>

