



***Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist: A Program Self-Assessment Checklist
for Family Day Care Home and Child Care Center Providers
Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program***

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

STEPS TO NUTRITION SUCCESS CHECKLIST: A PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR FAMILY DAY CARE HOME AND CHILD CARE CENTER PROVIDERS PARTICIPATING IN THE CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

Overview

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI), created in 1989 (Public Law 101-147), engages in activities that lead to and provide training and technical assistance related to improving the quality of meal service to children. During the 1999 NFSMI Research Agenda Conference, the Applied Research Division identified research needs related to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). These needs included the availability of competent child care nutrition program professionals responsible for providing quality food and nutrition services to young children in out-of-home care.

Child care professionals in Family Day Care Homes (FDCH) and child care centers strive to provide the best care possible through the application of a variety of CACFP guidelines and other resources. Like the school food and nutrition program providers, CACFP participants are interested in continuous quality improvement and take advantage of training provided by state agencies and sponsoring organizations. Since program improvement begins with a self-assessment of where the program is currently, the Applied Research Division determined that participation in a program self-assessment would be the first step needed to direct individual child care providers to the resources needed for continuous quality improvement.

The Applied Research Division planned and conducted a research study designed to develop a program self-assessment checklist grounded in established standards that focus on the food and nutrition services of child care operations. State agencies and sponsoring organizations provide guidance to CACFP participants in the appropriate application of the CACFP. The project goal was to build on this structure and provide a comprehensive program self-assessment checklist, which used at a regular interval such as once each year, would enhance existing training and program development efforts.

During the first phase of the project, the researchers reviewed the CACFP regulations and guidance materials in preparation for determining the quality indicators to include on the program self-assessment checklist. An expert panel representing CACFP professionals from state agencies, sponsoring organizations, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and NFSMI provided input and assistance in the selection and wording of indicators. The expert panel determined the program self-assessment checklist would be titled *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* and suggested that the quality indicators be referred to as “best practices.” Two versions of the checklist were developed, one for FDCH providers and one for the child care center environment. Each checklist covered the same best practices but was worded

differently to reflect these different environments. FDCH providers and child care center directors were contacted and asked to participate in the pilot test of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*. Feedback from the evaluation of the pilot provided valuable information on how the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* may be used and how state agencies, sponsoring organizations, and the NFSMI might provide assistance to CACFP participants as they continue to maintain and improve program quality.

**DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST
FOR FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES AND
CHILD CARE CENTER PROVIDERS**

STEPS TO NUTRITION SUCCESS CHECKLIST

This project continues the NFSMI Applied Research Division research agenda to fill the gaps relative to the child care environment. In earlier research efforts NFSMI identified job duties, training needs and competencies, knowledge, and skills of sponsor monitors. The development of a program self-assessment checklist was determined to be the next step in providing research-based tools for participants in the CACFP. The *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* is the result of this research project. The *Checklist* reflects best practices as outlined in the regulations and guidance for the CACFP and will support CACFP providers in the continuous quality improvement of the food and nutrition services offered in their facilities. Additionally, results of the assessment process can be used to guide child care providers, state agencies, and sponsoring organizations in selecting training topics that support the specific needs of the programs.

Research Objective

The research objective was to develop a program self-assessment tool for FDCH and child care center providers participating in the CACFP. As part of the NFSMI's commitment to providing research, education, and training for the CACFP, the Applied Research Division determined that there was a need for a research-based program assessment tool for use by child care providers in family day care homes and child care centers. Many organizations in the public and private sectors had developed an extensive volume of self-assessment materials for determining quality child care. This research identified an opportunity to develop a tool utilizing those materials, which focused on the food and nutrition aspects of quality child care. The researchers determined that the tool would be in an easy-to-use checklist format. To accomplish this objective, the following strategies were used:

- Identify all major CACFP program regulations and guidance materials as well as other appropriate child care guidance materials related to quality food and nutrition services in the child care setting, such as those related to the Head Start Program.
- Determine the areas or aspects of providing quality food and nutrition services to be included on the program self-assessment checklist.
- Determine the quality indicators (best practices) related to food and nutrition services to be included on the program self-assessment checklist.
- Seek input from an expert panel on the content and format for the program self-assessment checklist.
- Pilot test the program self-assessment checklist with CACFP providers in FDCH and child care centers.

Informed Consent

This research project was conducted under contract with Mississippi State University. Informed consent procedures established by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research of Mississippi State University were followed throughout the research.

METHODS AND RESULTS

Development of a Program Self-Assessment Checklist

During the first phase of the research study, food and nutrition quality indicators were identified from the CACFP regulations (Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 1989, 1998), guidance materials, and other appropriate standards (American Dietetic Association, 1999; Code of Regulations, 2001; Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 2002; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 1999a; 1999b; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996) related to the food and nutrition services offered in the child care setting. A select group of CACFP professionals was asked to serve as an expert panel to assist NFSMI researchers in development of the program self-assessment checklist. Additionally, the expert panel members assisted in a pilot test of the program self-assessment checklist by providing names and contact information for FDCH providers and child care center directors who might be willing to complete the program self-assessment and evaluate the checklist and the program self-assessment process.

The expert panel consisted of state agency administrations responsible for the CACFP in their states and sponsoring organizations. The panel represented five states, five USDA regions, USDA Food and Nutrition Service and the NFSMI Education Division (See Appendix A for a list of expert panel members.) The CACFP expert panel performed a content validation procedure on the quality indicators identified by the researchers. A group consensus procedure was followed. The expert panel was directed to complete a preliminary checklist prior to coming to a work group session. During the two-day work group session, the expert panel provided feedback on the content, scope, and wording of the quality indicators, basic organization, and format for the finished checklist. Panel members suggested there be a separate version of the checklist for FDCHs and child care centers. The completed checklists were organized into content sections, which were determined by the expert panel to be consistent with CACFP guidance materials from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS, 1999a and b). The expert panel recommended that the quality indicators be referred to as “best practices,” a term familiar to the CACFP participants. The expert panel and the researchers decided upon the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* title for the program self-assessment tools.

“Best Practices” in CACFP

A comprehensive list of quality indicators or best practices was identified in part from the sources previously cited. In addition to published regulations and standards for the CACFP and child care in general, researchers drew from various educational materials available to CACFP participants. These resources included the following:

- The *CARE Connection* training series available from NFSMI (part available online)
- *Bright Futures in Practice: Nutrition*, 2nd ed. available from <http://www.brightfutures.org/nutrition/pdf/index.html>
- Dietary Guidance for Healthy Children Aged 2 to 11 Years --Position of ADA available online at www.eatright.org

- *What's in a Meal?* available from NFSMI
- *Child Care Recipes: Food for Health and Fun* available online at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/childcare_recipes.html
- *Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals* available online at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/buildingblocks.html>
- *Making Nutrition Count for Children* available online at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/nutritioncount.html>
- *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program* available online at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.html
- *Menu Magic for Children*. Retrieved January 6, 2003, from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/menumagic.html>

Expert panel members were familiar with all resources consulted and provided valuable guidance in the final selection and wording of best practice quality indicators to include in the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* program self-assessment tool. The expert panel identified the following content areas as a means of categorizing best practices: 1) Administration and Operations, 2) Nutrition, and 3) Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Children—Working with Parents and Others in the Community. These categories are consistent, although not identical, with those presented in the USDA's *Management Improvement Guidance: Child Care Center Sponsors and Independent Centers* (1999a) and *Management Improvement Guidance: Family Day Care Home Sponsors* (1999b). Additionally, the expert panel suggested that there be a separate version of the checklist for FDCHs and child care centers. Each version of the checklist covered the same content; however, wording was adjusted to be more specific to the FDCH and child care center providers. (See the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* for FDCH and child care centers in Appendix B and C, respectively, for a complete listing of best practices.) Revisions were made and the checklists reformatted according to the expert panel members' suggestions. Members of the expert panel were given another opportunity to review the checklists and make additional comments and suggestions, which were then incorporated into the checklists.

Pilot Test of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* for FDCHs and Child Care Centers

Once final revisions of each checklist were made, a pilot test involving CACFP participants was conducted. The expert panel members provided a list of potential participants for the pilot test. Twenty-nine child care center and 56 FDCH contacts were asked to participate in the pilot. Pilot participants included those individuals who planned the menus in the facilities. Researchers confirmed that pilot participants had access to all aspects of the food and nutrition services covered in both versions of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*. Pilot participants were instructed to complete a program self-assessment of their operation using the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* and an evaluation form that measured the value, usability, and clarity of the checklist (See Appendix D for a copy of the evaluation). Six independent child care centers, six Head Start centers, and 31 FDCH contacts completed and returned the program self-assessment and evaluation form, generating an overall study return rate of 51 percent.

Evaluation Results

Results of the evaluation are found in Tables 1 and 2. Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations, and Pearson Chi-Square data analysis were performed using SPSS (Version 10.0). Forty-three role incumbents participated in the pilot by completing the evaluation of the checklist. Since the evaluation process covered such factors as clarity and a participant's perceived value of the checklist and the program self-assessment process, FDCH and child care center participants received the same evaluation instrument. Additionally, participants could comment on or make suggested modifications for the best practice quality indicators. While participants did provide written comments (Appendix E) they did not make specific suggestions for any modification in the best practices. Individuals completing the pilot test of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* reported having the following job titles: center director, family day care home provider, center nutritionist, center cook, executive vice-president, nutrition manager, child care coordinator, assistant director, health services manager, and group day care operator.

When pilot test participants were asked if they participated in program self-assessment on a regular basis, statistical significance was determined ($p \leq .05$) that child care centers conducted a program self-assessment (75%) more than were FDCH providers (39%). Statistical significance ($p \leq .05$) was determined among the study groups as relating to the person most likely to complete the program self-assessment. Eighty-nine percent of FDCH providers indicated that they would be the individuals most likely to complete the program self-assessment; however, one responded that parents should be involved. In this FDCH, it appeared that the provider viewed parents as a partner in assuring quality care. Two FDCH pilot participants also indicated that the center director should be involved, which may be due to the location of several FDCH within a larger organization along with other child care arrangements, including Head Start. Twenty-eight percent of participants representing child care centers indicated that the center director was the person most likely to complete the program self-assessment. Remaining child care center pilot participants' responses to this question included the following individuals: executive vice-president, nutrition manager, authorized food program representative, assistant director, Health Services Advisory Committee, health services manager, center nutritionist, and center cook.

Pilot participants were asked to respond to a 12-item evaluation of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* related to the usability and value of the checklist and the program self-assessment process to evaluate continuous quality improvement of the food and nutrition services offered in their CACFP. The means and standard deviations for each of the 12 items are presented in Table 1 as descriptive data and are supported by Pearson Chi-Square analysis (Table 2). Three of the 43 pilot participants provided comments that indicated that time required to complete the program self-assessment was a factor considered when evaluating the checklist. Therefore, it appears that length of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* and the time required to do a thorough assessment were of concern to few. Given the many responsibilities and duties for child care givers, it is not surprising that time might be a concern in participating in program self-assessment. However, all returned checklists were completed. All pilot participants recorded some comments about how well the child care program was operating utilizing various best practices identified in the self-assessment instrument. This participation indicates that pilot participants took a thoughtful assessment

of their programs during the pilot test. They also agreed that they would be willing to participate in the assessment process on a regular basis (i.e., once a year). Thirty-four of 43 (81%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that they would be willing to complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* on a regular basis to assure they are offering a quality nutrition program.

Similarly, there was a high level of agreement among the pilot participants for other items on the evaluation. In order to accomplish the research objective, it was important that the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* accurately reflect the scope and goals of the CACFP and that the checklists reflect the highest quality in food and nutrition service in the child care setting. Both groups agreed that the checklists cover important aspects of implementing the CACFP and that best practices are consistent with the rules and regulations for the program. Pilot participants also validated through agreement that the best practices were clearly stated and the checklists were easy to use.

NFSMI was interested to know if the pilot participants felt the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* would assist them in continuous quality improvement efforts. Questions 6-10 (Tables 1 and 2) were used to determine if pilot participants perceived the checklist and the self-assessment process to be useful and to have value. Seventy-nine percent of FDCH and child care center respondents agreed that the program self-assessment checklist was useful or valuable to them in maintaining and improving quality of care. Ninety-three percent of pilot participants thought the checklist would be useful in helping them reach their goals and has the potential to have a long term impact on program quality (88%). Seventy-seven percent of FDCH participants and 72% of center participants indicated a willingness to develop a plan of improvement based on the findings identified after completing the checklist. Participants were also willing to use the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* on a regular basis, with a total of 81% of all pilot participants responding that they agree or strongly agree that they would be willing to do so.

Significant differences were noted between the study groups ($p \leq .05$) as relating to questions 11 and 12 on the evaluation. FDCH pilot participants were more likely to agree (55%) or strongly agree (32%) that training on the use of the checklist would be helpful, compared to child care center pilot participants' responses of 33% and 8% for agree and strongly agree, respectively. Child care center pilot participants were more likely to disagree that training would be helpful (59%) than the FDCH pilot participants (7%). Similarly, child care center respondents were more likely to be less interested in receiving recognition for completing a program self-assessment using the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* (64%) as compared with FDCH respondents (14%). Seventy-six percent of the FDCH pilot participants either agree or strongly agree that they would like to receive recognition from the sponsor or state agency for completing the checklist. These data support the need to look further into professional recognition opportunities and systems available to all child care providers for their outstanding achievements in food and nutrition services in the child care setting.

Table 1. Levels of agreement¹ on usefulness and value of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* as reported by pilot test participants

N=43 ²	FDCH	Centers	Total
1. The checklist covers all the important things we consider when implementing the CACFP in our child care center or family day care home.	3.68 ± 0.653	3.67 ± 0.651	3.67 ± 0.644
2. The Best Practices are consistent with the rules and regulations for the CACFP.	3.65 ± 0.661	3.75 ± 0.452	3.67 ± 0.608
3. The Best Practices represent the best care we can give.	3.60 ± 0.675	3.75 ± 0.452	3.64 ± 0.618
4. The Best Practices are stated clearly.	3.45 ± 0.723	3.50 ± 0.522	3.47 ± 0.667
5. The checklist was easy to use.	3.52 ± 0.851	3.42 ± 0.515	3.49 ± 0.768
6. The checklist was useful. I learned ways to improve our nutrition program.	3.00 ± 0.894	3.08 ± 0.515	3.02 ± 0.8.01
7. The <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> can help us reach program requirements and goals.	3.27 ± 0.828	3.33 ± 0.492	3.29 ± 0.742
8. I would be willing to complete the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> on a regular basis to help us to continue to offer the best nutrition program possible.	3.03 ± 0.875	3.18 ± 0.603	3.07 ± 0.808
9. I would be willing to develop a plan of improvement for Best Practices I have not done yet.	2.94 ± 0.814	2.91 ± 0.701	2.93 ± 0.778
10. The <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> could have a long-term impact on our nutrition program.	3.19 ± 0.833	3.00 ± 0.426	3.14 ± 0.743
11. Training on the use of the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> would be helpful.	3.13 ± 0.806	2.55 ± 0.674	2.95 ± 0.815
12. I would be interested in receiving recognition from my sponsor or state agency for completing the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> and for making improvement plans for my child care center or family day care home.	3.00 ± 0.964	2.55 ± 0.820	2.88 ± 0.939

¹ Responses ranged from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, and strongly agree=4

² N may vary due to no-responses for some items

Table 2. Comparison of FDCH and child care center evaluations of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*, using Chi-Square analysis

N=43 ¹		FDCH	Centers	Total
1. The checklist covers all the important things we consider when implementing the CACFP in our child care center or family day care home.	Strongly Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Disagree	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (2%)
	Agree	7 (23%)	2 (17%)	9 (21%)
	Strongly Agree	23 (74%)	9 (75%)	32 (74%)
2. The Best Practices are consistent with the rules and regulations for the CACFP.	Strongly Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Agree	8 (26%)	3 (25%)	11 (26%)
	Strongly Agree	22 (71%)	9 (75%)	31 (72%)
3. The Best Practices represent the best care we can give.	Strongly Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Agree	9 (30%)	3 (25%)	12 (29%)
	Strongly Agree	20 (67%)	9 (75%)	29 (69%)
4. The Best Practices are stated clearly.	Strongly Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Agree	12 (39%)	6 (50%)	18 (42%)
	Strongly Agree	17 (55%)	6 (50%)	23 (54%)
5. The checklist was easy to use.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Agree	7 (23%)	7 (58%)	14 (33%)
	Strongly Agree	21 (68%)	5 (42%)	26 (61%)
6. The checklist was useful. I learned ways to improve our nutrition program.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	6 (19%)	1 (8%)	7 (16%)
	Agree	13 (42%)	9 (75%)	22 (51%)
	Strongly Agree	10 (32%)	2 (17%)	12 (28%)
7. The <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> can help us reach program requirements and goals.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	Agree	14 (47%)	8 (67%)	22 (52%)
	Strongly Agree	13 (43%)	4 (33%)	17 (41%)
8. I would be willing to complete the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> on a regular basis to help us to continue to offer the best nutrition program possible.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	5 (16%)	1 (9%)	6 (14%)
	Agree	14 (45%)	7 (64%)	21 (50%)
	Strongly Agree	10 (32%)	3 (27%)	13 (31%)
9. I would be willing to develop a plan of improvement for Best Practices I have not done yet.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	5 (16%)	3 (27%)	8 (19%)
	Agree	17 (55%)	6 (55%)	23 (55%)
	Strongly Agree	7 (23%)	2 (18%)	9 (21%)
10. The <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> could have a long-term impact on our nutrition program.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	2 (7%)	1 (8%)	3 (7%)
	Agree	5 (48%)	20 (83%)	25 (58%)
	Strongly Agree	12 (39%)	1 (8%)	13 (30%)
*11. Training on the use of the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> would be helpful.	Strongly Disagree	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
	Disagree	2 (7%)	7 (58%)	9 (21%)
	Agree	17 (55%)	4 (33%)	21 (49%)
	Strongly Agree	10 (32%)	1 (8%)	11 (26%)
*12. I would be interested in receiving recognition from my sponsor or state agency for completing the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> and making improvement plans for my child care center or FDCH.	Strongly Disagree	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)
	Disagree	4 (14%)	7 (64%)	11 (28%)
	Agree	12 (41%)	2 (18%)	14 (35%)
	Strongly Agree	10 (35%)	2 (18%)	12 (30%)

¹ N may vary due to no-responses for some items

*Evaluation items preceded by an * are significant at the p<.05 level, using Pearson Chi-Square analysis.

Summary and Conclusions

High-quality food and nutrition programs for young children are an essential component of high-quality child care. Parents and guardians depend upon the child care program to provide nutritious meals and snacks to their children. Quality food and nutrition programs begin with the provider. The self-monitoring process provides a time to reflect and assess existing practices. When CACFP providers self-monitor the level of best practices on a regular basis, they are actively participating in the quality assurance process. Sponsor monitors and state agency staff are encouraged to take advantage of the results of the implementation of the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* through focused follow-up technical assistance and training that is specific to the needs identified by the CACFP providers themselves. Written comments from the pilot participants indicate that they are presently engaged in various training and assessment activities that help them maintain and improve quality in their child care program (Appendix E). Numerous comments also indicate that additional training is needed in several key areas, including dealing with choking, ideas for menus, and safe food handling practices. Some child care professionals may not choose to implement new best practices in food and nutrition services. However, most comments provided by the pilot participants support the strong agreement with the usefulness and value of program self-assessment using the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* tools in the child care and FDCH settings.

The work presented in this report should further serve state agencies, sponsoring organizations, and NFSMI in developing strategies, including training opportunities for professional and personal growth for CACFP participants. Taking advantage of professional growth opportunities based upon the best practices presented in the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* should enhance the individual child care professional's ability to move to higher levels of achievement, while monitoring the quality of nutrition care provided. For additional information and opportunities related to professional growth through education and training, the child care professional is directed to the NFSMI Web site at www.nfsmi.org. NFSMI welcomes the comments and suggestions of readers of this report on how NFSMI may continue to provide research, education, and training opportunities for FDCHs and child care centers participating in the CACFP.

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APPENDIX A
CACFP Expert Panel/Reviewers

CACFP Expert Panel/Reviewers

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APPENDIX B
Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist **Family Day Care Homes**

Welcome to *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*. As a professional child care giver you want to provide the best care possible to the children in your family day care home. Quality nutrition programs are an important part of providing best care to children. By participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) you have taken the first step to nutrition success. When you serve nutritious meals and snacks in a child-friendly setting, you are providing a quality nutrition program.

Completing the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will help you determine if you are providing a quality nutrition program for the children in your family day care home. When you are doing your job right, it is called **Best Practice**. The *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* includes Best Practices for quality nutrition programs. Completing the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will help you determine if you are using Best Practices in your family day care home.

There are three main sections to the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* - 1) Administration and Operations; 2) Nutrition; and 3) Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Children - Working with Parents and Others in the Community. Just follow the five easy steps below as part of your commitment to serving quality meals and snacks in your family day care home. Involve helpers and parents in completing the checklist whenever possible.

Five easy steps to follow when using the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*

- Step 1: Complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* by marking the response that best describes your family day care home.
- Step 2: Decide which Best Practices you want to add or improve.
- Step 3: Select a few Best Practices at a time and begin to make improvements in your nutrition program.
- Step 4: Take advantage of nutrition education and other resources provided by the state and sponsoring organizations to make improvements. Take time to think about your progress in achieving the Best Practices you are working to improve.
- Step 5: Complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* at least once a year to ensure that you continue to provide a quality nutrition program.

Congratulations! You are taking the steps necessary to provide the very best nutrition care for children.

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

In this section, you will consider **Best Practices** related to the administration and operation of a quality nutrition program in your family day care home.

Best Practice Checklist: Guidelines and Procedures

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines and procedures are designed to help you provide the highest quality nutrition program to children. Following these guidelines will assure that you receive reimbursement for meals and snacks. Best practices in quality nutrition programs include following all the guidelines and procedures of the CACFP. Your state agency or sponsor may have additional procedures that you must follow.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Recognize the importance of food and nutrition to healthy child development.				
Follow all nutrition requirements of the CACFP, licensure, or registration to ensure that the food and nutrition needs of children are met.				
Have written food and nutrition procedures for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding children with allergies • Foods brought from home • Food substitutions • Feeding children with special needs • Others are developed as needed 				
Submit on time information required by the program sponsor.				
Make sure child care helpers and parents are familiar with all food and nutrition procedures.				
Make sure all food and nutrition procedures are consistent with state and federal regulations.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Menu Planning and Food Preparation

Planning menus for meals and snacks in advance is important to meeting the nutrition needs of the children in your care. Taking time to plan menus, healthy cooking methods, and nutrition education are important Best Practices. Reading label directions and using standardized recipes* are part of running a quality nutrition program. The state agency and sponsor are valuable resources for planning and preparing quality meals and snacks.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Plan meals and snacks that include foods that are age appropriate and children enjoy eating.				
Notice what foods children are eating so that unfamiliar foods will be offered again or prepared in a different way.				
Plan nutrition education activities that help children accept new foods.				
Involve parents in promoting new menus and foods offered in the family day care home.				
Consider the backgrounds of all children when planning menus.				
Plan menus in advance.				
Use recipes or written directions from food packages to be sure there is enough food and foods are prepared correctly.				
Use healthy cooking methods such as steaming instead of boiling and baking, roasting or grilling instead of frying.				
Serve all foods at their peak of freshness and when the quality is the best.				

* A standardized recipe is a written recipe that has been tested and always provides an acceptable product and the same amount each time it is used.

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Purchasing Foods

Purchasing foods can be a challenge. It is important to purchase high quality foods that will meet the nutrition needs of the children in your family day care home and meet your budget. Wise shopping will ensure there is adequate food available throughout the month.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Use food labels and other similar information to help make wise food purchases to save money and assure there is enough food for the entire month.				
Purchase enough food to meet the meal pattern requirements and the needs of the children.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Mealtime Considerations

Mealtime is one of the most important parts of the child care day. Creating the right kind of mealtime setting is one of the most important things you can do for the children in your care. Take time to make mealtime relaxing and enjoyable for you and the children. Mealtime is a great time to teach positive attitudes about eating and foods. It is also a wonderful time to explore other concepts such as colors, textures, and many others. Be sure to schedule plenty of time for meals and snacks.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Provide a clean, pleasant, and attractive place for children to eat.				
Arrange tables and seating areas to encourage conversation among the children.				
Serve meals and snacks without distractions.				
Turn off the television and videos during mealtime.				
Sit and share the same meals and snacks with the children.				
Allow children to participate in the meal service by setting the table.				
Make sure children have enough time to eat meals and snacks without hurrying.				
Serve meals and snacks for older children at the same time each day. Feed younger children and infants on demand.				
Make any needed changes in meal schedules to ensure children’s needs are being met.				
Talk to children about foods in a positive way and encourage children to try foods.				
Help children during mealtime.				
Never use mealtime as a time to discipline or scold children.				
Never use food as a way to reward or punish children.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Food Safety

Best Practices related to food safety should begin with a good understanding of the principles of safe food handling. Be sure to take advantage of training in this important area, and make it a priority in your continuing education plans. Have the necessary supplies and spaces needed for proper hand washing by you and the children and to keep the child care facility clean.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Follow all food safety and health regulations, licensure, registration, or other rules.				
Keep all health and safety inspection reports on file.				
Know whom to ask when help is needed with health and safety regulation questions.				
Use and clean all equipment and other food surfaces properly.				
Use proper hand washing procedures at all times. Wash hands often throughout the day.				
Wash hands of infants and children before meals, after toileting, and other times as needed.				
Know which foods may cause choking and never offer them to young children.				
When shopping for food, these basic safe food handling guidelines* are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after selecting your non-perishables. • Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking. • Do not buy food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates. • Put raw meat and poultry into a plastic bag so meat juices will not cross-contaminate ready-to-eat food or food that is eaten raw, such as vegetables or fruit. • Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to take a cooler with ice for the perishables. 				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Food Safety, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
<p>When storing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). • Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below. • Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days. • Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food. • To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer. • In general, high acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored on the shelf for 12 to 18 months. Low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years -- if the can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean, and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted. 				
<p>When preparing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wash hands before and after handling food. • Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash hands, cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water. • Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator. • Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water. 				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Food Safety, Continued

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
When thawing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerator: The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food. • Cold Water: For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing. • Microwave: Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing. 				
When cooking food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook ground meats to 160 °F; ground poultry to 165 °F. • Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F; all cuts of fresh pork, 160 °F. • Whole poultry should reach 180 °F in the thigh; breasts, 170 °F. 				
When serving food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot food should be held at 140 °F or warmer. • Cold food should be held at 40 °F or colder. • When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often. • Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). 				
When saving leftover food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature was above 90 °F). • Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling. • Use cooked leftovers within 4 days. • Meat and poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be refrozen before or after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook before refreezing. 				

* “Basics for Handling Food Safely” is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/facts_basics.htm

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Planning and Teamwork

It is hard to overestimate the importance of planning. Achieving quality in the nutrition program in your family day care home requires a commitment of time and effort to plan for success. Planning will save you time in the long term. Take time to plan all aspects of your nutrition program and involve helpers and parents in your planning.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Review all procedures and meal and snack schedules and plan annually to see if improvements are needed.				
Review nutrition and meal service goals and plans on a regular basis and revise when needed.				
Involve helpers, program sponsor, and parents in planning healthy meals and snacks.				
Use and keep nutrition information and nutrition resources provided by the program sponsor and state agencies overseeing the program.				
Use information on menu planning, meal service, and nutrition education from program sponsors, state agencies, and other reliable sources.				
Set goals and make plans to ensure success of the nutrition program, such as introducing new fruits and vegetables, serving foods prepared with less fat, and using food activities with children.				
Share goals and plans for the nutrition program with helpers and parents.				
Keep all CACFP forms and required information, such as menus, meals counts, and others.				
Ask for information from the program sponsor when needed.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Planning and Teamwork, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Use the sponsor monitor's visit to make improvements.				
Use a spending plan and shopping list to help make sure money is available to buy food to meet program requirements.				
Review the cost of food on a regular basis to assure the purchase of nutritious foods.				
Attend training on CACFP regulations, menu planning, food safety, nutrition education, and other topics provided by the program sponsor and state agencies.				
Have an active membership in local, state, and national child care associations.				
Take leadership roles in professional associations.				
Participate in certification programs offered by the program sponsor or state agencies.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

In this section you will consider **Best Practices** related to planning, preparation, and serving child care program meals and snacks that meet the nutrition needs of all the children in your family day care home.

Best Practice Checklist: Meal Requirements

The CACFP meal requirements are designed to help you provide the highest quality nutrition program. Following the meal pattern requirements is a first step in planning, preparing, and serving meals and snacks that meet the nutrition needs of growing children. Best Practices in quality nutrition programs include following all the meal requirement of the CACFP.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Menus are planned to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements for meals and snacks.				
Planned menus are followed and menu substitutions are appropriate.				
Recipes are used to assure the right amounts of foods are prepared and healthy food preparation methods are used.				
Required amounts of food are served at meals and snacks.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Nutrition Recommendations

The CACFP meal pattern requirements should be used in combination with the Best Practices listed in this section of the checklist. Special attention is needed for certain nutrients that are hard for children to get, such as vitamin A and fiber. Encouraging children to try a variety of foods will improve their chances of getting all the nutrients and energy they need for growth and development. Respecting the food cultures of children is important, too. Keep up with the latest information about nutrition and children; scientists are learning new facts all the time.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Plan menus that provide foods rich in vitamin A and vitamin C (fruits and vegetables), iron (meats, poultry, green vegetables, and enriched breads and cereals), and calcium (milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified orange juice).				
Plan meals and snacks that provide the right amounts of calories and fat.				
Plan meals and snacks that provide plenty of fiber by including whole grains and plenty of fruits and vegetables.				
Plan meals and snacks to be sure they are not high in sodium or sugar.				
Plan menus around a wide variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables.				
Take responsibility for deciding when children are served meals and snacks and what foods are served. Children can decide how much to eat from the foods offered.				
Allow children to decline foods.				
Include foods familiar to children and consistent with their culture and background.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Special Food and Nutrition Needs

Not all children have the same nutrition needs; and some children have very special food, nutrition, and feeding needs due to disabilities, allergies, and other considerations. Best Practices in a quality child care nutrition program tend to the special needs of all children enrolled in the family day care home. It is important to allow all children to participate as fully as possible in all child care activities, keeping the special needs of children in mind as you plan daily activities as well as menus. You may need to seek help in providing for children’s special needs. Ask your state agency or sponsor. Be sure to include parents and helpers in your efforts to meet children’s special needs.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Follow written recommendations of a recognized medical authority for special food, nutrition, and feeding needs of children.				
Provide the CACFP sponsor a written statement, from a medical authority, of any special diet instructions.				
Work with the sponsor to meet the special needs of children, within the CACFP guidelines.				
Adapt menus to meet the nutrition and feeding needs of children.				
Include children with special needs in all mealtime activities as much as possible.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Feeding Infants

Feeding infants requires special care. Following the Best Practices in this section will help ensure you are feeding infants properly. If you would like more information on feeding infants, ask your sponsor or state agency. The Best Practices in this section are taken from *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program*. All child care providers will find this an important source of information. You can order or print the entire publication directly from the USDA Web site at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.html.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Follow the Best Practices outlined in <i>Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program</i> .				
Create a safe, caring, and pleasant mealtime; for example, softly talking to babies, cuddling them, and keeping hot foods out of reach.				
Initiate discussions with parents about how the baby is eating and growing, especially if there are concerns.				
Talk to parents about what the baby is eating at home and in child care to be sure the baby is getting what is needed.				
Report any signs of neglect in feeding to the appropriate authorities.				
Carefully follow the infant meal pattern requirements.				
Create a breastfeeding-friendly setting by limiting other foods or beverages until parents indicate the baby is ready.				
Share the benefits of breastfeeding with expectant mothers.				
Offer only age-appropriate foods and beverages to all babies. Work with parents in the introduction of solid foods.				
Feed older babies along with other children so they are part of the mealtime experience.				
Use appropriate feeding equipment for all babies, including those with disabilities.				
Use age-appropriate infant seats and high chairs for babies that are being fed solid foods.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Feeding Infants, Continued

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Always use safety straps in infant seats and high chairs.				
Feed babies and younger children upon demand. Work with parents to understand the baby's hunger cues.				
Feed babies until they are full. Never force an infant to finish a bottle or other foods.				
Hold young babies while they are being fed. Older babies may be fed a bottle while sitting up in the high chair.				
Maintain eye contact with babies during feedings.				
Feed babies slowly. Allow infants at least 20 minutes to feel full. Never make a larger hole in a bottle nipple to make milk come out faster.				
Never feed cereal or other foods from a bottle.				
Never leave babies and young children unattended during mealtime, not even for a few minutes.				
Never prop a bottle or allow older babies to go to bed with a bottle or cup.				
Never allow older babies to feed continually from a bottle or cup.				
Wash hands before and after handling breastmilk, formula, and other baby foods.				
Heat bottles under warm running water. Test on the wrist to be sure the temperature is right. Never use a microwave oven or the stovetop.				
Refrigerate all bottles of breastmilk and formula as soon as they arrive and until ready to use. Never allow bottles to stand at room temperature.				
Use breastmilk and formula only for the baby for whom they are intended.				
Never save unfinished bottles of breastmilk or formula to use at another feeding.				
Thaw bottles of frozen breastmilk in the refrigerator. Only thaw what is needed for one feeding. Do not refreeze.				
Carefully follow directions for mixing infant formulas.				
Clean and sanitize all bottles before using.				
Never feed from the jar of baby food. Portion out the amount needed and promptly refrigerate the rest.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Feeding Infants, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Never save unfinished baby food left in the baby's bowl, plate, or cup for another feeding.				
Label all bottles and food containers with the baby's name.				
Label all bottles with the date. Discard according to the following schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard all formula and breastmilk after 48 hours. • Discard all breastmilk that has been frozen and thawed after 24 hours. • Discard all frozen breastmilk that has never been thawed after 3 months. 				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Nutrition Education

Providing current, age-appropriate nutrition education is an important aspect of the child care curriculum. Nutrition education activities can be used to teach math, science, social studies, and language. Music and art are also great places to use food-related themes.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Conduct nutrition education activities with children.				
Plan nutrition education activities that follow the nutrition recommendations of the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> and the <i>Food Guide Pyramid for Children</i> .				
Have available and use age-appropriate, current nutrition education materials.				
Take advantage of lending libraries for nutrition education materials.				
Talk about foods served at mealtime and use stories and other classroom activities that teach about healthy foods.				
Offer snacks for class activities that promote healthy eating habits.				
Let children help prepare healthy snacks.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN - WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

In this section you will consider **Best Practices** related to planning activities for the health, safety, and well-being of all the children in your family day care home.

Best Practice Checklist: Safety

Safety is a high priority for all child care providers. You want to ensure that the children in your care are safe from accidental and intentional injury. The well-being of all children is important to you. Being prepared to deal with the unexpected will help you provide Best Practices that keep the children in your care safe.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Know how to prevent choking and how to help a child that is choking.				
Follow kitchen safety procedures, such as proper use of knives, microwave ovens, and all heating appliances.				
Dispose of all trash properly, especially diapers and similar waste.				
Have smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in place and know how to use them correctly. Batteries for fire detectors are checked regularly.				
Have fire evacuation plans and practice regularly with the children.				
Keep pets out of all food preparation and serving areas.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN - WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Best Practice Checklist: Emergency Readiness

Most family day care homes never have to deal with natural disasters or other large-scale emergency situations, but it is critical to be prepared. Best Practices in emergency readiness start with being “ready” with a plan in place to deal with potential situations that might threaten the health, safety, and well-being of the children in your care.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Have a written plan for taking care of sick children and children who become sick while they are in the home.				
Have a written plan for taking care of children when parents are late picking children up at the end of the child care day.				
Have a written plan for taking care of children until parents pick them up when weather or other situations require the home to close unexpectedly.				
Have a plan for providing services during a disaster or other emergency situation.				
Include in the disaster plan a 3-day food and water supply, other emergency supplies, and information as recommended by the Red Cross or Department of Home Land Security.				
Share the disaster plans with all parents.				
Make sure helpers and parents know how to help carry out the disaster plan.				
Make sure helpers and parents know about other community disaster and emergency plans.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Family Day Care Homes
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN - WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Best Practice Checklist: Promoting the CACFP

The benefits of the CACFP to the children in your family day care home are worth sharing. Take opportunities to tell other child care providers about the program and how they can participate. You will want also to share your experiences in the program with the policy makers in your community and state. By spreading the word about CACFP and how it helps you offer a quality child care program through nutritious foods and nutrition education, you are helping make sure the CACFP continues to get the support it needs at the local, state, and federal levels.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Share benefits of participating in the CACFP with other family day care homes.				
Answer questions from new program participants about the CACFP.				
Tell parents about the benefits of the CACFP.				
Share menus served to children with parents.				
Share ideas for healthy meals and snacks with parents.				
Encourage parents not to use food as a reward or punishment.				
Provide public policy makers, such as legislative personnel and government agencies, with information about the benefits of the CACFP.				
Make the family day care home available to public policy makers to see the benefits of the child nutrition program to children.				

Comments:

APPENDIX C
Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist **Child Care Centers**

Welcome to *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*. As a professional child care giver you want to provide the best care possible to the children in your care. Quality nutrition programs are an important part of providing best care to children. By participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) you have taken the first step to nutrition success. When you serve nutritious meals and snacks in a child-friendly setting, you are providing a quality nutrition program.

Completing the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will help you determine if you are providing a quality nutrition program for the children in your child care center. When you are doing your job right, it is called **Best Practice**. The *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* includes Best Practices for quality nutrition programs. Completing the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will help you determine if you are using Best Practices in your child care nutrition program.

There are three main sections to the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* - 1) Administration and Operations; 2) Nutrition; and 3) Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Children - Working with Parents and Others in the Community. Just follow the 5 easy steps below as part of your commitment to serving quality meals and snacks. Involve the child care staff, teachers, and parents whenever possible in completing the checklist.

Five easy steps to follow when using the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*

- Step 1: Complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* by marking the response that best describes your nutrition program.
- Step 2: Decide which Best Practices you want to add or improve.
- Step 3: Select a few Best Practices at a time and begin to make improvements in your nutrition program.
- Step 4: Take advantage of nutrition education and other resources provided by the state and sponsoring organizations to make improvements. Take time to think about your progress in achieving the Best Practices you are working to improve.
- Step 5: Complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* at least once a year to ensure that you continue to provide a quality nutrition program.

Congratulations! You are taking the steps necessary to provide the very best nutrition care for children.

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

In this section, you will consider **Best Practices** related to the administration and operation of a quality nutrition program in your child care center.

Best Practice Checklist: Guidelines and Procedures

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines and procedures are designed to help you provide the highest quality nutrition program to children. Following these guidelines will assure that you receive reimbursement for meals and snacks. Best practices in quality nutrition programs include following all the guidelines and procedures of the CACFP. Your state agency or sponsor may have additional procedures that you must follow.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The child care center recognizes the importance of food and nutrition to healthy child development.				
The nutrition requirements of the CACFP, Head Start, or licensure are used to ensure that the food and nutrition needs of children are met.				
The child care nutrition program has written food and nutrition procedures for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding children with allergies • Foods brought from home • Food substitutions • Feeding children with special needs • Others are developed as needed 				
Child care personnel, including nutrition staff, teachers, and parents, are familiar with all food and nutrition procedures.				
All food and nutrition procedures are consistent with state and federal regulations.				
Daily food production records are accurate and complete.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Menu Planning and Food Preparation

Planning menus for meals and snacks in advance is important to meeting the nutrition needs of the children in your care. Taking time to plan menus, healthy cooking methods, and nutrition education are important Best Practices. Reading label directions and using standardized recipes are part of running a quality nutrition program. The state agency and sponsor are valuable resources for planning and preparing quality meals and snacks.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Work schedules for food preparation are developed, posted, and periodically reviewed.				
Batch cooking methods are used whenever possible.				
Meals and snacks are served so that all foods are at their peak of freshness and when the quality is the best.				
All child care staff, including teachers, are trained to observe children’s food choices.				
Observations of children’s food choices are noted and reported to the menu planner.				
How well children accept new foods is noted.				
Nutrition education activities are planned to help children accept new foods.				
Parents are involved in promoting new menus and foods offered in the child care center.				
The ethnic and cultural backgrounds of all children are considered when menus are planned.				
Menus are planned in advance.				
A complete set of standardized recipes is available in all food preparation locations.				
Child care nutrition program staff members are trained in the use of standardized recipes and how to follow package directions.				
Foods are prepared using healthy cooking methods such as steaming instead of boiling and baking, roasting, or grilling instead of frying.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Purchasing Foods

Purchasing foods can be a challenge. It is important to purchase high quality foods that will meet the nutrition needs of the children in your center as well as meet your budget. Wise shopping will ensure there is adequate food available throughout the month.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Nutrition labels and other similar information are used to help make wise food purchases.				
Enough food to meet the meal pattern requirements and the needs of the children is purchased.				
The <i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i> is used to determine amounts of food to purchase.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Mealtime Considerations

Mealtime is one of the most important parts of the child care day. Creating the right kind of mealtime setting is one of the most important things you can do for the children in your care. Take time to make mealtime relaxing and enjoyable for you and the children. Mealtime is a great time to teach positive attitudes about eating and foods. It is also a wonderful time to explore other concepts such as colors, textures, and many others. Be sure to schedule plenty of time for meals and snacks.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Children have a clean, pleasant, and attractive place to eat.				
The arrangement of tables and seating areas encourages conversation among children and with teachers.				
Meals and snacks are served without distractions.				
Television and videos are turned off during mealtime.				
Caregivers are seated with and eat the same meals and snacks as the children.				
Children are allowed to participate in the meal service by setting the table and by using family style meal service.				
Children have enough time to eat meals and snacks without hurrying.				
Adults provide assistance to children during mealtime.				
Meals and snacks for older children are served at the same time each day. Feed younger children and infants on demand.				
Meal schedules are reviewed regularly to ensure children’s needs are being met.				
Adults talk about food in a positive way and encourage children to try foods.				
Children are never disciplined or scolded at mealtime.				
Food is not used as a way to reward or punish children.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Food Safety

Best Practices related to food safety should begin with a good understanding of the principles of safe food handling. Be sure to take advantage of training in this important area, and make it a priority in your continuing education plans for everyone in the center. Stress the importance of food safety to everyone and provide the necessary materials and spaces needed for proper hand washing by the staff and children and to keep the child care facility clean.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
All food safety and health regulations, licensure registration, or other rules are followed.				
All health and safety inspection reports are kept on file.				
When help is needed with health and safety regulation questions, the care giver knows whom to ask.				
All child care program staff members are trained in proper hand washing and other food safety procedures.				
Children are taught to wash their hands before eating, after toileting, and other times as needed.				
Children are not served foods that may cause choking.				
When shopping for food, these basic safe food handling guidelines* are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after selecting your non-perishables. • Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking. • Do not buy food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates. • Put raw meat and poultry into a plastic bag so meat juices will not cross-contaminate ready-to-eat food or food that is eaten raw, such as vegetables or fruit. • Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to take a cooler with ice for the perishables. 				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Food Safety, Continued

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
<p>When storing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). • Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below. • Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days. • Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food. • To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer. • In general, high acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored on the shelf for 12 to 18 months. Low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years - if the can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean, and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted. 				
<p>When preparing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wash hands before and after handling food. • Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash hands, cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water. • Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator. • Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water. 				
<p>When thawing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerator: The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food. • Cold Water: For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing. • Microwave: Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing. 				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Food Safety, Continued

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
When cooking food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook ground meats to 160 °F; ground poultry to 165 °F. • Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F; all cuts of fresh pork, 160 °F. • Whole poultry should reach 180 °F in the thigh; breasts, 170 °F. 				
When serving food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot food should be held at 140 °F or warmer. • Cold food should be held at 40 °F or colder. • When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often. • Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). 				
When saving leftover food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature was above 90 °F). • Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling. • Use cooked leftovers within 4 days. • Meat and poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be refrozen before or after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook before refreezing. 				

* “Basics for Handling Food Safely” is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/facts_basics.htm

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Planning and Teamwork

It is hard to overestimate the importance of planning. Achieving quality in the nutrition program in your child care center requires a commitment of time and effort to plan for success. Planning and working together as a team will not only assure your success, it will save time in the long term. Take time to plan all aspects of your nutrition program and involve all the nutrition program staff, teachers, parents, and others that may be appropriate.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The menu planner, cook, teachers, nurses, other child care staff, and parents work as a team to assure healthy meals are served to children.				
The team meets regularly to review nutrition procedures and make changes when needed.				
The child care program staff, program sponsor, and parents are involved in planning healthy meals and snacks.				
The child care program maintains nutrition information and nutrition resources provided by state agencies and sponsor.				
Child care nutrition program staff use information on menu planning, meal service, and nutrition education from state agencies, sponsor, and other reliable sources.				
Goals and plans are made to ensure success of the nutrition program, such as plans and goals related to introducing new fruits and vegetables, serving foods prepared with less fat, and using food activities with children.				
Goals and plans for the nutrition program are shared with the child care program staff.				
Goals and plans are reviewed on a regular basis and revised when needed.				
All CACFP forms and required information such as menus and meals counts are kept on-site.				
Information is requested from the state agency or sponsor when needed.				
A copy of the budget approved by the state agency is on file.				
Income and expenditure projections are evaluated monthly.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Planning and Teamwork, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The foodservice budget is prepared based upon the current number of children enrolled in the center.				
When available, automated data processing is used to enhance financial reporting between the child care program and the state or sponsoring agency administering the CACFP.				
The cost of food from all sources, including food from vendors, is reviewed regularly to assure the purchase of nutritious foods.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Staffing and Training

The child care nutrition program staff members are an important part of the child care team. A caring staff committed to providing the very best care possible is essential to quality care for children. Training opportunities will help the staff learn Best Practices in all areas of the nutrition program operation. This checklist deals with the nutrition program staff, but the principles can be applied to all the child care staff.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Procedures for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel are in writing and used when making hiring decisions.				
Procedures for recruiting and hiring reflect the cultural diversity of the local child care environment.				
Procedures to allocate staffing are based on factors such as meal production and service system, enrollment, teaching and supervision and other assigned duties within the child care program.				
Staffing in the child care center is based on any existing state or local requirements.				
A formal staff performance evaluation system is established.				
Staff is trained on nutrition topics including CACFP regulations, menu planning, food safety, nutrition education, and other relevant topics.				
On-the-job training is provided to improve skills and productivity.				
All staff members have opportunities to attend educational programs, staff development activities, one-on-one training, and professional meetings.				
Additional training and staff development are provided as needed.				
The child care program takes advantage of training offered by state agencies and sponsors.				
Training activities are evaluated at least annually.				
Internal staff meetings are scheduled regularly to discuss problems and encourage suggestions for program improvement.				
A standard procedure is used to evaluate staff performance.				
All child care nutrition program staff members are evaluated in writing at least annually.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Staffing and Training, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Staff members are recognized for outstanding performance.				
Staff members are encouraged to be active members in local, state, and national child care associations.				
Staff members are encouraged to take leadership roles in professional associations.				
Staff members are encouraged to participate in certification programs.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

In this section you will consider **Best Practices** related to planning, preparation, and serving child care program meals and snacks that meet the nutrition needs of all the children in your child care center.

Best Practice Checklist: Meal Requirements

The CACFP meal requirements are designed to help you provide the highest quality nutrition program. Following the meal pattern requirements is a first step in planning, preparing, and serving meals and snacks that meet the nutrition needs of growing children. Best Practices in quality nutrition programs include following all the meal requirements of the CACFP.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Menus are planned to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements for meals and snacks.				
Planned menus are followed and menu substitutions are appropriate.				
Standardized recipes are used to assure the right amounts of foods are prepared and healthy food preparation methods are used.				
Required amounts of food are served at meals and snacks.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Nutrition Recommendations

The CACFP meal pattern requirements should be used in combination with the Best Practices listed in this section of the checklist. Special attention is needed for certain nutrients that are hard for children to get, such as vitamin A and fiber. Encouraging children to try a variety of foods will improve their chances of getting all the nutrients and energy they need for growth and development. Respecting the food cultures of children is important, too. Keep up with the latest information about nutrition and children; scientists are learning new facts all the time.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Menus are planned to provide foods rich in vitamin A and vitamin C (fruits and vegetables), iron (meats, poultry, green vegetables, and enriched breads and cereals), and calcium (milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified orange juice).				
Meals and snacks are planned to provide the right amounts of calories and fat.				
Meals and snacks are planned to provide plenty of fiber by including whole grains and plenty of fruits and vegetables.				
Meals and snacks are planned to be sure they are not high in sodium or sugar.				
Menus are planned around a wide variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables.				
Child care givers determine when children are served meals and snacks and what foods are served.				
Younger children are fed upon demand as much as possible.				
Children can decide how much to eat from the foods offered and are allowed to decline unwanted foods.				
Meals and snacks include foods familiar to children and consistent with the cultures represented in the center.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Special Food and Nutrition Needs

Not all children have the same nutrition needs; and some children have very special food, nutrition, and feeding needs due to disabilities, allergies, and other considerations. Best Practices in a quality child care nutrition program tend to the special needs of all children enrolled in the center. It is important to allow all children to participate as fully as possible in all child care activities, so keep the special needs of children in mind as you plan daily activities as well as menus. You may need to seek help in providing for children’s special needs. Ask your state agency or sponsor. Be sure to include parents and teachers in your efforts to meet children’s special needs.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Special nutrition needs are based on written recommendations of a recognized medical authority.				
Menus are adapted to meet the nutrition and feeding needs of children.				
The child care program works with state agencies and the sponsor to ensure that the special nutrition needs of children enrolled are met.				
A plan is in place for obtaining the services of a registered dietitian for consultation on diet orders when meals are to be modified.				
Children with special needs are included in mealtime activities as much as possible.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Feeding Infants

Feeding infants requires special care. Following the Best Practices in this section will help ensure you are feeding infants properly. If you would like more information on feeding infants, ask your sponsor or state agency. The Best Practices in this section are taken from *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program*. All child care providers will find this an important source of information. You can order or print the entire publication directly from the USDA Web site at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.html.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Best Practices outlined in <i>Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program</i> are followed.				
Babies have a safe, caring, and pleasant mealtime; for example, babies are softly talked to, cuddled, and served foods that are not too hot.				
Concerns about how the baby is eating and growing are discussed with parents.				
The child care giver talks to parents about what the baby is eating at home and in child care to be sure that the baby’s nutrition needs are met.				
All signs of neglect in feeding are reported to the appropriate authorities.				
The infant meal pattern requirements are followed carefully.				
A breastfeeding-friendly setting is created by limiting other foods or beverages until parents indicate the baby is ready.				
The child care giver shares the benefits of breastfeeding with expectant mothers.				
Only age-appropriate foods and beverages are offered to babies. The child care giver works with parents in the introduction of solid foods.				
Older babies are fed along with other children so they are part of the mealtime experience.				
Appropriate feeding equipment is used with all babies, including those with disabilities.				
Age-appropriate infant seats and high chairs for babies that are being fed solid foods are used.				
Safety straps in infant seats and high chairs are used.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Feeding Infants, Continued

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Babies and younger children are fed upon demand as much as possible.				
Babies are fed until they are full and not forced to finish a bottle or other foods.				
Young babies are held while they are being fed.				
Eye contact is maintained with babies during feedings.				
Babies are fed slowly, allowing at least 20 minutes for babies to feel full. Never make a larger hole in a bottle nipple to make milk come out faster.				
Cereal or other foods are never fed from a bottle.				
Babies and young children are never left unattended during mealtime, not even for a few minutes.				
Bottles are never propped and older babies never go to bed with a bottle or cup.				
Babies are not allowed to feed continually from a bottle or cup.				
Wash hands before and after handling breastmilk, formula, and other baby foods.				
Bottles are safely heated under warm running water and tested on the wrist to be sure the temperature is right. Never use a microwave oven or the stovetop.				
All bottles of breastmilk and formula are refrigerated as soon as they arrive and until ready to use. Bottles are never allowed to stand at room temperature.				
Breastmilk and formula are always used only for the baby for whom they are intended.				
All bottles and food containers are labeled with the baby's name.				
Unfinished bottles of breastmilk or formula are never used at another feeding.				
Frozen bottles of breastmilk are thawed in the refrigerator in the amount needed for one feeding and are never refrozen.				
Directions for mixing infant formulas are followed carefully.				
All bottles are cleaned and sanitized before use.				
Baby food is never fed directly from the jar. The amount needed is portioned out and the remaining is promptly refrigerated.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Feeding Infants, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
All uneaten baby food left in the baby’s bowl, plate, or cup is discarded and never saved for another feeding.				
All bottles are labeled with the date and discarded according to the following schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard all formula and breastmilk after 48 hours. • Discard all breastmilk that has been frozen and thawed after 24 hours. • Discard all frozen breastmilk that has never been thawed after 3 months. 				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Nutrition Education

Providing current, age-appropriate nutrition education is an important aspect of the child care curriculum. Nutrition education activities can be used to teach math, science, social studies, and language. Music and art are also great places to use food-related themes. Work with teachers when planning the daily learning activities in the curriculum and include activities that teach about healthy foods and good eating habits for young children. This is a great way for the entire child care staff and parents to learn about healthy eating as well.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Nutrition education is provided as a component of the comprehensive child care curriculum.				
The child care food and nutrition staff is included in curriculum planning.				
The child care program takes advantage of state and local agencies for nutrition education opportunities to remain current in nutrition knowledge and recommendations.				
The child care nutrition program staff supports educational efforts implemented in the classroom (i.e., providing appropriate foods for tasting parties).				
Current age-appropriate nutrition education materials are readily accessible to child care teachers.				
Plan nutrition education activities that follow the nutrition recommendations of the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> and the <i>Food Guide Pyramid for Children</i> .				
The child care program takes advantage of lending libraries for nutrition education materials.				
The child care program staff initiate pleasant conversation at mealtimes related to the foods served, tell stories, and use other classroom activities that teach children about healthy foods.				
Snacks offered for class activities promote healthy eating habits.				
Children help select and prepare healthy snacks.				
Snacks provided by parents, including snacks for special occasions, follow the same guidelines as regular CACFP meals and snacks.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN - WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

In this section you will consider **Best Practices** related to planning activities for the health, safety, and well-being of all the children in your child care center.

Best Practice Checklist: Safety

Safety is a high priority for all child care providers. You want to ensure that the children in your care are safe from accidental and intentional injury. The well-being of all children is important to you. Being prepared to deal with the unexpected will help you provide Best Practices that keep the children in your care safe.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
All child care program staff know how to prevent choking and how to help a child who is choking.				
Kitchen safety procedures, such as proper use of knives, microwave ovens, and all heating appliances, are used.				
Instructions for equipment operation and cleaning are accessible to the staff.				
A plan for reporting, investigating, and correcting the cause of accidents is followed.				
A plan for equipment maintenance is implemented.				
The child care nutrition program staff is trained in kitchen safety techniques.				
All trash is disposed of properly, especially diapers and similar waste.				
Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are in place and all child care program staff know how to use them correctly. Batteries for fire detectors are checked regularly.				
Fire evacuation plans are in place and practiced regularly with the children.				
Pets are not allowed in food preparation and serving areas.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
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SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN—WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Best Practice Checklist: Emergency Readiness

Most child care facilities never have to deal with natural disasters or other large-scale emergency situations, but it is critical to be prepared. Best Practices in emergency readiness start with being “ready” with a plan in place to deal with potential situations that might threaten the health, safety, and well-being of the children in your care. As with all other aspects of the child care operation, teamwork is important...work together and be prepared.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The child care program has a written plan for taking care of sick children and children who become sick while they are in the center.				
The child care program has a written plan for taking care of children when parents are late picking children up at the end of the child care day.				
The child care program has a written plan for taking care of children until they are picked up by parents when weather or other situations require the center to close unexpectedly.				
The child care program has a plan for providing services during a disaster or other emergency situation.				
Disaster plans include a 3-day food and water supply, other emergency supplies, and information as recommended by the Red Cross or Department of Homeland Security.				
Disaster plans are shared with all parents.				
All child care program staff are trained to implement disaster plans.				
All child care program staff and parents are familiar with any community disaster and emergency plans.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
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SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN—WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Best Practice Checklist: Promoting the CACFP

The benefits of the CACFP to the children in your child care center are worth sharing. Take opportunities to tell other child care providers about the program and how they can participate. You will also want to share your experiences in the program with the policy makers in your community and state. By spreading the word about CACFP and how it helps you offer a quality child care program through nutritious foods and nutrition education, you are helping make sure the CACFP continues to get the support it needs at the local, state, and federal levels.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The CACFP child care program promotes the benefits of the CACFP within the community.				
The CACFP child care center helps new program participants with questions about implementing the CACFP in their centers.				
Parents are made aware of benefits of the CACFP.				
The child care program shares child care menus with parents.				
The child care program shares ideas for healthy meals and snacks with parents.				
Parents are encouraged not to use foods as a reward or punishment.				
The child care program works with schools and other community groups to create a healthy food environment for all children.				
The child care nutrition program staff evaluates needs for providing additional meals such as supper in the center.				
The child care nutrition program staff evaluates needs for providing nutrition programs or services such as breakfast programs, after school feeding, summer feeding, elderly feeding, contract services, and parent functions.				
The child care nutrition program staff is involved in the development of plans for additional services.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
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**SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN—WORKING
 WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Promoting the CACFP, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The child care nutrition program staff provides public policy makers such as legislative personnel and government agencies with information about the benefits of the CACFP.				
Public policy makers are invited to visit the child care facility to observe the contribution of the CACFP to the health and education of children.				

Comments:

APPENDIX D
Evaluation of Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist

Evaluation of *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*

1. Please tell us what you think about the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*. Please circle the number corresponding to your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The checklist covers all the important things we consider when implementing the CACFP in our child care center or family day care home.	1	2	3	4
The Best Practices are consistent with the rules and regulations for the CACFP.	1	2	3	4
The Best Practices represent the best care we can give.	1	2	3	4
The Best Practices are stated clearly.	1	2	3	4
The checklist was easy to use.	1	2	3	4
The checklist was useful. I learned ways to improve our nutrition program.	1	2	3	4
The <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> can help us reach program requirements and goals.	1	2	3	4
I would be willing to complete the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> on a regular basis to help us to continue to offer the best nutrition program possible.	1	2	3	4
I would be willing to develop a plan of improvement for Best Practices I have not done yet.	1	2	3	4
The <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> could have a long-term impact on our nutrition program.	1	2	3	4
Training on the use of the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> would be helpful.	1	2	3	4
I would be interested in receiving recognition from my sponsor or state agency for completing the <i>Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist</i> and for making improvement plans for my child care center or family day care home.	1	2	3	4

2. What changes would you suggest to make the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* more helpful? _____

3. Is your child care facility already doing any type of self-assessment and improvement of the nutrition program? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please tell us about the self-assessment and improvement you have done. If you have a checklist or other tool you use, please share a copy with us.

Evaluation of *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*, Continued

4. If the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* was used on a regular basis in your child care facility, who would be the person most likely to complete it?

- Center director
- Center nutritionist
- Center cook
- Family day care home provider
- Family day care home helper
- Other: _____

5. Please check the type of facility where you work.

- Child care center
- Family day care home
- Head Start center
- Head Start day care home
- Other: _____

6. What is your job title?

- Center director
- Center nutritionist
- Center cook
- Family day care home provider
- Family day care home helper
- Other: _____

7. How many years have you worked in the CACFP? _____ Years

Please return all the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* materials, this evaluation form, and a signed consent form in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX E
Responses to Evaluation Questions

Responses to Evaluation Questions

What changes would you suggest to make the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* more helpful?

Responses from FDCH Pilot Participants

- Be more specific on what is “good nutrition,” give examples of “healthy snacks.”
- Seems very specific as is.
- Possibly provide a follow-up packet with ideas to implement the steps in the checklist, such as suggestions for increasing food variety.
- Divide best practices related to older children, younger children, and infants.
- It’s good already.
- Offer ways that a provider can implement various best practices.
- Compile best practices being used and share them with new providers.

Responses from Child Care Center Pilot Participants

- I would shorten the checklist. Some questions are asked more than once.
- Suggest each section refer to specific CACFP guidelines, e.g. meal pattern requirements and portion sizes.
- Present the checklist in a way that it could be used as a quick reference tool from month to month.

Responses to Evaluation Questions, *Continued*

Tell us about the self-assessments and improvements you have done. If you have a checklist or other tool you use, please share a copy with us.

Responses from FDCH Pilot Participants

- Fruit and vegetables are expensive and with the lower reimbursement rate, I buy in bulk to keep the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables to a minimum.
- Due to high cost, I buy vegetables and fruit in bulk and freeze.
- I look at each meal, making sure it has a variety of nutrients, color, and flavors.
- I do most of my menu planning according to season and weather, buying seasonal foods, which helps my budget.
- I follow the food program guidelines and requirements.
- I am always assessing my program and changing menus to fit the needs and backgrounds of the children I serve.
- We attend a workshop once a year to learn more about best practices.
- I do an evaluation of my home-based program each year by getting feedback from parents.
- When I attend the yearly mandated workshop, I file the handouts for future use.
- I always check over forms, menus, and various materials in preparation for a quarterly inspection.
- We use healthy food preparation methods, such as steaming, broiling, grilling, and baking.
- I continually ask staff and parents for suggestions and input to help improve my program.

Responses from Child Care Center Pilot Participants

- Self-assessment of all Head Start Management areas is done annually, based on the Head Start Management Plan.
- I use self-assessment three times a year to determine training needs for staff.
- I involve parents and staff in the self-assessment of menus.
- I conduct a yearly nutrition orientation for staff and provide in-services for parents and staff.

Responses to Evaluation Questions, *Continued*

- I have implemented family style meal service and made menu changes to increase variety.
- I have implemented a monthly menu planning session, which involves the cook, nutrition manager, teaching staff, and parents.
- We have a committee, consisting of the center director, teaching staff, the nutrition manager, and the cook, which meets at the end of the year to review menus.
- We do a community needs assessment and parent survey.
- We address nutrition issues through parent meetings and advising committees.

Additional Comments

- I think the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will be great for home day cares or small community day cares that do not have federal or state guidelines.
- The *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* reinforces and reminds you of best practices.
- Many of the questions reflect the guidelines of the CACFP program.
- Pilot participants state that training is needed in the following areas:
 - Shelf-life of breast milk
 - What to do when baby switches over to whole milk instead of formula and doesn't like it
 - What to do when a baby doesn't like "baby food"
 - How to provide aid to a child who is choking
 - CPR training for infants and older children
 - CACFP requirements