



NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Child and Family Well-Being Community
Nutrition Services Section
Child and Adult Care Food Program
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The North Carolina CACFP Messenger

From the Child and Adult Care Food Program Manager

Hello CACFP Family,

Spring in North Carolina is fleeting, and already we are enjoying the vibrant green leaves signaling the arrival of summer. As I mentioned during the Monthly Institution Call, we have begun the initial planning stages for our FY 2026 Record Renewal. I look forward to sharing more detailed information regarding the FY 2026 Record Renewal training with you soon. Please stay tuned for updates.

Starting with this issue, we're adding an exciting new section to our newsletter that highlights our institutions and facilities. We want to build connections within our CACFP family, so that we not only feel closer but also aware of the great work happening all over our beautiful state. Help us spread the word about the amazing centers that are part of our program by letting us know the good things happening where you are! You can read more about how to participate on [page 2](#).

Thank you for your continued dedication and all that you do to nourish North Carolinians in our communities.

With Appreciation,

Cassandra Ward
CACFP Program Manager

Inside this issue

Announcements	2
For Our Health.....	3
Meet the State Agency	4
Meet our Institution/Facility	5
What's Happening in May & June ..	6
CACFP Standardized Recipe.....	7

Reminders

- **Friday, May 2 and June 6, from 1 to 2 PM** - next two State agency monthly calls with CACFP Institutions (click [here](#) to join)
- **Friday, May 30, 2025 and Monday, June 30, 2025** - last days to submit March and April 2025 claims
- Standardized Recipe - **Peach and Yogurt Smoothies** (on [Page 7](#)). Packed with the goodness of yogurt and the natural sweetness of peaches. A healthy and delicious way to fuel your day!



Announcements

Exciting news! In an effort to help strengthen connections within our CACFP family and learn about all the great work being done across the state, the newsletter will now include a section showcasing our amazing institutions and facilities. We are thrilled to feature Gaston Community Action, Inc. Head Start Program as we debut the Meet the Institution/Facility section in this issue (check out [page 5](#)). We would love to hear what is happening at your site. For instance, we invite you to share about events, gardens, seasonal displays, training highlights, or staff (e.g. cooks/teachers/administrators). Please send your contributions [here](#).



Important: If you are sharing any photographs of children, please ensure you have obtained signed photo release consent forms from their parents or legal guardians.



Training Opportunity: Adult Care Bootcamp - Keeping older adults healthy, engaged, and well-nourished takes creativity, knowledge, and the right strategies. Join National CACFP Sponsors Association on Zoom from **11:00 am to 4:45 pm on May 14** for the CACFP Boot Camp on Adult Care so you can walk away with fresh ideas, practical solutions, and the confidence to elevate the care you provide to older adults. Discover simple ways to incorporate movement into daily routines, hands-on tips to enhance nutrition under CACFP guidelines, and bring your questions for industry experts. Can't make it on May 14? Register and get access to on demand viewing through May 28! Register today at <https://bit.ly/CACFPAdultCare>.

Grant Opportunity: Spark Good Local Grants - Each year, Walmart U.S. stores and Sam's Clubs and Distribution Centers award local cash grants designed to support local organizations that meet the unique needs of communities.

- Grant amounts range from \$250 to \$5,000
- Applications are accepted and reviewed on a quarterly basis:
 - ⇒ May 1 - July 15, 2025
 - ⇒ August 1 - October 15, 2025
 - ⇒ November 3 - December 31, 2025
- Explore Spark Good Local Grants [here](#)



As a reminder, the [NC Farm to ECE Connections Map](#) is available to help you connect with local farmers and NC-grown/raised food. By incorporating more local foods into meals and snacks, childcare programs can support children's health, enhance nutrition security, and foster positive food experiences.

To help you make the most of this valuable resource, a [training video](#) has been created that walks you through the features of the map. This video will show you how to navigate the platform, connect with local farmers and food suppliers, and integrate farm-fresh foods into your program. Whether you are just getting started or looking to expand your Farm to ECE initiatives, this resource is here to support you.



For Our Health

Next in the [Blue Zones](#) Power 9: Lifestyle Habits of the World's Healthiest, Longest-Lived People is "BELONG."

According to the Blue Zone researchers, 99% of the centenarians they interviewed belonged to some kind of faith-based community. The type of faith doesn't matter; Jewish, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, or Baha'i. Research shows that attending any kind of faith-based service at least once per week adds *4 to 14 years of life expectancy*.

The world's Blue Zone areas have strong faith communities. In Loma Linda, California, most people are involved in the Seventh Day Adventist community. In Okinawa, Japan, many people are of the Buddhist faith. In Sardinia, Italy, most of the population are Roman Catholic.

Belonging to any faith-based community adds significant benefits to a person's physical and emotional health. Faith-based communities provide social support and a sense of belonging which can help ease stress and decrease isolation. These communities offer support through difficult times, providing a natural support network.

Faith-based traditions and practices often include spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation, which promote mental well-being. Buddhist [meditation practices](#) offer a range of [benefits](#), including reduced stress, improved mental clarity, and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world. These practices can also cultivate compassion and ethical living, as well as reduce anxiety and depression.

Many faith-based traditions encourage practicing healthier lifestyles, including not smoking, little to moderate alcohol consumption, and reducing other risky behaviors. The [Seventh Day Adventists](#) in Loma Linda are well known for not smoking or drinking, having an active lifestyle, and following a vegetarian diet which contributes to their health and longevity. They believe the body is God's temple and therefore strive to treat it with respect and care.

The Blue Zone researchers and many other scientific studies have shown the importance of belonging to a faith-based community and the benefit that this kind of practice and participation can provide. No matter the type, belonging to a faith-based community can add years to your life.

(Karen Lainez Rubi, Supervisor – Nutrition, Training, and Policy Team)

Karen Lainez Rubi grew up in Hawaii and went to graduate school at Loma Linda University in California. She has a master's degree in Public Health, majoring in Nutrition as well as Health Promotion and Education. Karen is a Registered/Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist, Certified Health Education Specialist, and a Certified Childcare Health Consultant. Karen was previously certified with American College of Sports Medicine as a Health and Fitness Instructor.



Meet Your State Agency Staff

Nathalie Sumner and Elizabeth Cole

Name: Nathalie Sumner

Title/Role: Child Nutrition Assistant

Region: Western Region (the Mountains)



- **My favorite food is...**I am such a foodie and love most everything but if I had to choose just one thing to eat for the rest of my life, it would be Thai food. I love spice!!!
- **My favorite place and/or activity/event in North Carolina is...**the Mountains, where I live. My family and I LOVE to hike and spend our time outside, and on the lake, and rivers during the warm months.
- **My favorite part of my job is...**Technical Assistance, I love helping institutions understand the program and be successful.
- **The best tip I have for success in the CACFP is...**organization. Have a file and folder for everything. Dates, years, months for record keeping helps keep you successful in the CACFP.

Name: Elizabeth Cole

Title/Role: Finance and Business Compliance Analyst

Region: Lower Piedmont region

- **My favorite food is...**sweet potatoes.
- **My favorite place and/or activity/event in North Carolina is...**visiting the NC beaches and attending different festivals.
- **My favorite part of my job is...**answering questions about our program.
- **The best tip I have for success in the CACFP is...**stay organized so that you can collect and maintain all documents that support your claims.



Meet Our Institution/Facility

Deatons Garden of Love Article

(Gaston Community Action, Inc. Head Start Program)

Gaston Community Action, Inc. Head Start Program has taken a big step toward hands-on learning and healthy living by launching its first garden at a local Head Start center in Lincolnton, NC. With great enthusiasm, the center's staff named this special space "Deaton's Garden of Love."



To ensure the garden's success, the team partnered with the NC Cooperative Extension for training and guidance. Gardening lesson plans were woven into the curriculum, engaging both children and parents in the process. This shared responsibility fostered a sense of ownership, teamwork, and pride as everyone played a role in caring for the plants.

The children have embraced the experience with excitement-watching their garden grow and even enjoying the fresh produce during lunchtime meals. This hands-on connection to food nurtures a sense of accomplishment and appreciation for healthy eating.

Beyond the joy of gardening, Deaton's Garden of Love supports school readiness by creating an engaging environment that promotes:



*Critical Thinking

*Environmental Awareness

*Science and Math Concepts

*Physical Activity and Wellness

*Responsibility and Teamwork

Through this initiative, children gain both educational and personal growth opportunities, enhancing their overall learning experience. Deaton's Garden of Love is more than just a garden-it's a place where young minds grow, thrive, and cultivate a lifelong love for learning.



What's Happening in May and June

Older Americans Month (May): Join the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in honoring our seniors this May for Older Americans Month. The 2025 theme, "Flip the Script on Aging," encourages us to challenge stereotypes and celebrate the valuable contributions of older adults. Explore resources and share your support for active and engaged aging using #OlderAmericansMonth. Learn more [here](#).



National Pick Strawberries Day (May 20th): Get ready for a taste of pure spring! Mark your calendars for Strawberry Pick Day on May 20th. It's the perfect time to visit a local patch here in North Carolina and experience the joy of harvesting your own sweet, sun-ripened strawberries. Or simply treat yourself to a flat of these delicious berries! Find local farmers for strawberry picking using the [NC Farm to ECE Connections Map](#).

National Dairy Month (June): A perfect time to appreciate all things dairy! From creamy milk to flavorful cheeses and delightful yogurts, there's so much to enjoy. Looking for a tasty treat? Consider the Peach and Yogurt Smoothie recipe included in this newsletter ([page 7](#)). And with North Carolina's wonderful selection of fresh fruits in spring and summer, the possibilities for delicious smoothies are endless – think strawberry and beyond. On the topic of smoothies and how they fit into program requirements, here are a few key points:



Can smoothies be served to meet the milk requirements?

Yes, the volume of fluid milk in each portion of smoothie is creditable if the smoothie contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2 fluid ounces) of fluid milk, the minimum serving size for milk, and the milk meets the fat standards. When a smoothie contains less than the amount of milk required in the meal pattern, additional fluid milk must be offered. Smoothies are the only example of a recipe made by program operators that can credit the fluid milk in the recipe.

When serving a smoothie with fruit as 1 of the ingredients/components, does that count as your juice for the day?

Yes. Pureed vegetables and fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned) served in a smoothie credit as juice and are subject to the juice limit.



Note: The minimum amount of creditable milk in a smoothie is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. The minimum creditable amount for fruits and vegetables is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup as served.

For more comprehensive information about smoothies, please see the policy memo [CACFP 17-2019](#).



Peach and Yogurt Smoothies

With just two ingredients, this simple smoothie will be a new favorite.

AGES: 3–5 years

PREP TIME: 45 minutes

COOK TIME: 0 minutes

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

½ cup fruit

½ oz eq meat alternate

SOURCE

Team Nutrition CACFP Easy Recipe Project

TeamNutrition.USDA.gov

INGREDIENTS	25 SERVINGS		50 SERVINGS		DIRECTIONS
	Weight	Measure	Weight	Measure	
					1 Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
Peaches, frozen, unsweetened, thawed, drained	7 lb	2 gal	14 lb	4 gal	2 Combine peaches and yogurt in a blender. Mix until smooth.
Vanilla yogurt, low-fat	3 lb 2 oz	1 qt + 2¼ cups	6 lb 4 oz	3 qt + ½ cup	
					3 Serve ¾ cup (6 oz ladle). Serve immediately, or keep cold at 40 °F or lower.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

¾ cup Peach and Yogurt Smoothie

NUTRIENTS	AMOUNT
Calories	109
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	3 mg
Sodium	37 mg
Total Carbohydrate	24 g
Dietary Fiber	2 g
Total Sugars	22 g
Includes Added Sugars	N/A
Protein	4 g
Vitamin D	N/A
Calcium	97 mg
Iron	0 mg
Potassium	N/A

N/A = Data not available

NOTES

- **Contains milk (yogurt).**
- Yogurt must not contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.
- Refrigerating smoothies for more than 3 hours may cause a texture change.
- Smoothies can be made in advance and stored in the freezer.

WEIGHT/YIELDS

25 Servings	50 Servings
10 lb 2 oz	20 lb 4 oz
25 Peach and Yogurt Smoothies	50 Peach and Yogurt Smoothies