



Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010: The Role of State Health Agencies in Ensuring Access to Healthy Food



Healthy eating is essential for a child’s physical and mental development. Proper nutrition reduces the risk of chronic disease, iron deficiency, dental cavities, and obesity, while hunger and food insecurity directly affect a child’s ability to learn and develop in the classroom.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 authorized \$4.5 billion in new federal funding for school meal and child nutrition programs over 10 years through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The purpose is to increase access to breastfeeding, water, and healthy food for low-income children and to provide additional support for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Specifically, it ensures that:

- The WIC program will support breastfeeding.
- WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) will be mandatory nationwide by October 1, 2020.
- Nutrition quality and standards of food served in school-based and pre-school settings will be enhanced to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- All 50 states must now have expanded the Afterschool Meal Program, specifically “at-risk afterschool meals.”
- More family child care homes can use the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) program because of improved area eligibility rules.

Below is a summary of key components of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. Each section emphasizes the important role of the state health agency as a key partner in the implementation of various components. The chart at the end summarizes agency oversight for WIC, SNAP, CACFP, and childcare licensing.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

More than 50 percent of children receive WIC services. Almost all state health agencies oversee WIC programs and can work with other agencies and hospitals to promote breastfeeding and support programs like the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.

■ Support for breastfeeding in the WIC program (Sec. 231)

WIC will add “breastfeeding support and promotion” to its list of services. USDA will recognize exemplary breastfeeding support practices and award performance bonuses to state and local agencies. Recognition and awards will be based on the prevalence or rate of partial or full breastfeeding infants (e.g., highest proportion of or greatest improvement in proportion), effectiveness of the peer counselor program, and extent to which the WIC partners with others to support breastfeeding.

Healthy Children Perform at a Higher Standard in School

- Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism, and improved mood.
- Children who are obese have:
 - greater absentee rates
 - lower academic achievement
 - increased chance of being teased and bullied

References: *J Am Diet Assoc. 2010;110:1477-1484. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: www.cdc.gov/yrbss.*



did you know

An estimated 20–30% of children are overweight or obese by the time they reach 6 years of age.




did you know

The top 5 foods for 2–18 year olds are desserts, pizza, soda, yeast breads, and chicken and chicken mixed dishes.

- **Direct certification for children receiving Medicaid benefits (Sec. 103)**
Demonstration projects will look at the effectiveness of direct certification with Medicaid. This has the potential to identify children eligible for free meals that are not directly certified using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- **WIC program management (Sec. 352)**
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), cashless payment using a card, must be established by October 1, 2020. State WIC agencies, often within the state public health agency, are responsible for the management and coordination of the EBT system.
- **Farmers Market Nutrition Program (Sec. 424)**
The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program is expanded through 2015. This program provides fresh, unprepared, locally grown vegetables and fruits through sales at farmers' markets.

National School Lunch & Breakfast Program

Usually this program is administered by state education agencies. State health agencies can support healthy meals and snacks through collaboration with their education counterparts and coordinated school health programs to certify meal and nutrition standards. State health agencies can also provide technical assistance on local wellness policies by disseminating resources and training on designing, implementing, promoting, and evaluating local school wellness policies.

- **Performance-based reimbursement rate increases for new meal patterns (Sec. 201)**
USDA released guidelines for the meal patterns and nutrition standards for the school lunch and breakfast programs. School meals that meet these standards will be eligible to receive an additional reimbursement of 6 cents per lunch. To be eligible a school food authority must be certified by the state to be in compliance with the meal pattern and nutritional standards. School food authorities not in compliance will not receive the additional reimbursement. The school meal standards include doubling fruit and vegetable servings, requiring all milk to be low fat or fat free, and setting calorie standards that address hunger and obesity.
- **Water (Sec. 203)**
Schools are required to make free potable water available in locations where meals are served.
- **Local school wellness policy implementation (Sec. 204)**
Each local educational agency participating in a program authorized by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act or the Child Nutrition Act must develop and implement a local school wellness policy for all schools under the jurisdiction of the local educational agency. The districts are required to report to the



did you
know

Nearly half of 2-3 year olds consume a sugar-sweetened beverage daily.



public their extent of compliance and progress in attaining the goals of the policy. At a minimum, the wellness policies must address goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student health. The district must designate one or more district officials to ensure that each school complies with the policy.

■ **Nutrition standards for all foods sold in school (Sec. 208)**

USDA will establish science-based nutrition standards in compliance with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all foods sold in schools. The nutrition standards apply to all foods sold on the school campus at any time during the school day outside of school meal programs, including a la carte, vending machines, and school stores, and allow some exemptions for school fundraisers.

■ **Summer food service programs: Outreach to eligible families (Sec. 112)**

Each state agency that administers the National School Lunch Program must ensure that school food authorities coordinate with summer food service programs (SFSP) to inform families of the location and availability of SFSP.

■ **Information for the public on the school nutrition environment (Sec. 209)**

Local educational agencies participating in the school lunch and breakfast programs must report on the school nutrition environment. The nutrition environment report must include information pertaining to food safety inspections, local wellness policies, meal program participation, and the nutritional quality of program meals.

■ **Applicability of food safety programs on the entire school campus (Sec. 302)**

There are now food safety requirements throughout the school campus in any area where programs' foods are prepared, served, or stored. Safe food handling procedures must be followed at all times to prevent foodborne illness.

■ **Ensuring safety of school meals (Sec. 308)**

The Federal Nutrition Service (FNS) and states have established a time frame to improve hold-and-recall procedures for food deemed unsafe. Federal regulations mandate that school cafeterias be inspected two times each school year. The FNS must work with states, often the state health agency, to conduct inspections and help schools receive timely and complete notification about suspect food products.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Some state health agencies oversee CACFP, but in most states it is administered by the state education agency, while childcare licensing is handled by many state health agencies. This is an opportunity for both agencies to collaborate on providing technical assistance to childcare and adult programs on the dietary guidelines, the new reimbursement structure, and how wellness policies will be incorporated into licensing requirements.



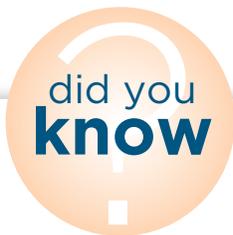
- **Nutrition and wellness goals for meals served through the CACFP (Sec. 221)**
The program will assist states through grants and other sources of funding to provide meals that meet nutrition guidelines set forth by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Guidelines for reimbursable meals and snacks served by institutions, family, or day care homes will be released in 2012.
- **Interagency coordination to promote health and wellness in childcare licensing (Sec. 222)**
State childcare licensing agencies are encouraged to include nutrition and wellness standards within state licensing standards that ensure that licensed childcare centers and family or group day care homes provide opportunities for age-appropriate physical activity, limit the use of electronic media and the amount of sedentary activity, and serve meals and snacks that meet nutrition guidelines.

Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program

State health agencies can work with partner agencies to develop and implement the state's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program to support community interventions on healthy eating and active living. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture is often the state-sponsoring agency for this program; however public health departments are also sponsoring agencies.

- **Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program (Sec. 241)**
This Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program replaces the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), which enables state agencies to provide nutrition education and obesity prevention services to low-income populations. USDA will issue regulations for this program, in conjunction with CDC, representatives of state and local governments, academic and research experts, community organizers, and other stakeholders.

A copy of the full Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ296/pdf/PLAW-111publ296.pdf>.



did you know

Most children today consume 4 to 5 times more added sugars than the maximum recommended daily amount.

Acknowledgements

ASTHO would like to acknowledge the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND) for their contributions to this issue brief.

The chart on the following page summarizes agency oversight for the programs described above. In all cases, it is important that the state health agency works with its partners in education, agriculture, and other areas to ensure the successful implementation of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. Doing so will support healthy moms and babies, contribute to scholastic success, and improve access to healthy foods for vulnerable populations.



Food Programs Led by State Health Agency

GREEN = Led by state health agency
TAN = Led by another agency or organization

States	WIC	SNAP	CACFP	Childcare Licensing
AL	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
AK	GREEN	GREEN	TAN	GREEN
AZ	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
AR	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
CA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
CO	GREEN	TAN	GREEN	TAN
CT	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
DE	GREEN	GREEN	TAN	TAN
DC	GREEN	GREEN	TAN	GREEN
FL	GREEN	TAN	GREEN	TAN
GA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
HI	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
ID	GREEN	GREEN	TAN	GREEN
IL	TAN	TAN	TAN	TAN
IN	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
IA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
KS	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
KY	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
LA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
ME	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	TAN
MD	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
MA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
MI	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
MN	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
MS	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
MO	GREEN	TAN	GREEN	GREEN
MT	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
NE	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
NV	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
NH	GREEN	GREEN	TAN	GREEN



Food Programs Led by State Health Agency - continued

GREEN = Led by state health agency

TAN = Led by another agency or organization

States	WIC	SNAP	CACFP	Childcare Licensing
NJ	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
NM	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
NY	GREEN	TAN	GREEN	TAN
NC	GREEN	TAN	GREEN	GREEN
ND	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
OH	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
OK	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
OR	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
PA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
PR	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
RI	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
SC	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
SD	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
TN	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
TX	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
UT	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
VT	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
VA	GREEN	TAN	GREEN	TAN
WA	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN
WV	GREEN	TAN	TAN	GREEN
WI	GREEN	GREEN	TAN	TAN
WY	GREEN	TAN	TAN	TAN

Sources:

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (2010), available at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

USDA Child Nutrition Programs, available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>.

SNAP and SNAP-ED State and Implementing Agencies Contact (USDA), available at: <http://snap.nal.usda.gov/state-gates>.

WIC State Agencies, available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/statealpha.HTM>