



Buying Local Produce from a Centralized Kitchen

A centralized kitchen is a kitchen that prepares and delivers snacks and meals for multiple facilities. Child care facilities may wish to consider this option if:

- ✓ They do not have a kitchen.
- ✓ They do not have a cook or have had significant staff turnover with cooks.
- ✓ They want to save time by outsourcing menu planning, food purchasing and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) paperwork.
- ✓ They want to ensure that children have access to healthy, nutritious meals as well as exposure to a variety of fruits, vegetables and other food items they might not get otherwise.

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) Meal Service Program

Operating out of Durham, CCSA's Meal Service Program provides two nutritious meals and one nutritious snack per day to children in participating child care centers. CCSA prepares and delivers a lunch daily, along with an afternoon snack and breakfast for the next morning. A variety of foods are offered that are low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. Vegetables and whole grain products are served often; fruit is served every day.

Following U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines, the catered meals provide ample portion sizes that meet or exceed Child and Adult Care Food Program standards.

By purchasing food in bulk, the Meal Service Program allows child care centers to purchase nutritional meals and snacks at cost, without having to maintain expensive kitchens. It also allows directors to focus more of their attention on quality care instead of on shopping, menu planning, and cooking.

To participate in the Meal Services Program, centers must maintain at least a three star license or be working toward a three star license through one of CCSA's local quality improvement projects.

To date, this program serves 24 facilities in Durham and Orange Counties. Through Farm to Child Care, CCSA now has the opportunity to work with facilities in Wake County.

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