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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

GETTING STARTED WITH KIDKARE

Provider training for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Congratulations! You are ready to start Participating in the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP). We are pleased you have chosen ACA as your Food Program Sponsor.

Our goal is to give you the training and tools needed be a successful Food Program participant. Refer to your Food Program Manual, the KidKare Knowledge Base, and this training packet often. In them you will find answers to most CACFP questions. You may also call ACA directly or email the office with your questions. Our office hours are Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM and Fridays 8:00 AM -1:30 PM. If you call after hours, please leave your question on our voice messaging service and we will promptly return your call the next business day.

This packet addresses the basics of using KidKare. The enclosed information contains time-saving suggestions, outlines what to expect on CACFP visits, and contains a quick review of the CACFP requirements. Remember, we are here to help you succeed. Let us know how we can assist you.

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KidKare Login

recordkeeping

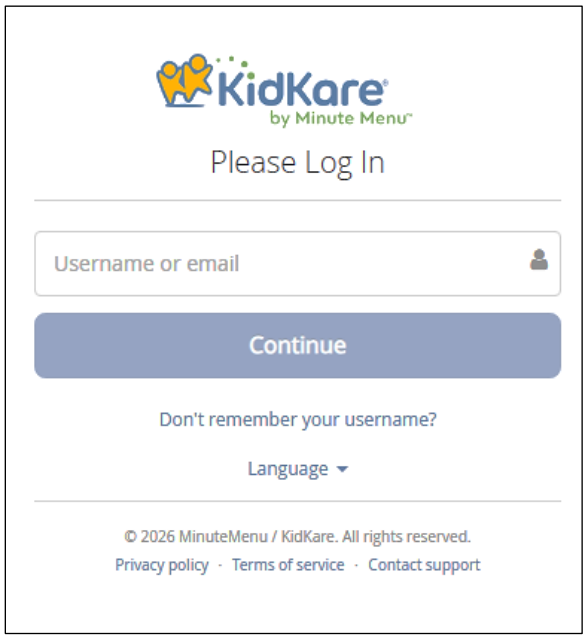
KidKare by Minute Menu is a web-based application that works with most web browsers. There's no need to download or install any software on your computer, tablet, or phone.

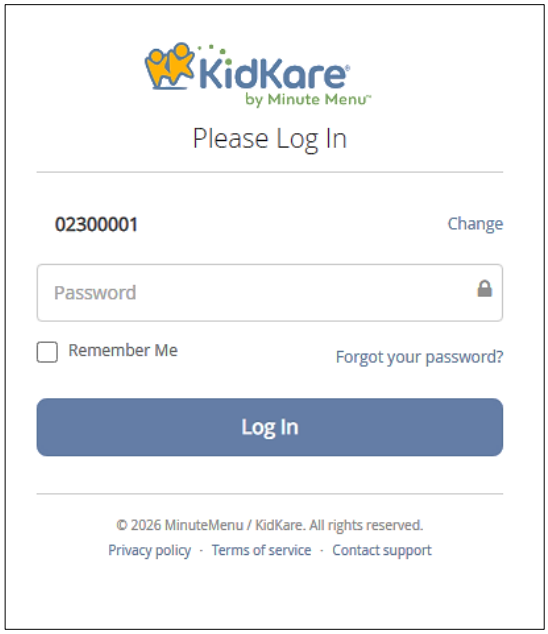
You were sent your KidKare username, password, and welcome letter by email. Please contact ACA if you did not receive them.

Log into KidKare using the directions below.

1. Go to kidkare.com and click *LOG IN.*
2. Enter your username and click *Continue*.
3. Enter your password and click *Log In*.

KidKare está disponible en español. Haz clic en la flecha desplegable de idiomas debajo del botón Iniciar sesión y selecciona language.es.





Note: Check out the KidKare knowledge for answers to frequent KidKare questions.
https://knowledge.kidkare.com/homes/home-providers

You can also watch a short video showing the basics of using KidKare.
https://knowledge.kidkare.com/homes/introduction-to-kidkare-for-home-providers

Once you are logged In, the first step is to enroll the children. You will need to complete an enrollment form for each child in care. This includes your own children less than 11 years of age, or less than 13 years if you are eligible to claim your own children's meal and snacks.

Enroll a Child

1. In the *My Children* section of KidKare, click on the *+ Add Child* button on the right of the screen.

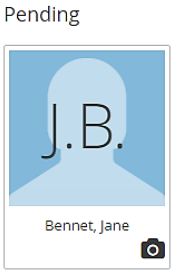
2. Complete the three pages of information. Items with an asterisk are required fields.

3. If KidKare detects an error or if required information is missing, you will not be able to go to the next page until these issues have been corrected. The incorrect or missing information is highlighted in red.

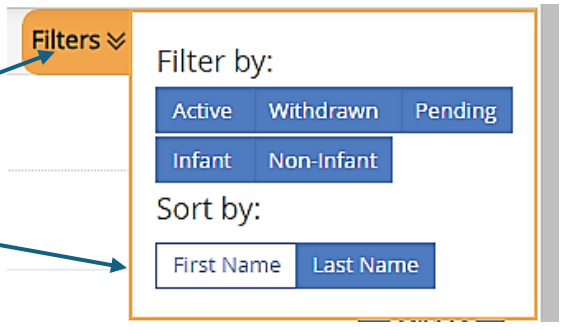
4. Once you have finished filling out all the necessary items, you can choose to Enroll Child or Enroll/Print. Choose *Enroll/Print*. Print the completed enrollment form.

5. Give the printed enrollment form to the child's parent or guardian. The parent needs to review the enrollment, correct any errors on the form, initial any corrections, and sign & date the enrollment. Keep a copy of the completed form for your records.

6. Mail the signed and dated enrollment form to ACA's office so it is received before the end of the month. You will know ACA has received Enrollment form when the child's status moves from *Pending* to *Active* in the *My Children* section of KidKare.



Note: You can sort children by first or last name, go to ***Home > My Children***. Click the filters tab on top right of the page. Select to sort children by first or last name. Children will be sorted in the order selected on all screens throughout the program.

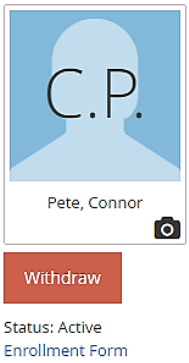


Withdraw a Child

When a child permanently leaves your care, you need to withdraw the child in KidKare.

Click on **Home > My Children**.

The home icon is in the upper corner of the screen .



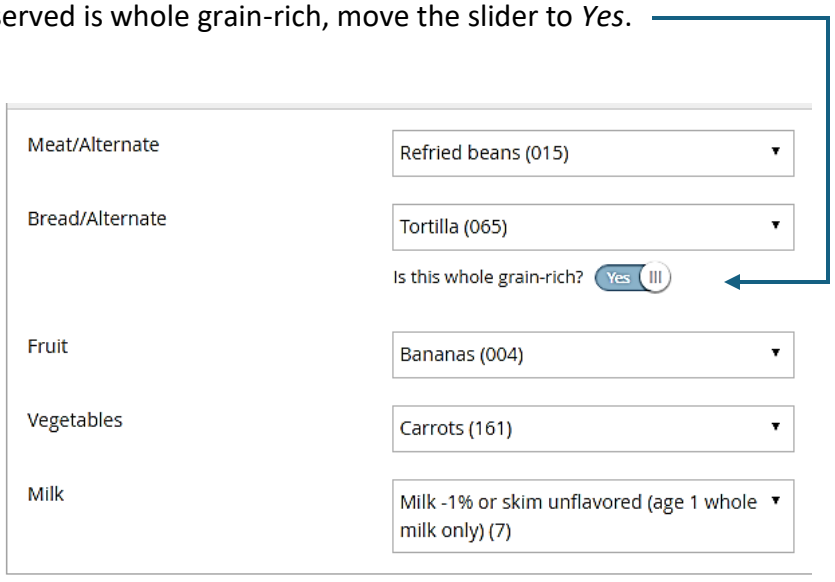
1. Find the child you need to withdraw in the Active section and click their name to view the child's information.
2. Click the red, *Withdraw* button under their photo.
3. Select the date of the withdrawal.
4. Click *OK* to complete the process.

Recording Menus, Meal Counts and Attendance

record keeping, meal patterns, meal counts

To record menu for children one year and older go **to KidKare > *Meals* > *Enter Meal***.

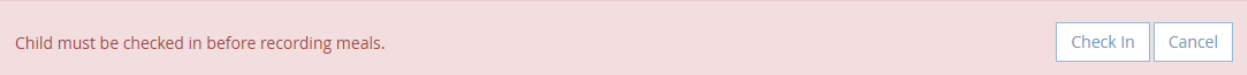
1) Pick the date the meal was served.
2) Select *Non-Infants*.
3) Choose the type of meal that was served from the dropdown box: Breakfast, AM Snack, Lunch, PM Snack, Dinner, Eve. Snack.
4) Using the drop-down menus, select the food items you served at this meal. If the grain served is whole grain-rich, move the slider to *Yes*.



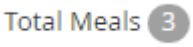
Note: if you select *other* as a food choice, you must list the name of the food served in the comments section (bottom of screen) before saving the meal.

5. Click on the names of the children who participated in this meal/snack (meal count).

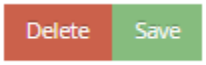
   If this is the child's first meal/snack of the day, you must mark them in attendance before proceeding. Click on a child's name and the box below will appear. Click *Check In*. They are now marked in attendance for the day.



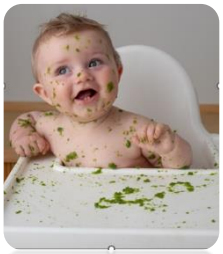
6. After selecting all the children present for the meal (meal count), check the *Total Meals* at the bottom of the screen to make sure your meal count is correct. In this example, 3 children were fed this meal.



7. *Save* the meal information before leaving the screen.



To record infant meals, go to **KidKare** > ***Meals > Enter Meal***.

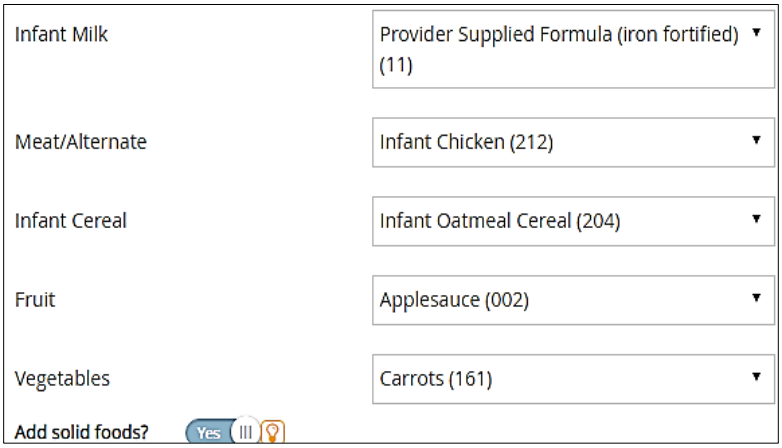


1. Pick the date the meal was served.
2. Select *Infants*.
3. Choose the meal you want to record.
4. Click on the infant's name. If this is the child's first meal/snack of the day, you must mark them in attendance before proceeding. The pink box below will appear Click *Check In.* The infant is now marked in attendance for the day.

5. Enter the child's breastmilk or formula. Click on the drop-down arrow in the box across from *Infant Milk*. Select the correct formula or breastmilk choice.

If the infant is eating solid foods, move the solid foods slider to *Yes*. You are now able to enter the infant's solid foods.

Use the drop-down arrows to select the food items served. If the infant has started solid foods, **the solid foods MUST be recorded.**



7. Click *Save*. Repeat for each infant.

Note: if you see an orange lightbulb on the Kidkare screen, hover your curser over it for more information.

Meals containing solid foods are reimbursable when the infant is developmentally ready to accept them. Set this option to **Yes** to record additional food items for infants.

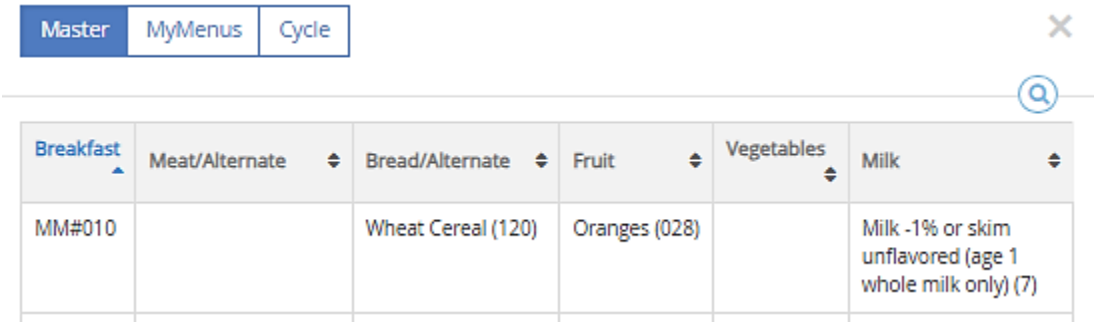
PrePlanned Menus

record keeping, meal patterns

One way to decrease menu recording time is to use or create pre-planned menus.

Master Menus

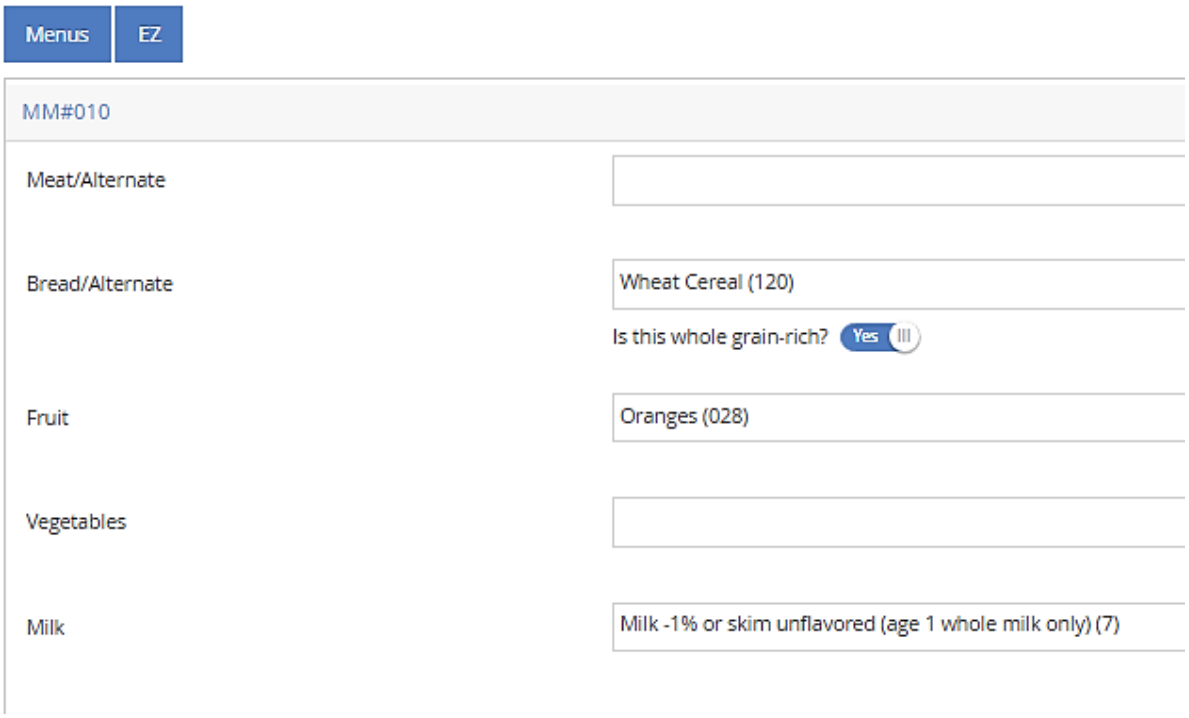
1) In KidKare go to **Meals > Ener Meals**.
2) Click *Enter Meals.*
3) Select Infants or Non-infants.
4) Ensure the correct date is selected at the top of the Page.
5) Click the *Select a Meal* drop-down menu and select the meal you are recording. (Breakfast, AM Snack, Lunch, PM Snack, Dinner, or Eve. Snack).
6) Click *Menus*. A pop-up opens and displays your preplanned menus. You can click *Master* to view master menus your sponsor providers in addition to the menus listed on the *MyMenus* tab.



7) To locate the menu to select:

- Click the column header to sort meal components in ascending or descending order.
- Click to search for a particular menu.

8) Click the menu to select it. The pop-up closes and the menu is added to the *Enter Meal* page.



9) Click on the names of the children who participated in this meal or snack

10) Click *Save*.

Note: Remember to use whole grain slider to indicate when a whole grain-rich product is used. At least one whole-grain rich product must be served each day to prevent claim deductions.

E-Z Menus

E-Z menus are monthly preplanned menus you can use as is or change to better accommodate the foods you typically serve. To use E-Z menus:

1) Print or view the menus found in the *Members Only* section of ACA's website https://www.acainc.org/ez-menus.html

2) To select an E-Z menu in KidKare go to **Enter Meal> Select Meal**. Click on the blue *EZ* near the top of the screen to enter the meal or snack.

3) If you are making a change to the menu, use the dropdown arrows to the right of the meal component you are changing. Select the component you served. For example, if the E-Z menu shows orange juice, but you served apple juice, you need to change the menu to indicate apple juice was served.

4) Remember to use the whole gran slider to indicate when a whole grain-rich item is served**.**

Contact ACA with any questions.

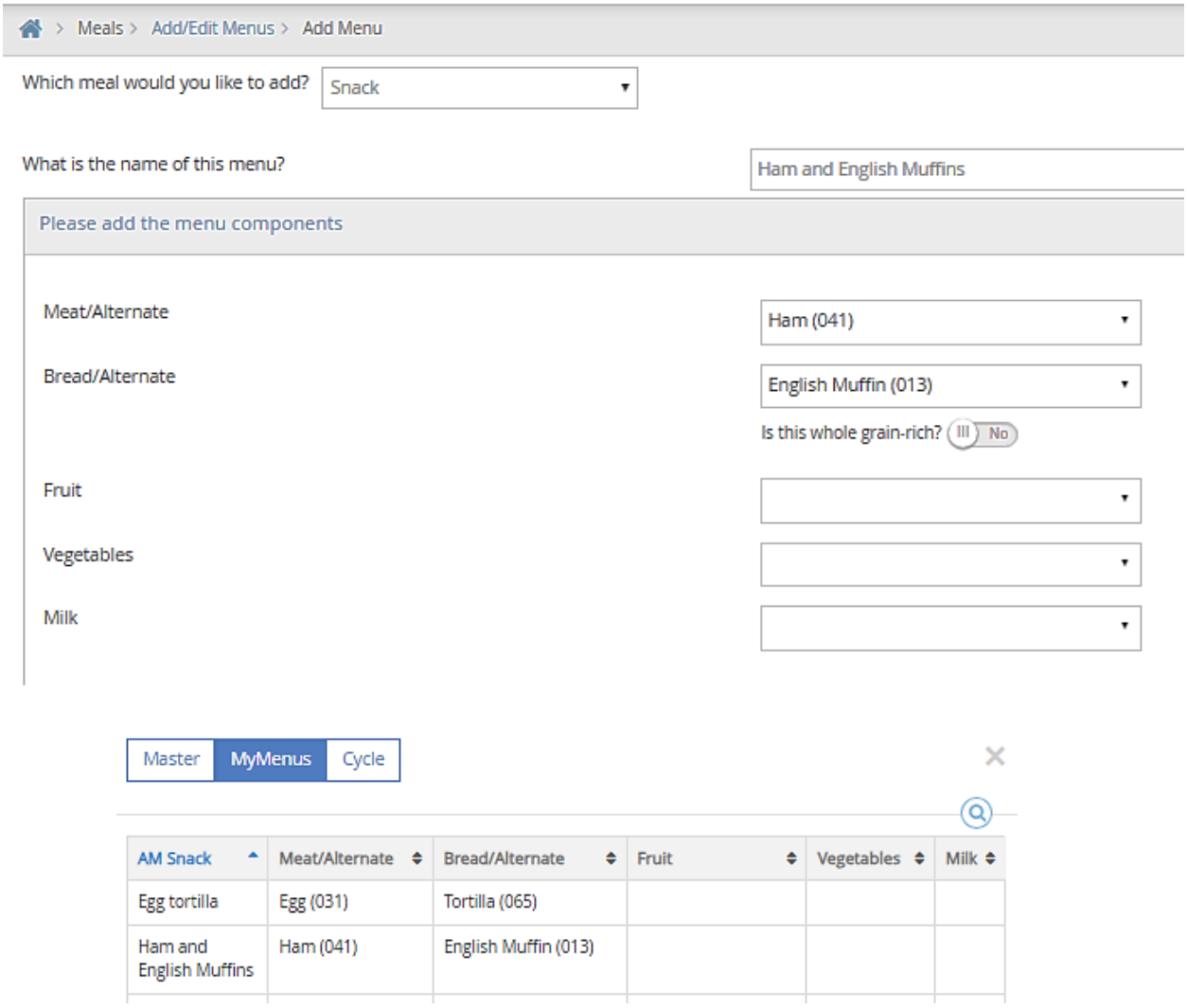
Note: Menus must reflect the actual foods that were served. If you do not serve a meal component shown in the E-Z menu, be sure to change it to what was served.

Creating Menu on the Meal Entry Page

You can also create and save your own preplanned menus.

MyMenus

1) Go to **KidKare> Meals > Enter Meals > Add/Edit Menus**
2) Click on *+Add Menu* (blue box at the top right of the screen).
3) Select the meal or snack you would like to add
4) Select your meal components.
5) Click *Create My Menu*.
6) Click the *What is the Name of This Menu Box* and enter the name for the menu.



You can now select your saved menu from the *MyMenu* section of *the Enter Menu* screen.

7) Click *Save*.

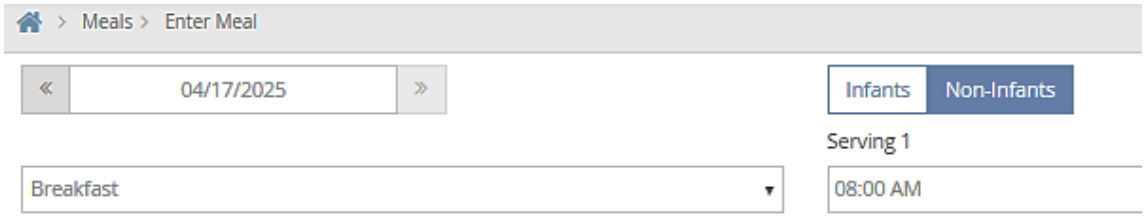
Remember to enter all required meal components for the meal or snack you are creating and saving. If a meal or snack component is missing or incorrect (e.g. incorrect milk chosen), the meal or snack will be disallowed.

Note: You can also create *MyMenus* directly from the *Enter Meal* page. Enter the meal components and click on the names of the children participating in the meal or snack. Click on the blue *+ Create MyMenu* button. Enter the menu name and click *Save*.

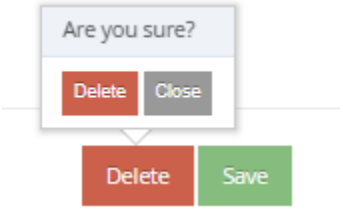
Delete A Meal

You can delete meals if needed. Typically, you would do this if the meal was entered in error.

1) Go to **KidKare > Meals > Enter Meals**.
2) Click *Enter Meal* to open the page.
3) Select the date.
4) Select *Infants* or *Non-Infants*.
5) Click *Select Meal* drop-down menu and select the meal type.



6) Click *Delete*.

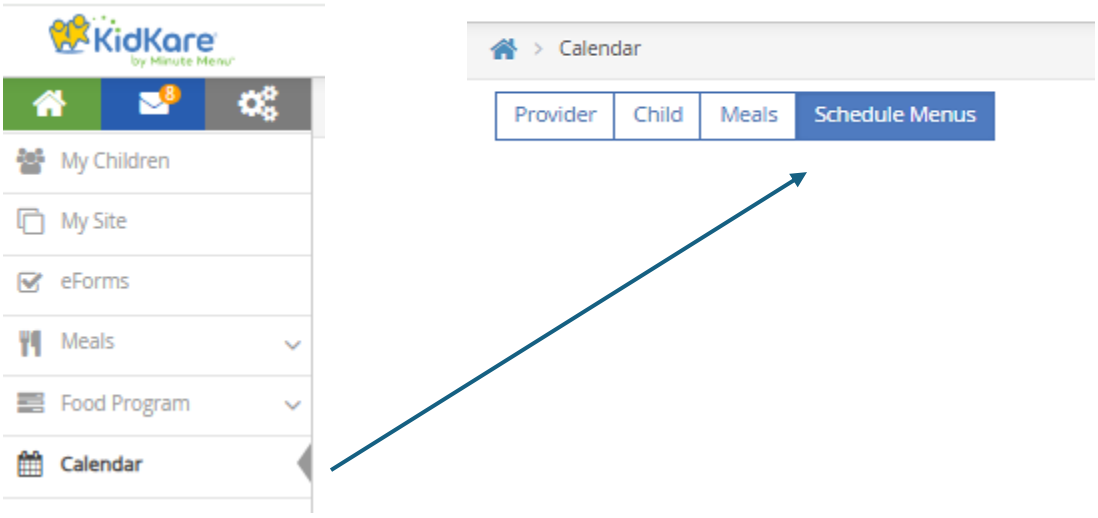


7) At the Are You Sure prompt, click *Delete*.

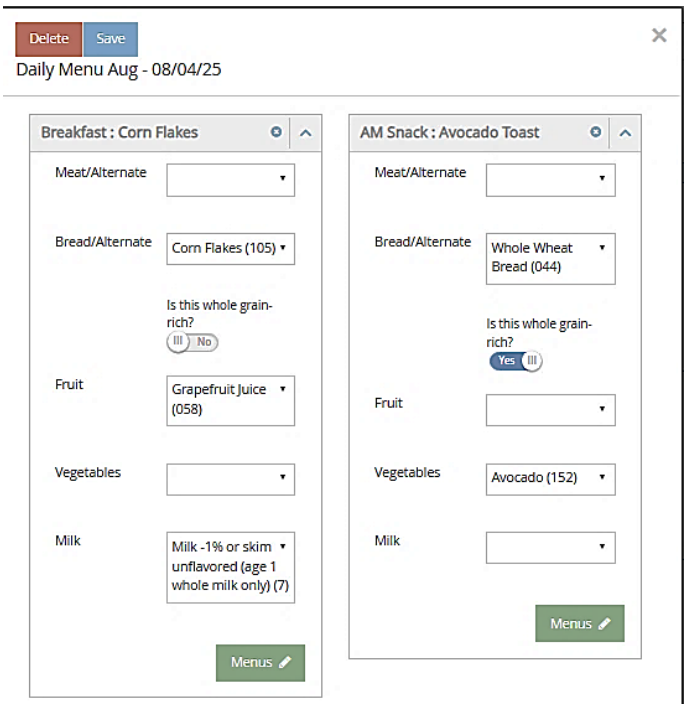
Note: **The best predictor of successful Food Program participation is daily recordkeeping**. Do not get behind. It only takes 5-10 minutes a day to complete your records. If you wait and enter them weekly it takes 25-50 minutes. If you wait until the end of the month it takes 2 to 3 hours. The longer it takes the more likely it is that entry errors occur, and entry errors mean claim deductions. **Get your maximum reimbursement**. Enter your attendance, menus and meal counts into KidKare daily.

Schedule Meals in Advance

You can schedule menus for infants and non-infants in advance on the *Meals Calendar*. Click on *Calendar* from the menu on the left side of the KidKare screen. Then choose the *Meals Calendar*. Select *Infants* or *Non-Infants*.



1) Click on the date for which to schedule menus. The Daily Menu pop-up opens.
2) Use the drop-down menus to select the components for each listed meal. You can also click *Menus* to select a saved menu.



3) Click *Save*. The scheduled meals and snacks will automatically display on the *Enter Meal* page for day on which they are scheduled.

Packaged Combination Foods

(program meal patterns, review procedures)

Packaged combination foods are quick and convenient. They are store purchased foods which contain more than one meal component. When claiming such products for CACFP reimbursement, you must be sure they credit. Such foods include:

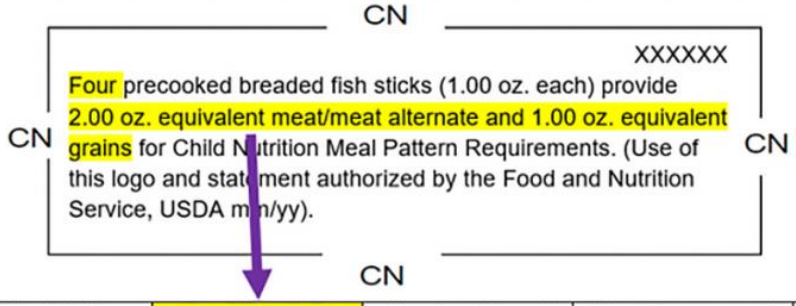
Product	Often Claimed For
Beef stew	meat/meat alternate and vegetable
Pizza	meat/meat alternate and grain
Chicken nuggets	meat/meat alternate and grain
Fish sticks	meat/alternate and grain

There are minimum serving size requirements for CACFP meals and snacks. The minimum serving size of each food component varies by the age of the child and the meal being served. Without a Child Nutrition (CN) label or a Product Formulation Statement (PFS), you cannot assure minimum serving size guidelines are being met.

What is a Child Nutrition (CN) label?

It is documentation found on some packaged combination foods that show how the food contributes to the meal pattern.

The program is a voluntary USDA labeling program. Because it is voluntary, you will not find a CN label on all products. In the program, USDA evaluates a product's formulation to determine how it contributes to the meal pattern requirements. Once approved, the manufacturer is allowed to state this contribution on the product label.



Ages	Min. Meal Pattern Requirements	Crediting Info From CN Label	Serving Size at Lunch/Supper	Meal Component Amts per Serving	Amt Meets Meal Pattern Reqs
1&2 year olds	1 oz M/MA ½ oz eq Grains	4 fish sticks = 2 oz eq M/MA 1 oz eq Grains	2 fish sticks	1 oz eq M/MA ½ oz eq Grains	✓
3-5 year olds	1.5 oz M/MA ½ oz eq Grains		3 fish sticks	1.5 oz eq M/MA ¾ oz eq Grains	✓
6 years & older	2 oz M/MA 1 oz eq Grains		4 fish sticks	2 oz eq M/MA 1 oz eq Grains	✓

Credit: https://www.cacfp.org/2023/02/21/child-nutrition-cn-labels/

Product Formulation Statement

If a CN label is not available, you will need a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) for a packaged combination food to credit. The PFS statement is obtained from the manufacturer. It must contain information about the amount of meat/alternate, grains, and/or fruit/vegetable provided by the product per serving. The analysis must be signed by an official of the manufacturer (not a salesperson).

To obtain a Product Formulation Statement, call the company's number on the product's package and explain you need child nutrition information for the product. Make sure you have the package in front of you because you will be asked for the UPC number. If they have child nutrition information on the product, they will send it to you. Be sure to request that the product analysis sheet is signed by an official of the manufacturer.

Keep the CN labels and Product Formulation Statements for the packaged combination foods you serve on file at your childcare site. During a home visit you will be asked for them. If you do not have them on file, you may lose reimbursement.

Emergency Alternative Records

(recordkeeping, meal counts)

As a CACFP participant, you have agreed to keep daily food program records. This means you must enter your food program menus and meal counts into KidKare by 11:59 pm on the day they are served.

Occasionally, a situation might occur which prevents you from accessing KidKare. For example, your internet may be down, or your laptop may be broken. In these situations, you must keep written records of your menus and meal counts **EXACTLY** as you would enter them in KidKare. The children in attendance each day must be documented. The menus must list each meal component, and meal counts must list the names of the children who participated in each meal or snack. The date of the meal services must be recorded. Time in and time out forms are not acceptable.

Fortunately, KidKare has a report, the *Daily Meals Worksheet Report*, designed to assist you in keeping USDA acceptable handwritten attendance, menus and meal counts. To print this report open KidKare the go to:

Reports > Worksheets > Daily Meal Worksheet.

Click *Run* and the report will generate. You can print the report or save it to your device. Once you can access KidKare, you may enter the menus, attendance, and meal counts from the *Daily Meal Worksheet*. Keep the completed worksheets with your Food Program records.

If you prefer, you may print the *Weekly Attendance Worksheet* and record your menus on a separate paper.

Enrolling a Nonparticipating Child

record keeping, review procedures, program reimbursement system

As a Food Program participant, you must offer the Food Program to all children in your care. It is up to the child's parent to accept or decline the offer. While it is rare for a parent to decline the food program, it does happen. The most common reason is the parent wants to supply the child's food. A child whose parent has declined the food program is called a nonparticipating child.

To stay in USDA compliance, you must show you offered the Food Program and the parent refused it. You do this by completing an Enrollment Form for the child. When you are entering the child's enrollment date, **unclick the *Participates in CACFP* box.**

Complete and print the enrollment form. Have the parent review, sign and date the form. Mail the completed form to ACA.

Nonparticipating children count in your licensing capacity, so we need to know when they are present during meals and snacks. If they are present during a meal or snack, click on their name as you would a participating child. You will not be reimbursed for their meal/snack, but they will count in your license capacity.

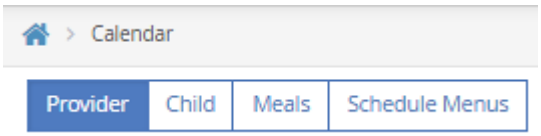
Occasionally an enrollment from for a participating child is mistakenly completed as a non-participating child. The result is no reimbursement for that child's meals/snack. To maximize reimbursement, please review your enrollment forms carefully before mailing them to ACA.

Provider Calendar

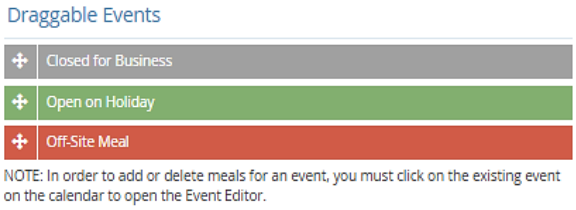
recordkeeping, review procedures

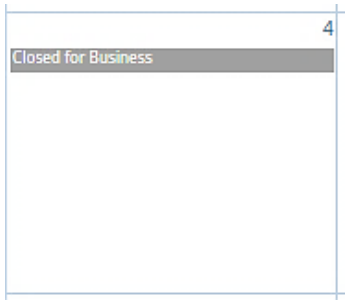
The Provider Calendar is where you document days you are closed, open on a holiday, or serving meals/snacks off-site (such as during field trips). This information is needed by ACA staff to schedule visits and to properly process your Food Program claim. Without it, your Program Advisor may attempt to conduct a visit when you are not available, or your food program claim may be incorrectly reduced.

To enter information in the Provider Calendar, go to **KidKare > Calendar**. The Provider calendar is the default calendar. It will be displayed in blue.

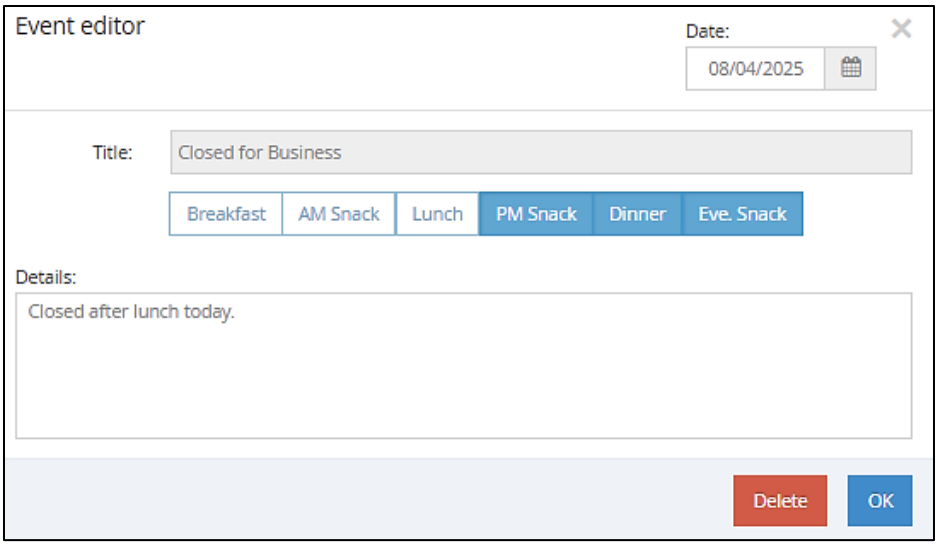


1) **Drag** events from the *Draggable Events* section to the right and drop them into the appropriate day on the calendar.





2) Once you have added an event to the calendar, click it to add detail. The *Event Editor* pop-up opens.



3) Select the meal(s) this event affects.
4) Click the *Details* box and enter any notes about the event.

The unhighlighted meals are they meals you served. The blue highlighted meals are the meals not served because you are closed. With this information in the Provider calendar, ACA will not attempt an afternoon visit on this day. Also, you will not receive reimbursement for any meals or snack claimed after lunch on this date.

5) Click *OK* when finished.

To delete an event you added in error, click the event to open the *Event Editor*. Then click *Delete*. At the "*Are You Sure"* prompt, click *Delete*.

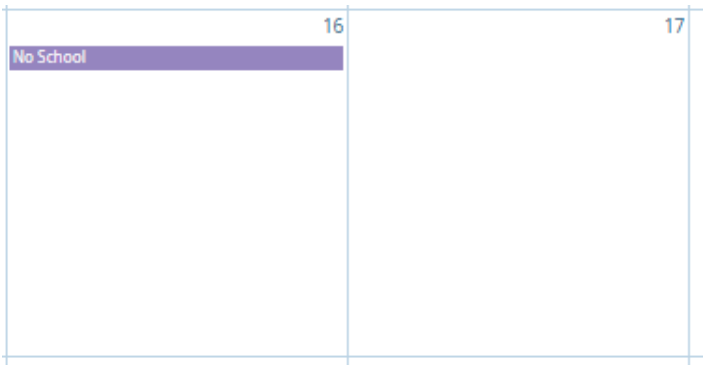
Child Calendar

recordkeeping, review procedures, clam reimbursement system

School age children are expected to be in school during am snack and lunch. If a school age child is in your care for a.m. snack or lunch because they were present on a holiday, school was out, or they were sick, you must document that information in the Child Calendar. If the information is not in the child calendar, you will not be reimbursed for the child's am snack or lunch.

1) Go to **KidKare>Calendar>Child**.
2) Select the child you are entering the information for.

3) Drag Events from the *Draggable Events* section to the right and drop them into the appropriate day on the calendar.

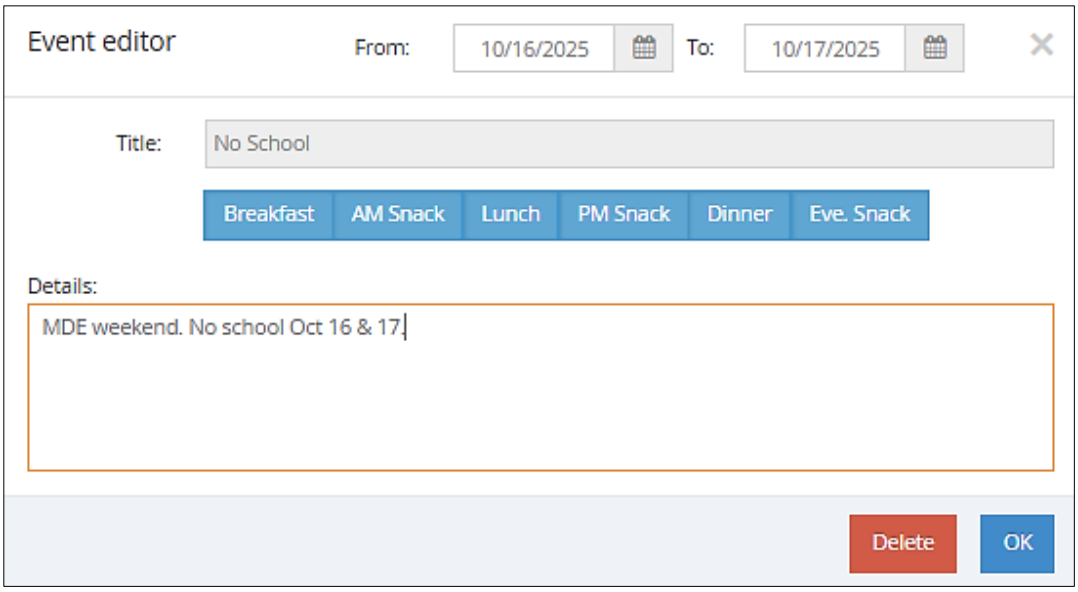


4) Once you have added an event to the calendar, click it to add details. The *Event Editor* pop-up opens.

5) Select the days or meals this event effects.

6) The Child Calendar defaults to school out all day. If you are entering a partial school out day, click the meals where school was in session to unselect them. Only those meals for which school was out should be blue. For example, if school was in session in the morning during Breakfast and the AM Snack, click Breakfast and AM Snack to clear them. Only those meals for which school was out should be selected.

7) Click *OK*.

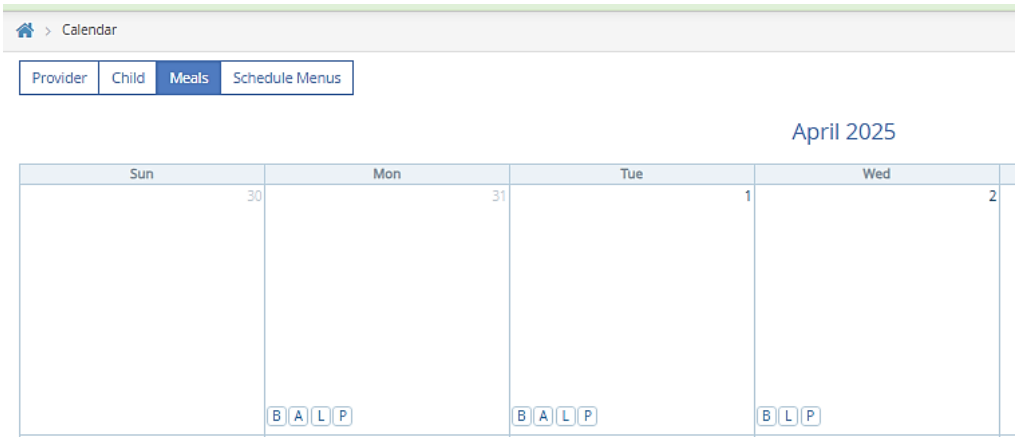


The *Child Calendar* shows Taylor was in your care for all meals and snacks on October 16 and 17. This means you are eligible to be reimbursed for Taylor's for a.m. snacks and lunches on those days.

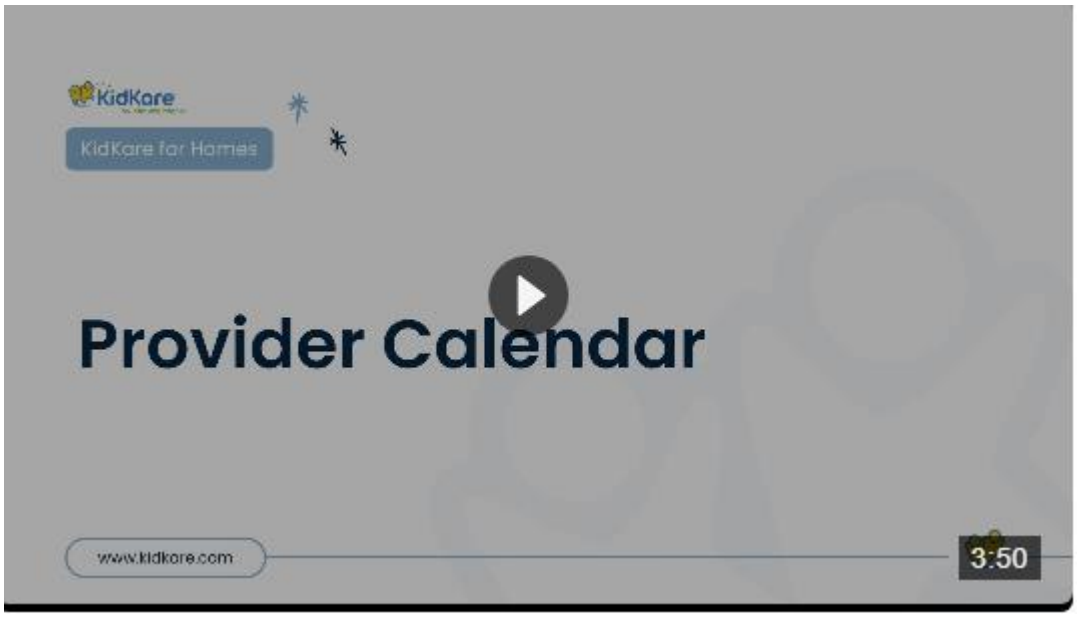
Note: You can also mark children present on a holiday, out of school, or sick on the Enter Meals screen see page 22 and 23 for details.

Meals Calendar

The *Meals Calendar* shows all the meals and snacks that have been recorded on the *Enter Meal* screen with children in attendance. Use this calendar to keep track of what meals have and have not been entered into KidKare.



Click on the meal icon (B, A, L P, D, E) and the *Enter Meal* screen will open allowing you to see the menu and the children who were present for the meal or snack.

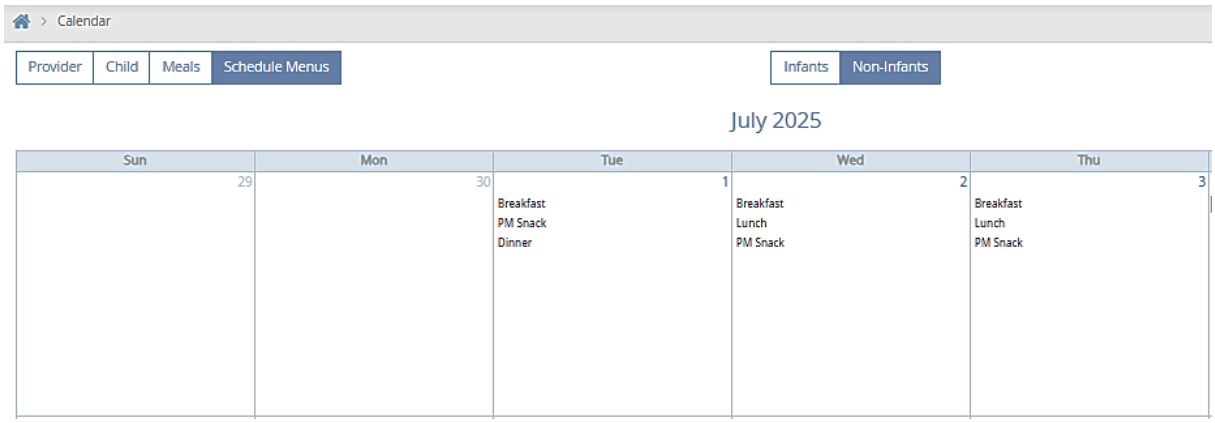


https://knowledge.kidkare.com/homes/provider-calendar
Click on the picture of link for videos and more information on Using KidKare calendars.

Schedule Menus Calendar

recordkeeping

The *Schedule Menus* calendar show all the menus that have been planned in advance or scheduled for a future date. Use this calendar to ensure you have all menus planned and scheduled when you are building your menus in advance.



Note: You can view 2 or more calendars at the same time. Simple click on the calendars you want to display. All calendars shown in blue will be displayed.

Marking School Out

recordkeeping, review procedures

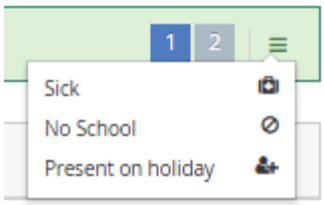
School age children are expected to be in school during a.m. snack and lunch. If they are not, you must enter school out in KidKare. Failure to mark school out will result in loss of reimbursement.

School out can be marked in the *Child Calendar*, or in the *Enter Meals* screen. The calendar allows you to mark several days and out at once. The *Enter Meals* screen only allows you to mark one day and meal/snack at a time, but it is done on the same screen you use to enter menus and meal counts.

1) Go to **KidKare>Meals>Enter Meals**
2) Enter your Lunch or AM snack menu
3) Click on the names of the children participating in the meal.
4) On the right side of the name bar, you will see 3 lines.

5) Click on the 3 lines.

6) A drop-down menu will appear.



7) Click on *No School*.
8) You will now see a circle with a line through it.

9) The child has been marked as out of school. When you claim is processed, this meal will not be deducted due to “School age child claimed for a.m. snack or lunch”.

This method can also be used to record days a school age child is present on a holiday or is in your care because they are too sick to attend school.

What to Expect on a Home Visit

review procedures

Food Program participants are required to have at least 3 home visits per year. Most visits will be unannounced. Some visits will be at a meal or snack time.

During a home visit, your Program Advisor will review your compliance with Food Program requirements. Some of these include:

Childcare License

- Do you have a copy of your current childcare license?
- Does the information on your license match the data we have on file?
- Are you co-licensed with someone else?
- Are you operating within license capacity?
- Do you have a variance to your license?
- Do you have a helper?

Food Program Records

- Are your food program records (menus, meal counts, and attendance) accurate, complete, and up to date in KidKare?
- If your records are not in KidKare, do you have acceptable backup records?
- Do you have copies of completed enrollment forms or enrollment renewal forms for all the children in your care?
- Have you retained your Food Program records for three years and 3 months after the date of the fiscal year to which they pertain (October 1 through September 30)?
- If you have a corrective action plan, are you following it?

Meal Service

(Review at meal and snack visits.)

- Does the meal or snack meet meal pattern guidelines?
- Are the required minimum serving sizes being met?
- Does the meal service area meet sanitary standards?
- Do the children wash their hands before eating?
- Are you serving low-fat or skim milk to children 2 years and older and whole milk to children 1 year of age?
- Do you have CN Labels or product formulation statement for commercially prepared combination foods available for review?

Food Program Data

- Do the meals and snacks served match those approved on your food program application?
- Are the meal and snack serving times we have on file accurate?
- Do you have infants in care? If so, who is purchasing the formula and who is purchasing the solid foods?
- Are you recording the solid foods for infants who are developmentally ready to have them?
- Have you changed the days of the week you offer care?
- Have you changed the hours of operation for your business?
- Have you had a recent change in your meal claiming patterns?

In addition to checking these items, your Program Advisor will review Program information and update you on program changes and provide food program training. They will complete an electronic Review Detail Report summarizing everything reviewed and discussed during the visit. You will sign and date the report electronically at the visit. A copy will be emailed to you. The report copy will contain a link or links where you can view or download all training materials used during the visit.

You can help your home visit go smoothly by keeping Food Program materials which your Program Advisor needs to review together in an easily accessible spot.

If, at the time of a home visit, your menus and meal counts are not complete through the last meal or snack of the previous day, we will be unable to reimburse you for any meals or snacks not recorded.

If we come for a visit and a helper is conducting the childcare, we will complete the visit with the helper. The helper will need to have access to your food program records such as enrollments, re-enrollments, licenses, variances, back-up records, etc.

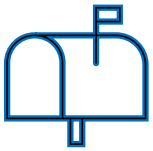
Note: Remember to give ACA prior notice when you are closed or away from your childcare site during business hours. See page 19 & 20 for instructions.

Child Enrollment Forms

record keeping and program reimbursement system

Parents must date their child's enrollment form in the same month the child begins care. You cannot be reimbursed for a child's meals and snacks for a month prior to the date on the child's enrollment form. For example, if Josie begins care on August 4, 2025, her parent must date her enrollment form for a day in August. If the form is dated September 1, 2025, you will not be reimbursed for Josie's August meals and snacks.

Enrollment forms must be received in the office before you submit your claim. It is recommended that you mail ACA each child's enrollment form as soon as they start in your care. Do not wait until the end of the month. When the enrollment is received in the office, the status of the child will switch from pending to active in Kidkare. See page 3 for more information.



You will not be reimbursed for a child's meals and snacks if ACA receives their enrollment form after your claim has been submitted to MDE, or if their enrollment form is incomplete. Before mailing enrollment forms, review the forms to be sure they are complete and properly signed and dated by the parents. **School age children must have school depart and return times entered.** Once your claim is submitted to the State for reimbursement, new enrollments cannot be added to the month.

All enrollment forms expire September 30th. Each September you will be emailed instructions for printing and having the parents complete the Enrollment Renewal Report. **Keep a copy of all completed enrollments forms and enrollment renewals**. This is a USDA requirement. The forms may be paper or electronic. They must be available for review during a home visit.

Note: Receive the maximum reimbursement possible. Remember to:

- Review enrollments before mailing to ACA to ensure they are signed and dated by the parent. Be sure they are dated with the correct month.
- Mail the completed enrollment forms to ACA so they arrive before the end of the month.
- Do not submit your claim if it contains a pending child whose meals and snacks you intend to claim. Contact ACA if you have questions.
- Keep copies of your signed and dated Enrollment Forms and yearly Enrollment Renewal Forms with your food program records. They will be needed for home visits.

Crediting Foods

meal patterns

CACFP participants must follow the meal patterns established by USDA to be reimbursed for the meals and snack they serve. For detailed information on crediting foods, please refer to the *Crediting Foods* section in your CACFP Manual.

Breakfast	Lunch or Supper	Snack (two of the four groups)
Fluid Milk* Vegetable or Fruit Grains (meat or meat alternate may be used to meet the entire grains requirement a maximum of 3 times per week)	Fluid Milk* Meat or Meat Alternate Grains Vegetable Fruit (a vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement) **	Fluid Milk* Meat or Meat Alternate Grains Vegetable Fruit

* Fluid milk must be unflavored whole milk for 1-year-olds, unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk for children two through five years old, or unflavored low-fat (1%) or flavored low fat (1%), unflavored fat-free (skim) or flavored fat-free (skim) milk for children six years old and older. Breastmilk is an allowable substitute for milk for children of any age.

** When 2 vegetables are served at lunch/supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served. For example, you cannot serve spaghetti sauce and tomato slices.

School Age Children Claimed for Lunch and A.M. Snack

meal counts, record keeping

School age children are not expected to be in your care during school hours. If a school age child is recorded in your meal count for a.m. snack or lunch, you must note a school out day or child sick day in KidKare. If this information is not in KidKare, your claim will be deducted. See page 14-15 for more information.

School out days, including the first and last day of classes each year, vary widely across school districts. ACA does not have access to all school calendars. It is up to you to let ACA know school was out by entering the information in KidKare. Entering this information avoids claim deductions and helps assure you receive the most reimbursement possible.

Own Children in Care

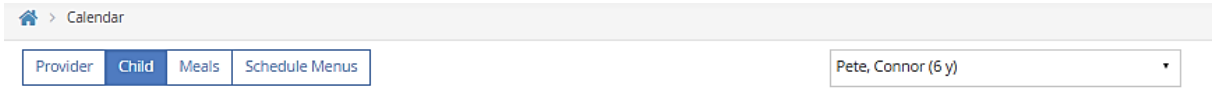
(Meal counts, record keeping)

Your own children of childcare age are automatically included in your license capacity when processing your Food Program claim.

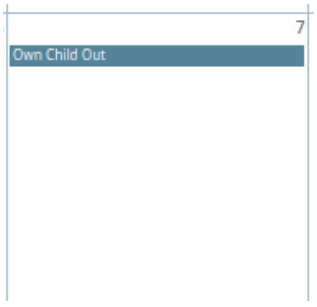
If your own child is not present during childcare hours, you must record them as not present. Failure to do so may result in your claim being reduced for over license capacity, especially **if you are replacing your own child with a daycare child to stay within licensing capacity**. If your child is school age, we assume s/he is at school during the times indicated on their enrollment form.

To record your own child not present

1) Go to **KidKare > Calendar**
2) Select the *Child Calendar*
3) From the dropdown menu, click on your own child's name.

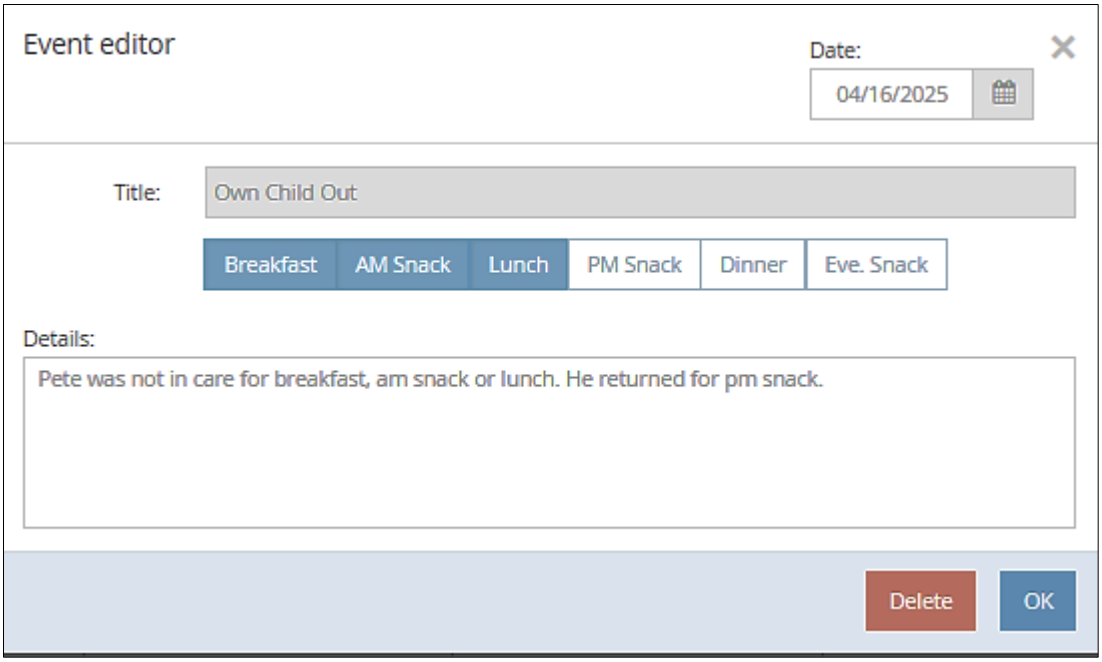


4) From the *Draggable Events*, drag *Own Child Out* to the appropriate date.



Your child is now marked out of care for the day and will not count in license capacity.

If your own child is not in care for part of a day, click on the *Own Child Out* that you dragged into calendar. The Event Editor will open.



Indicate the meals and snack for which your child was not in care and click OK.

In this example, Pete was out of care for breakfast, am snack and lunch. He returned for pm snack.

Prior Notification

review procedures

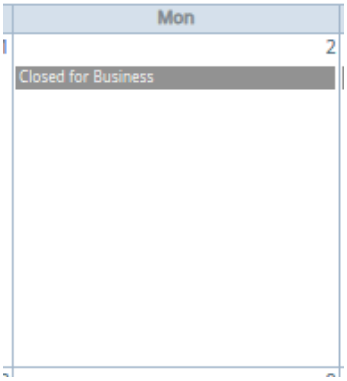
Providers are **required by USDA** to give their Program Advisor prior notification if they are closed during their normal childcare hours, or if they and the children are away from childcare site during childcare hours. This includes weekends and evening meals if you claim them. Prior notification allows your Program Advisor to schedule visits efficiently and helps ensure you stay in compliance with Federal regulations.

For example, you and the children take a field trip to the zoo. If you give your Program Advisor prior notification of this field trip, he or she will not plan a visit with you on that day and time. However, if no prior notification is given, a visit may be made.

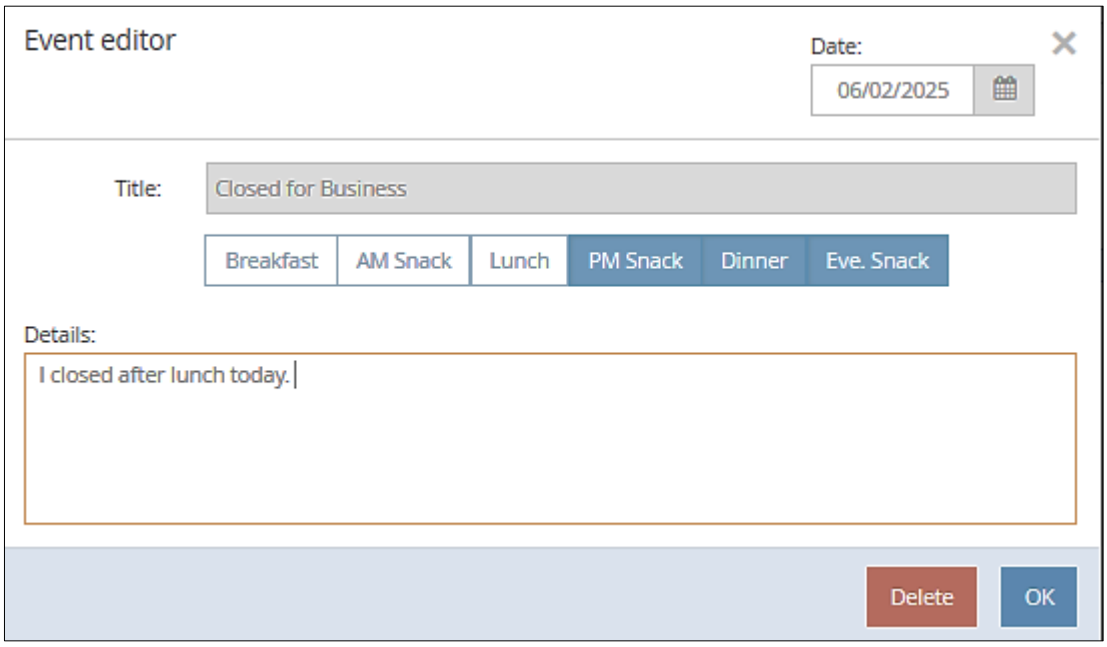
If your Program Advisor arrives at your childcare site for a visit during your scheduled meal or snack times, and you and the children are not there, the meal or snack will not be reimbursed. Failure to give prior notification is recorded in your food program record. Repeat incidents could result in corrective actions, a finding of serious deficiency, and even program termination for 7 years.

The best way to give your Program Advisor Prior Notification is by using the *Provider Calendar* in KidKare.

1) Go to **KidKare > Calendar**
2) Select *Provider Calendar*
3) From the *Draggable Events* drag the *Closed for Business* or *Off-Site Meal* tag to the appropriate day on the calendar.



4) If you are only closed part of a day, click on the *Closed for Business* tag you drag into the calendar. The *Event Editor* will open. You can now indicate which part of the day you were closed and which part you were open.



5) Click *OK* to save the information.

Your Program Advisor can now see you are closed on the day indicated and they will not attempt to conduct a visit with you. To assist with visit scheduling, please enter your days closed into the calendar as far in advance as possible. If you close unexpectedly, please call or email ACA. We will notify your Program Advisor.

Open on a Holiday

review procedures, record keeping

If your childcare business remains open on a major holiday (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, or Christmas) you must note it in KidKare.

1) Go to **KidKare > Calendar**
2) Select *Provider Calendar*
3) From the *Draggable Events* drag *Open on a Holiday* tag to the appropriate day on the calendar

When you submit your claim to our office for processing and payment, it is reviewed by staff. If you claim meals on a holiday and the date in not noted as a day open in the Provider Calendar, the meals will be deducted.

Special Diet Statement

meal patterns, claim review procedures, program reimbursement system

USDA requires Food Program participants make reasonable modifications to accommodate meals and snacks for participants with a medical need for the modification.

Sometimes this can be done while still meeting the meal patterns. For example, if a child has a peanut butter allergy, another qualifying meat or meat alternative can be substituted for the peanut butter. In such a case, a special diet statement is not required.

At other times, the meal patterns cannot be met. For example, a 2-year-old child who requires whole milk rather than 1% milk due to concerns with lack of weight gain. In these instances, a special diet statement is needed.

A special diet statement is a form completed by an authorized medical authority (licensed Physician, Physician Assistant, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or a Registered Dietitian). The form Identifies how the participant's physical or mental impairment affects their diet, describe what must be done to accommodate the participant's dietary needs, documents specific foods should be avoided, and lists those below with recommended substitutions.

Once the special diet statement is on file with ACA, the provider can be reimbursed for meals and snacks that comply with the special diet statement even if the meal or snack does not follow the meal patterns.

You can download a special diet statement from ACA's website.

https://www.acainc.org/forms.html

Adults' & Children's Alliance

Note: Childcare providers are not required to accommodate special dietary requests that do not constitute a medical need, including requests related to religious or moral convictions or personal preference. If these requests are accommodated, sponsors must ensure that all U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal pattern and nutrient requirements are met.

Claiming Children with Special Needs

Program reimbursement system

Once a child turns 12 years old, they are no longer eligible to participate in the Food Program. There is one exception to the rule, and it is for special needs individuals.

A child (up to the age of 21 and in school) may qualify for CACFP participation based on having a "mental or physical handicap, as defined by the State" the child must meet the definition of "child with a disability" from the Minnesota Statutes 125A.02.

For an adult participant (over the age of 21 or otherwise not in school) to qualify for CACFP participation based on having a "mental or physical handicap, as defined by the State," the participant must have a disability that meets the definition of "handicapped person" in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

When eligibility for continued CACFP participation is based on a child's or adult's disability, documentation of the disability must be on file in ACA's office before meals served to the participant may be claimed for program reimbursement. A physician's statement that the participant has a disability as defined in the applicable law shown above is required. If a participant's disability has been documented in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan at school, the family may provide that documentation instead of a physician's statement.

Record Retention Requirement

record keeping and program reimbursement system

The USDA requires Food Program participants to maintain Program records for "three years and 3 months after the date of the fiscal year to which they pertain." This provision is intended to facilitate reviews, to enhance Program integrity, and to assure Providers they are being properly reimbursed by their sponsor.

Providers are required to keep copies of each child's enrollment form (including re-enrollment forms), daily records of the number of children in attendance and the number of meals, by type, served to enrolled children (meal count and menu forms) as well. This requirement means Food Program records for fiscal year 2026 (October 1, 2025-September 30, 2026) must be kept until January 1, 2030. Failure to keep such records shall be grounds for denial of reimbursement.

USDA has stated Providers must have on hand for immediate review all records that support their program activities for the current month as well as the previous twelve months of operations. Providers may store the remaining two years offsite; however, they must still be in the control of the Provider and accessible within a reasonable amount of time. If no offsite storage is used, Providers must retain the three years of records, onsite at the family childcare home. Records can be kept in hard copy or electronic format, provided they are readily available to reviewers.

Moving

Program reimbursement system

Your CACFP application and agreement are valid only for your current address. If you are moving and planning to continue childcare in your new home, you must contact ACA **prior** to your moving date. **Failure to contact our office before you move may result in a loss of reimbursement.**

Tiering

program reimbursement system

In the CACFP there are 2 meal/snack reimbursement tiers. All providers are eligible for Tier 2 rates. Some providers are eligible for the higher Tier 1 rates. Providers living in a Tier 1 school area or a Tier 1 census tract will receive Tier 1 rates.

If you live in a Tier 2 area, it may still be possible for you to receive Tier 1 reimbursement. The USDA has set up *Household Income Eligibility Guidelines for Tier 1 Eligibility*. If your family's income falls within government guidelines, you can receive Tier 1 rates regardless of where you live. Furthermore, you may be able to claim some of your own children's meals for Food Program reimbursement.

If your family's income is above the Tier 1 limit, it is possible individual children enrolled in your childcare may be eligible to receive Tier 1 rates for their meals and snacks. If a childcare participants family meet the *Household Income Eligibility Guidelines for Tier 1 Eligibility,* their meals/snack can be reimbursed at the higher Tier 1 rates.

To qualify for Tier 1 rates, an approved Household Income Statement along with any needed documentation must be on file and approved by ACA. The *Provider Household Income Statement* and the *Families Households Income Statement* can be downloaded from ACA's website.

https://www.acainc.org/forms.html

To ensure privacy and to encourage parents who qualify for Tier 1 rates to apply, you should give all parents a Tier 1 application. Parents who believe their household qualifies for Tier 1 rates may mail the application directly to ACA. They may give the completed *Household Income Statement* to you in a sealed envelope, and you can mail the envelope to ACA. Regulations do not permit us to inform you of which children receive Tier 1 rates and which receive Tier 2. Your check stub will document the number of meals served at each tier rate.

Reimbursement

Program reimbursement system

Food Program claims should be submitted by the **3rd** of the month following the month being claimed. Claim supporting documents including enrollment forms, updated licenses, variances and special diet statement are due before you submit your claim.

On time, complete claims received by the first Thursday of the month, will generally have their reimbursement check mailed, or direct deposit transmitted around the second Friday of the month. However, the State has 45 days after the claim is submitted to release the funds to ACA and we have 5 working days to release them.

DO NOT RELY ON RECEIVING YOUR REIMBURSEMENT BY A CERTAIN DATE EACH MONTH!

You can check on the status and amount of your claim in KidKare.

KidKare > Food Program>View claims

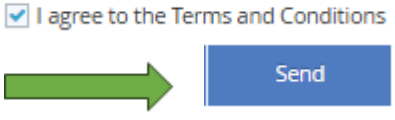
Always check with you bank to ensure you direct deposit funds are in your account.

Don't Forget to Submit

claims submission

Submit your Food Program claim for processing and payment after serving and recording your last meal or snack for the month.

KidKare> Food Program> Send claim to Sponsor



Groceries are expensive! Get your reimbursement as soon as possible. We cannot process what we do not have. So, remember to submit your claim.

Claim Summary and Errors Report

Program reimbursement system, review procedures

After your claim has been processed by ACA, a *Claim Summary and Errors Report* is available for your review. The report lists any claim deductions made to your claim. Please review this report monthly and let ACA know if you have any questions.

Check your Error Report each month!

KidKare > Reports > Claim Statements > Claimed Summary and Error > Select month > Run

Common Claim Deductions

record keeping, claim submissions

Entering menus and meal counts daily helps prevent errors. Here are the most common mistakes that lead to claim deductions:

- Menus missing meal components.
- Incorrect milk recorded (flavored milk, milk equivalent, special provision milk).
- Failing to serve or record at least one whole grain-rich food per day.
- Claiming more than 2 meals and 1 snack or 2 snacks and 1 meal per day child per day.
- Claiming meals indicating that you are over license capacity. Don't forget that your own children count in your license capacity. Also, send in new licenses and variances before submitting your claim.
- School age children being claimed for a.m. snack or lunch and not having school out/sick recorded for them in KidKare
- Recording a meal or children in attendance which differs from what was observed at a home visit.
- Claiming pending children. This means we have not received the child's enrollment form.
- Claiming meals or days you are not approved for. Please send a signed and dated letter or email to the office if you would like to add meals or days to your application. **The letter/email must be sent prior to the end of the month and state the meal start and end times as well as the date you will start serving the meal or add the days.**

Note: KidKare provides several reports you can run daily to help avoid claim errors such as the *Food Served Report* and the *Claimed Food and Attendance Report*.

KidKare > Reports > Meal and Attendance