

Floor Alert

To: Members, California State Assembly
From: Ellen Braff-Guajardo, Elyse Homel, California Food Policy Advocates
Date: May 25, 2012
Subject: **Support AB 1872 (Alejo) – Improving Child Care Nutrition**



Problem

Nearly 25% of preschool-aged kids are overweight or obese. In California, licensed family day care homes (FDCH) serve more than 360,000 California kids; yet they are *not* required to follow *any* nutrition standards, as a condition of licensure, for the meals and snacks they serve. In contrast, licensed child care centers are obligated to follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern.

What does AB 1872 do?

Sets a minimum nutrition standard for foods served in family day care homes.

AB 1872 would set a minimum nutrition standard that would require FDCH providers to follow the CACFP meal pattern, meaning all meals and snacks served by the provider must follow age appropriate serving sizes and focus on the four basic food groups: milk, fruits/vegetables, grains/bread, and meat/meat substitutes.

Shrinks the nutrition gap in child care.

AB 1872 would shrink the “nutrition gap” of foods served in California child care settings by matching the licensing requirement of following the CACFP meal pattern in *both* FDCHs *and* child care centers. This standard has existed for decades in California for child care centers and at least 19 other states require the CACFP meal pattern be followed in *all* licensed child care settings.

Requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to inform *all* child care providers about CACFP.

In California, only about half of all licensed child care providers participate in CACFP. Unfortunately, many providers have misconceptions about CACFP eligibility, enrollment, and reimbursement procedures. AB 1872 would require DSS to inform all child care providers – home *and* center-based – about CACFP by including information on the DSS website and during orientation for prospective child care providers.

Why Support AB 1872?

AB 1872 supports child care providers’ financial sustainability.

AB 1872 will improve the accessibility of information about CACFP eligibility, enrollment, and reimbursement, which will lead to an increase in CACFP participation. A child care center serving 50 children could receive over \$63,000 per year in federal CACFP reimbursements; a FDCH serving five children could receive over \$5,310 per year in federal CACFP reimbursements.

AB 1872 connects providers, families, and children to a whole system of nutrition benefits.

- AB 1872 sets an expectation of balanced nutrition and provides nutrition and safety-net benefits. Research has shown that child care settings participating in CACFP serve healthier meals and snacks than those child care settings not participating in the program.
- The CACFP meal pattern is designed to meet the nutritional needs of all children, particularly low-income children who may not otherwise have access to healthy meals and snacks.
- CACFP reimbursements paid to providers translate to lower costs of child care and food for families.
- Providers enrolled in CACFP are better connected to nutrition education resources.

Good nutrition in child care should not be dependent on the type of licensed setting the child is in.

For more information on AB 1872, contact Ellen Braff-Guajardo, ellen@cfpa.net or 510.301.0824 or Elyse Homel, elyse@cfpa.net or 619.501.8248 or see www.cfpa.net/improving-child-care-nutrition
