



April 16, 2014

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mark Leno
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
California State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Assembly Budget
California State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Support for Early Childhood Education Nutrition Investments

Dear Governor Brown and Chairpersons Leno and Skinner,

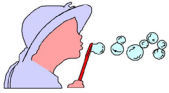
We, the undersigned, are writing in strong support of a state investment in early childhood education (ECE) nutrition. Nutrition reimbursements for ECE programs have the power to boost the nutritional quality of the foods served to California's youngest residents, while simultaneously strengthening the financial viability of California's ECE system.

There is strong scientific evidence that the first five years of life are a critical time for growth and brain development. We know that children who start life with nutritious diets fare better, both physically and academically, and are more likely to thrive later in life. With more than one million children enrolled in California's licensed ECE programs, educators are uniquely positioned to support a young child's nutritional needs. Unfortunately, California has slashed overall funding for ECE by 40% in the past six years and cut nutrition-specific funding by 85% in the past three years. This has left ECE programs without adequate resources to provide nutritious foods, particularly those programs serving our most disadvantaged children.

After a decade of budget crises and dire fiscal conditions for the field of ECE, California has finally turned the page. Policymakers have the opportunity to rebuild our state's ECE system to support the current and long-term health needs of California's children. With this goal in mind, we respectfully request that the Legislature:

- » **Require the state to reimburse all ECE programs enrolled in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) \$0.2248 for each free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch served.**

By providing nutrition reimbursements for ECE programs at a level equal to that provided for meals served in K-12, California policymakers can support the health of our youngest children and fulfill our state's well-established commitments to increase kindergarten readiness and decrease the achievement gap. California's youngest children need and deserve a healthy, well-nourished start to life.



Plaza Community Services



Please contact Elyse Homel Vitale with California Food Policy Advocates at elyse@cfpa.net or 510.433.1122 ext. 206 with any questions regarding our request.

Sincerely,

- 4C's of Alameda County
- 4Cs of Sonoma County, Community Child Care Council
- American Heart Association
- Angels Child Care Food Program
- Associated Students Children's Center (CSU Northridge)
- Atkins Center for Weight & Health, UC Berkeley
- California Alternative Payment Program Association (CAPPA)
- California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- California Child Development Administrators Association (CCDAA)
- California Food Policy Advocates
- The CAPPA Children's Foundation
- Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
- Child Care Food Program Roundtable
- Child Care Law Center
- Child Development Centers / Continuing Development, Inc.
- Child Development Associates, Inc.
- Child Nutrition Program of Southern California
- Children's Council of San Francisco
- Children Now
- Choices for Children
- Community Action Marin
- Community Bridges
- Comprehensive Child Development, Inc.
- Connections For Children
- Contra Costa Child Care Council
- Educational Enrichment Systems, Inc.
- Family Child Care Council
- Family Resource & Referral Center
- Feeding America San Diego
- First 5 Association of California
- First 5 Fresno County
- First 5 LA
- First 5 San Benito
- First 5 Sonoma
- FRAMAX – Child Care Food Program
- International Institute of Los Angeles
- Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- Long Beach Unified School District, Office of Child Development Centers
- Mather Playschool and Club Mather Child Development Center
- Northern Director's Group
- Nutrition Policy Institute
- Plaza Community Services
- Professional Association for Childhood Education (PACE)
- San Diego Hunger Coalition
- The Sarah Samuels Center for Public Health Research & Evaluation
- Solano Family & Children's Services
- St. John's Well Child & Family Center
- Valley Oak Children's Center