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January 14, 2016

**Subject: Young Children in All-Day Child Care Need Additional Meal or Snack**

Dear Senator:

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is writing to ask you to urge your colleagues in the Senate Agriculture Committee to include a provision in the Senate Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill that allows the option for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to serve a third meal, or at the very least a snack, for children who are in care for more than eight hours per day.

Currently over 550,000 California children receive healthy meals and snacks daily from CACFP in family child care homes, child care centers, and afterschool programs.<sup>1</sup> It is vitally important for children in child care long hours to have healthy meals and snacks throughout the day. This is especially critical for low income kids. California has nearly three million children under age 6, of which 24 percent live in poverty.<sup>2</sup>

Young children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of food insecurity, with poor nutrition affecting a young child's ability to learn and grow. The earliest years are the most important for ensuring children's healthy growth and development. It is during these years that the foundation is laid for lifelong healthy habits, including nutritional preferences.<sup>3</sup> **The additional meal or snack for children in care long hours will improve childhood nutrition, enhance child development and school readiness, and help working families work.**

CFPA has over 20 years of experience working to strengthen the federal nutrition programs through policy and advocacy. CFPA has had great success in the past establishing policies specifically around child care. We led the effort to establish standards for beverages that can be served in licensed child care homes and centers in California. Building upon this success, the time is right to extend the option to providers to serve an additional healthy meal or snack. We appreciate your support and consideration of allowing the option for an additional meal or snack in CACFP as we move towards the reauthorization of the child nutrition programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Colby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anna" and last name "Colby" clearly distinguishable.

Anna Colby, MS, MPP  
Nutrition Policy Advocate  
California Food Policy Advocate

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary numbers from State Level Tables FY 2011-2015: Child and Adult Care Food. (2016, January 8). Accessed: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables> United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services

<sup>2</sup> Poverty Status in The Past 12 Months By Sex By Age. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

<sup>3</sup> Birch, L. Development of food preferences. *Annu. Rev. Nutr.* 1999; 19:41-62.