important updates for success and more resources from the child care healthy food program

John R. Gadient RD/LDN, Supervisor

Dear Child Care Provider,

Happy 10 Year Anniversary to the Healthy Food Program at Illinois Action for Children! To celebrate our program established in October 2005, we want to dedicate this issue to the four providers who have been with us from the start.

important Healthy Food Program Numbers

Out-of-home voice mail phone number: (773) 564-8862

If you are closed, going to be out of your home during a scheduled meal service or the children are not present—state regulations require you to inform us.

Payment release dates call: (773) 564-8860

To speak to a customer service representative call: (773) 564-8861

Vera Davis

as told to Nutrition Advocate, Luz Lopez

Ms. Davis said she has learned how to serve nutritious meals during her time in the program. She spoke about the benefits of the reimbursement which allows her to serve better meals to the children. She also spoke of the opportunity to attend classes that expanded her knowledge of nutrition and healthy habits. Ms. Davis stressed that anyone joining the Healthy Food Program should take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. She also suggested they keep in constant communication with the program, especially if they have questions.

continued
Has your phone number changed?
In order to maintain eligibility for the food program we must have a working phone number in our records for you. Let us know immediately if your phone number has changed.

Changing Meal Times:
Providers are not allowed to change or add mealtimes unless first approved by the Healthy Food Program. If your children’s schedule changes and you want to change, add or drop a mealtime, please call us immediately for approval. Otherwise, it may affect your reimbursement.

JoAnne Guilford said the Healthy Food Program made her more aware of not forcing food on the children. Since learning this healthy food tip, she noticed the children are happier and much more willing to try new things. She spoke about the joy of meeting different children in her care and forming bonds with them. Like Ms. Davis, she also said the reimbursement has allowed her to purchase better quality food for the children. Ms. Guilford’s advice for providers new to the program is to listen to their Nutrition Advocate; they help providers get the most benefit from the program. She also stressed the importance of listening to the children because they are the reason for the work we do.

Damaris Miranda feels since joining the program, she has been able to provide healthy and balanced meals that contribute to the growth and wellness of the children in her care. She believes that by setting a meal schedule and offering the appropriate amounts of food, she is helping prevent childhood obesity. Ms. Miranda also praised the Minute Menu computer software available to Healthy Food Program providers. She feels the Healthy Food Program has helped her run a smooth and successful business, and urges new providers to never hesitate to ask questions because everyone is capable of teaching and being taught new things.

Carne Jones said the program has helped her make sure the children in her care receive a balanced meal or snack. She explained how she makes sure all of the food groups are represented in her meals for the children. The program has also resulted in her planning menus with the various meal components in mind, knowing her choices affect how nutritious the meals are, as well as her reimbursement. Ms. Jones stressed that anyone joining the program should think about a schedule to make sure everything is in order, from planning meals with all the necessary components, to finding time each day to document the foods served so that records are up to date.