



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning



February 2010

## Nutrition Services' Food for Thought Newsletter

### *From the Director's Chair*

Approximately 1 in 4 pre-school aged children in Georgia are considered overweight or obese emphasizing the need for prevention projects for our youngest children.

To help resolve this obesity epidemic, Bright from the Start is piloting a wellness project for eligible child care entities to encourage an environment where children can develop healthy behaviors.

Good nutrition and regular physical activity is essential for the physical, cognitive, and social development of young children. Overweight children are more likely to suffer from

impaired school function, psychosocial problems, and chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

**Bright from the Start recently implemented a grant-funded project titled "Caregivers Promoting Healthy Habits: Implementing Wellness Policies in Child Care Centers in Southwest Georgia."** The goal of this pilot project is to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits in an effort to reverse the trend of overweight and obesity among Georgia's children. The project will help eligible centers in 14 southwest GA counties to develop and implement wellness policies.

To determine if your county is eligible and to access an application, visit Bright from the Start's website at: <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Nutrition/NutritionServicesMain.aspx> and click on "...request for applications now available" under Popular Topics.

For more information, contact Monica Fink, Nutrition Project Manager, at (404) 463-4093 or [monica.fink@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:monica.fink@dec.al.ga.gov).

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### *SFSP Sponsors and Sites Needed to Help Close the Gap on Hunger This Summer!*

In today's economy, families need help now more than ever to stretch their food dollar. This need becomes even greater during the summer months when school is out of session. Bright from the Start's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides monetary reimbursement to organizations that provide food to children 18 and younger.

Bright from the Start is seeking eligible sponsors in low-income areas to provide summer meals to children. The following entities can qualify as sponsors: public or private nonprofit schools; universities, colleges, or camps; units of local government; faith-based organizations; and private nonprofit organizations considered tax exempt by the IRS.

Sponsors can operate the SFSP and feed children at sites such as schools, churches, recreation centers, community and migrant centers, child care centers, and other local community areas where children congregate and play. Sponsors are reimbursed according to federal guidelines for the meals they serve. They can prepare and serve meals themselves or contract with a food vendor to prepare meals for the program.

For more information on becoming an SFSP sponsor, contact the Summer Food Service Program team at 404-656-5957 or by e-mail at [SFSP@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:SFSP@dec.al.ga.gov).

## Food Allergies: Safe Food Handling to Prevent Triggering an Allergic Reaction



Almost 11 million Americans have food allergies; many are children, and the prevalence of food allergies is on the rise (Sicherer, Munoz-Furlong, & Sampson, 2003, 2004).

Although any food can cause an allergic reaction, eight foods account for 90% of food allergies: peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts and cashews), milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat.

An allergic reaction is triggered when the immune system overreacts to a food that it thinks is a harmful invader. This overreaction causes symptoms that may appear within seconds to hours after eating the trigger food. Most allergic reactions are mild and cause symptoms such as a runny nose, sneezing, itching skin, hives, and digestive upset. For those who encounter severe allergic reactions, *exposure* to a trigger food may cause life-threatening symptoms such as swelling of the tongue, lips, or throat (Basset, 2005). If swelling is severe, death will occur without immediate medical help. Unfortunately, sudden severe allergic reactions (known as "anaphylaxis") to food causes 200 deaths annually.

The only proven way to prevent triggering a reaction is to avoid the offending food. Avoidance measures include reading food labels for allergenic ingredients, asking questions about meal ingredients when eating outside of the home, and adopting food handling behaviors that prevent cross-contact with allergens.

### **Below are five safe food handling practices to prevent triggering a food allergy reaction:**

- 1. Carefully note who has food allergies in your institution.**
  - A. When enrolling participants, ask if they have any known food allergies.
  - B. Adjust the menu and serve alternative items whenever necessary.
- 2. Keep food simple and safe.**
  - A. Be aware that allergens such as eggs, wheat, milk, and soy hide in soups, dips, and homemade goodies.
  - B. Check ingredient labels on food packages for allergens every time you acquire them. Food products may change.
    1. The new food labeling law requires food manufacturers to disclose if products contain any of the top eight food allergens.
  - C. Do not serve a food to an allergic participant if you can't guarantee it will be allergen free. If necessary ask the person with an allergy to bring his or her own snack.
- 3. Disclose ingredients used to prepare meals and snacks.**
  - A. Avoid using "secret" ingredients. Always indicate if potential allergens are included in the recipe or may have come in contact with the food you are preparing or serving.
- 4. Prevent cross-contact between allergen-containing and allergen-free foods.**
  - A. Keep even a trace of an allergenic food (e.g., peanut, peanut butter, peanut oil) from coming in contact with an allergen-free food or surface (e.g., counter, bowl, spoon).
  - B. Wash your hands, workspace, utensils, and pans. Make sure dishes are allergen-free before preparing foods.
  - C. Thoroughly clean up workspace after use.
- 5. Be in control of the meal service.**
  - A. Keep kids from trading meals and snacks.
  - B. Have children wash hands.
  - C. Clean eating areas after meals and snacks. (A smudge of peanut residue on a table could trigger a reaction.)
  - D. Limit crafts that use food items.

## *Child and Adult Care Food Program Reviews*

Nutrition Services acknowledges the following institutions for having perfect CACFP reviews:

EJB Adult Daycare, Inc. – 90 day review  
 Kingdom Educational Ministries – 90 day review  
 Caring Works, Inc. – 1 year review  
 Bellbrook Child Development Center – 1 year review  
 The Home Place Adult Daycare, Inc. – 1 year review  
 Thomas Daycare – 3 year review

*Congratulations! Keep up the good work!!!*

### *Question & Answer: Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons*

**Q:** The majority of our participants are from the Jewish community. Does the Child and Adult Care Food Program allow variations in the food components of meals served?

**A:** Yes. Please reference FNS Instruction 783-13, which can be found on our website at: [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)

**Q:** Can Jewish participants have un-enriched matzo during the religious observance of Passover?

**A:** Yes, un-enriched matzo can be substituted for the bread requirement during that period of time only.

**Q:** Can Jewish institutions be exempt from being required to serve milk at lunch and supper when meat or poultry is served?

**A:** Yes, several options are available for substituting the milk component in this example. All options are listed in FNS Instruction 783-13, which can be found on our website at: [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)

### *We are Here to Serve You — Contact Information*

#### **NUTRITION SERVICES**

##### **Lou Brienza**

Director  
404-651-8197  
[Louis.Brienza@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Louis.Brienza@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Leslie Truman**

CACFP Administrative Assistant  
404-657-1779  
[Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Leslie.Truman@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Marissa Hamm**

Program Manager  
404-651-7181  
[Marissa.Hamm@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Marissa.Hamm@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Falita Flowers**

Program Manager  
404-656-6452  
[Falita.Flowers@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Falita.Flowers@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Sonja Adams**

Policy Administrator  
404-651-8193  
[Sonja.Adams@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Sonja.Adams@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Meggan Hemans-Reese**

CACFP Admin/Review Manager  
404-651-7192  
[Meggan.Hemans-Reese@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Meggan.Hemans-Reese@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Christy McCray**

CACFP Application Specialist  
404-651-7191  
[Christy.McCray@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Christy.McCray@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Anjuly Davis**

Training Coordinator  
404-656-6292  
[Anjuly.Davis@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Anjuly.Davis@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Vicki Morris**

SFSP Manager  
404-656-6411  
[Vicki.Morris@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Vicki.Morris@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Sherry Mays**

SFSP Coordinator  
404-651-7426  
[Sherry.Mays@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Sherry.Mays@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Ashanti Simon**

SFSP Administrative Assistant  
404-656-6332  
[Ashanti.Simon@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Ashanti.Simon@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Coretta White**

Business Operations Specialist  
404-463-1494  
[Coretta.White@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Coretta.White@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Brenda Carter**

Nutrition Consultant  
229-238-2958  
[Brenda.Carter@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Brenda.Carter@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Valerie Coulton**

Nutrition Consultant  
770-357-4927  
[Valerie.Coulton@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Valerie.Coulton@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Sonya James**

Nutrition Consultant  
770-357-7012  
[Sonya.James@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Sonya.James@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Bridgette Merrett**

Nutrition Consultant  
770-357-7062  
[Bridgette.Merrett@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Bridgette.Merrett@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Rae-Marie Lockhart**

Nutrition Consultant  
478-599-9801  
[Rae-marie.Lockhart@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Rae-marie.Lockhart@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Reynald Salamo**

Nutrition Consultant  
866-370-3203  
[Reynald.Salamo@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Reynald.Salamo@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Wanda Simpkins**

Nutrition Consultant  
678-371-6130  
[Wanda.Simpkins@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Wanda.Simpkins@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Sherrie Tuten**

Nutrition Consultant  
[Sherrie.Tuten@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Sherrie.Tuten@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Danna Foster**

Nutrition Consultant  
[Danna.Foster@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Danna.Foster@decal.ga.gov)

##### **Angelica Flucas**

Nutrition Consultant  
[Angelica.Flucas@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Angelica.Flucas@decal.ga.gov)

#### **FINANCE**

##### **Aneshia Harris**

Grants Administrator  
404-656-3325  
[Aneshia.Harris@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Aneshia.Harris@decal.ga.gov)

#### **AUDIT**

##### **Tanya Astin**

Audit Coordinator  
404-656-6293  
[Tanya.Astin@decal.ga.gov](mailto:Tanya.Astin@decal.ga.gov)

**Bright from the Start  
 Nutrition Services  
 10 Park Place South  
 Suite 200  
 Atlanta, GA 30303  
 Phone: 404-656-5957  
[www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)**