

August 2026

CACFP MONTHLY UPDATE

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Maine

CACFP SPONSORS

THE 2027
AGREEMENT
is Open!



**DEADLINE FOR
SUBMISSION:**

**AUGUST 31,
2026**



Don't wait until the last minute!

Submit your **2027 Agreement** early
to ensure a smooth process.



Thank you for your continued
commitment to the children
and families in Maine!

2027 Agreement Open Office Hours

Need assistance completing your 2027 CACFP Agreement?
Have questions about required documentation, CNPweb, or
the renewal process?

To support sponsors during the agreement renewal period,
the CACFP Team will be hosting a series of Open Office Hours
throughout July and August. These sessions are informal
opportunities to receive technical assistance, ask questions,
and get help navigating the agreement process.

No registration is required—simply join the session that best
fits your schedule:

[August 13, 2026- 7:00am-8:00am](#)

[August 18, 2026- 2:00pm-3:00pm](#)

[August 25, 2026- 4:30pm-5:30pm](#)

[August 27, 2026- 9:00am-10:00am](#)

[August 31, 2026- 10:00am-11:00am](#)



June Claim Submission

August 31, 2026 is the last day to
submit your **June 2026** claim

We strongly encourage you to submit claims as early as possible and not wait until the last minute. Planning ahead allows time to address any questions or issues that may arise, especially considering the two-step claim approval process.



CACFP RATES *for* Program Year 2026-2027



JULY 1, 2026 – JUNE 30, 2027

Per meal rates in Whole or Fractions of US Dollars

Rates	 Breakfast	 Lunch & Supper	 Snack
Free	2.54	4.76	1.30
Reduced	2.24	4.36	0.65
Paid	0.42	0.45	0.12

≥ CIL: TBD ≤

Tier 1		
	Breakfast	1.74
	Lunch & Sup	3.31
	Snack	0.98

Tier II		
	Breakfast	.62
	Lunch & Sup	1.99
	Snack	0.27

Administrative Reimbursement rates for Sponsoring Organizations of Day Care Homes

Home Rates



Initial 50	157.00
Next 150	119.00
Next 800	93.00
Each Add	82.00



Homes rates are per home/per month



Keeping Your Income Eligibility Form (IEF) Binder Audit-Ready

Maintaining an organized and accurate Income Eligibility Form (IEF) Binder is an important part of program compliance and helps ensure smooth administrative reviews. A well-managed binder protects participant confidentiality, supports accurate reimbursement claims, and makes records easy to locate when needed.

Before Filing a New IEF

To help ensure accuracy:

- Have two staff members review all new IEFs before filing them.
- Both reviewers should sign off on the form to verify that it has been completed and determined correctly.
- Once approved, add the participant to the Free/Reduced/Paid (F/R/P) Roster.

Maintaining the Free/Reduced/Paid Roster

Your F/R/P Roster should include:

- Participant's name
- Eligibility date
- Eligibility status (Free, Reduced, or Paid)

What is the eligibility date?

The eligibility date is either:

- The date the parent/guardian signed the form, **or**
- The date the determining official signed the form

The date your institution uses can be found in your Management Plan in CNPweb, Question #24.

Protecting Participant Confidentiality

Free, Reduced, and Paid eligibility information is strictly confidential.

Best practices include:

- Limiting access to eligibility information to authorized personnel only.
- Using coded identifiers if eligibility information must appear on meal count or attendance records.
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers, and parents cannot determine a participant's eligibility status from operational documents.

Remember: Protecting participant privacy is both a compliance requirement and best practice.

Reporting Free/Reduced/Paid Data on Monthly Claims

The F/R/P counts reported on reimbursement claims must be accurate and supported by documentation.

Institutions may use **one of two methods**:

Option 1: End-of-Month Count

Report the total number of valid Free, Reduced, and Paid IEFs on file at the end of the claim month. Institutions must keep a copy of the corresponding roster with that month's claim records.

Option 2: Unique Participants Served

Report the total number of valid Free, Reduced, and Paid IEFs for unique children who received meals during the claim month. Institutions must keep a copy of the corresponding roster with that month's claim records.

Consistency Matters

Whichever method your institution selects:

- ✓ Use the same process consistently throughout the year.
- ✓ Be prepared to explain your method during an Administrative Review.
- ✓ Ensure all staff responsible for claims understand the process being used.

Binder Organization Best Practices

A well-organized binder saves time and reduces errors.

Recommended organization:

1. **Separate forms by eligibility category**

- Free
- Reduced
- Paid

2. **File forms alphabetically by participant's last name within each category.**

3. **Update rosters regularly to ensure information matches the forms on file.**

Secure Storage Reminder

Because IEFs contain sensitive personal information:

- Store binders in a secure location.
- Limit access to authorized personnel.
- Protect records from loss, damage, or unauthorized viewing.

A secure, organized binder helps ensure confidentiality while making records readily available when needed for monitoring or review.

ENROLLMENT FORMS: *Set Them Up for Success!*

Accurate Today. Smoother Tomorrow.



Enrollment forms (often referred to as Income Eligibility Forms or IEFs) capture a child's potential participation in your program. **Some programs do not complete IEFs** and instead use **enrollment forms**. Whether you use an IEF or an enrollment form, it should reflect the **days, hours, and meals** that a child **could possibly be in care for the entire program year**, rather than only their current or typical schedule.



This reduces paperwork, supports smooth operations, and helps prevent meals from being disallowed.

WHY IT MATTERS



REDUCES PAPERWORK

Fewer updates are needed when schedules change, saving you time and effort.



STREAMLINES OPERATIONS

Accurate forms will help your program run more efficiently and smoothly.



REDUCES DISALLOWANCES

Accurate forms help ensure meals are properly claimed and supported during reviews.



Thank you for your continued commitment!

Your attention to detail helps ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals while keeping your program running smoothly!



Strong programs. Healthy kids. That's what CACFP is all about!



You Asked, We Answered

Question:

A provider has enrolled a child who is over 12 years old because the child has documented developmental needs that require continued care. Does the Sponsor need to notify the State Agency before including the child in CACFP?

State Agency Response:

The Sponsor does not need to notify or request prior approval from the State Agency solely because a provider enrolls a child over the age of 12 due to documented developmental or disability-related needs. However, the Sponsor and provider must maintain appropriate documentation to support the child's eligibility for CACFP participation.

CACFP generally serves children through age 12; however, children over age 12 may be eligible when they meet an allowable age exception, such as having a documented disability or developmental need that supports their continued enrollment in care. The key requirement is that the Sponsor and provider must be able to demonstrate, through documentation, why the child is eligible to remain in care and be included in CACFP meal counts.

The Sponsor should ensure that the provider maintains documentation supporting the child's continued need for care beyond age 12. This may include, as applicable, documentation from a medical provider, an educational professional, a special education plan, a developmental assessment, or other relevant records that verify the child has a documented condition or need requiring care. The documentation should be kept on file by the provider and/or Sponsor in accordance with CACFP record retention requirements and must be available for review upon request during an Administrative Review or other monitoring activity.

Sponsors should not submit this documentation to the State Agency unless it is specifically requested. The documentation should be maintained confidentially and should only include what is necessary to support the child's eligibility and continued enrollment in care.

You Asked, We Answered

Continued

Sponsor Responsibility:

The Sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the provider understands the documentation requirements and that the child is included in CACFP meal counts only when the required supporting documentation is on file.

Provider Responsibility:

The provider is responsible for maintaining documentation showing that the child's continued enrollment in care beyond age 12 is due to documented developmental, disability-related, or similar needs that support eligibility under CACFP.

CACFP Milk Guidelines: Choosing the Right Milk for Every Age Group

CACFP milk requirements align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans to support bone health, growth and development with essential nutrients. Here's how to select the right milk to serve based on age and program requirements.

Birth -11 months	12 - 13 months Transition Period	12 - 23 months (1 year olds)	2-5 years old	6-18 years old	Adults
 Breastmilk	 Breastmilk	 Breastmilk	 Breastmilk	 Breastmilk	
 Iron-fortified infant formula	 Iron-fortified infant formula				
	 Whole	 Whole	 Whole	 Whole	 Whole
			 Reduced-fat (2%)	 Reduced-fat (2%)	 Reduced-fat (2%)
			 Low-fat (1%)	 Low-fat (1%)	 Low-fat (1%)
			 Fat-free (skim)	 Fat-free (skim)	 Fat-free (skim)
				 Flavored (whole, 2%, 1% or skim)	 Flavored (whole, 2%, 1% or skim)
	 *Milk substitute	 *Milk substitute	 *Milk substitute	 *Milk substitute	 *Milk substitute

All milks listed are unflavored unless otherwise noted and must meet state and local health standards.

Lactose-free and Ultra High Temperature (shelf-stable) milks are also creditable in the CACFP when following the fat content and flavored or unflavored requirements for the ages served.

*Milk substitutes (non-dairy beverages) must be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and meet the unflavored/flavored regulation for the age group being served, unless a medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian is provided.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

CACFP is an indicator of quality care.
JUNE 26

Celebrating National Breastfeeding Month

August is National Breastfeeding Month, a time to recognize the importance of breastfeeding and the role that families, communities, and childcare providers play in supporting breastfeeding families. World Breastfeeding Week is also observed each year from August 1–7.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program supports breastfeeding by recognizing breast milk as a creditable meal component for infants. Childcare centers and family childcare homes can help families continue breastfeeding after their child enters care by creating a welcoming environment and establishing consistent infant-feeding practices.

Breastfeeding-friendly childcare programs can support families by:

- Welcoming parents and guardians who would like to breastfeed their infant on-site.
- Providing a comfortable and private space for breastfeeding or expressing milk.
- Safely labeling, storing, preparing, and handling expressed breast milk.
- Communicating regularly with families about each infant's feeding plan.
- Following infants' hunger and fullness cues.
- Training staff on CACFP infant meal pattern requirements and safe infant-feeding practices.

Breastfeeding and Infant-Feeding Resources

USDA offers several resources to help CACFP operators support breastfeeding families and properly feed infants in their care.

Breastfed Babies Welcome Here!

These materials help childcare providers create a breastfeeding-friendly environment. Resources include guidance for childcare providers and information to share with families.

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/breastfed-babies-welcome-here>

Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guide explains the CACFP infant meal pattern and includes information on breastfeeding, handling breast milk and infant formula, introducing solid foods, preventing choking, and responding to infants' hunger and fullness cues.

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/feeding-infants>

CACFP Trainer's Tools: Feeding Infants

These training materials can be used to educate staff and family childcare providers about the CACFP infant meal pattern. The resources include presentation slides, training activities, videos, and supporting handouts.

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/trainers-tools/feeding-infants>

CACFP operators are encouraged to review these resources with staff and consider how their programs can continue creating a welcoming and supportive environment for breastfeeding families.

August Harvest of the Month

Cucumber

FUN FACTS

There are over 40 varieties of cucumbers. They grow off vining plants that can climb up to 10 feet high! Most cucumbers are green and cylindrical, but there are many varieties ranging in colors and shapes—some are white and round, others are yellow and spiny. Ancient Greeks and Romans ate cucumbers because they believed in their skin-beatifying qualities.

SOURCE: The Visual Food Encyclopedia



Cucumbers are an extremely refreshing vegetable that are perfect for hot summer days. They are made up of over 95% water and are a great source of potassium, vitamin C, and folic acid.

NUTRITION

For Harvest of the Month Resources, please visit the [Harvest of the Month](#) page on our website.

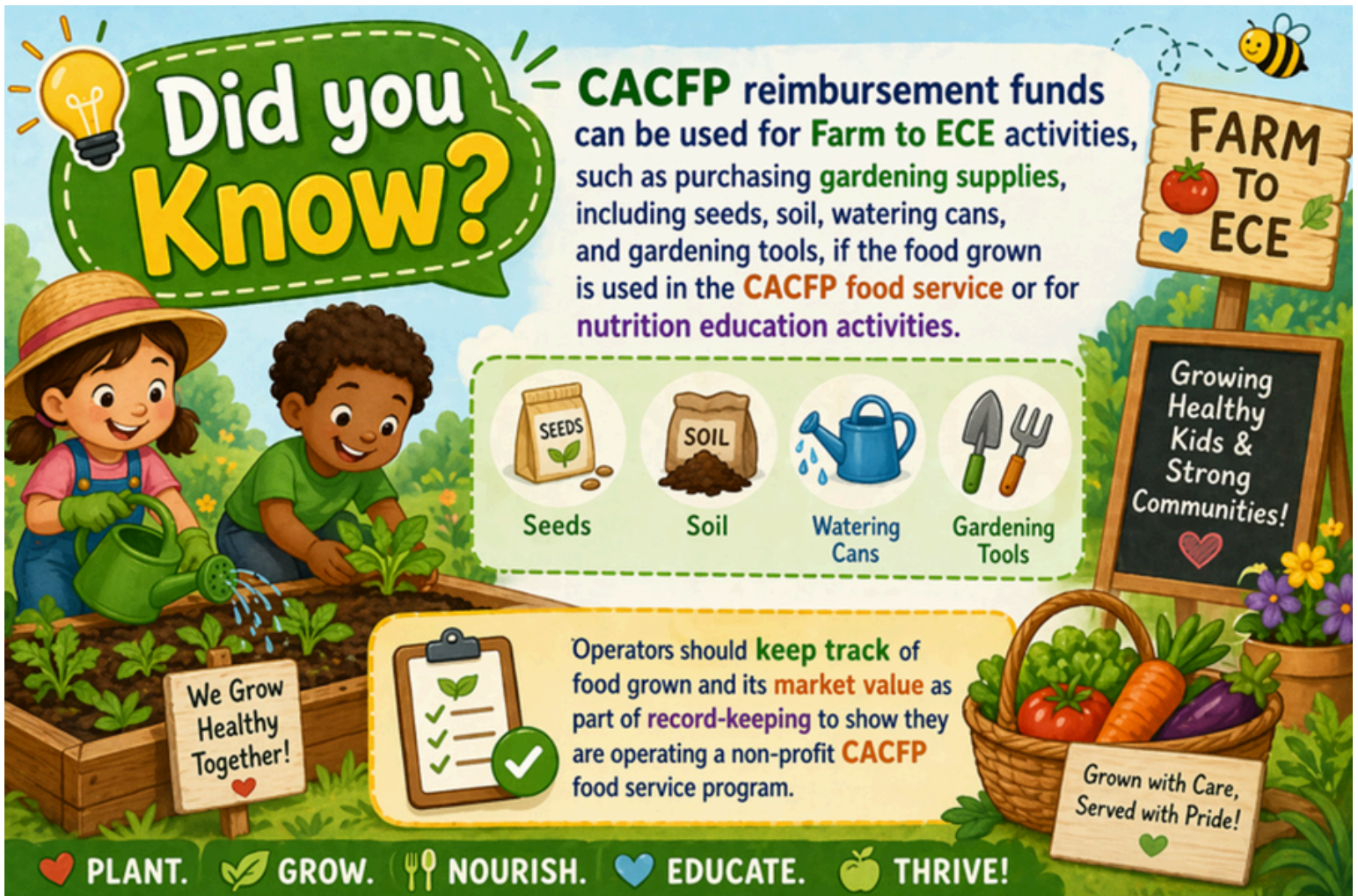
Join the Maine Harvest of the Month (HOM) Program! Take the pledge and join dozens of schools and childcare sites in bringing more healthy, local food to Maine children while supporting Maine farmers and producers!

By participating in the Maine Harvest of the Month program, CACFP Sponsors are pledging for the school year to:

- Serve the local HOM product at least 2x per month (local = Maine grown or caught)
- Display HOM materials provided by the Department of Education's Child Nutrition team

In return, the DOE Maine Harvest of the Month team pledges to provide participating Sponsors with:

- Printed marketing materials (IE: posters, recipe cards, stickers)
- Program training and ongoing technical support, as needed
- A monthly newsletter
- Recognition in participating in HOM



CACFP Helpful Tools and Resources from the NCA

The National CACFP Association (NCA) is a leading national organization offering support to thousands within the CACFP community. NCA's core mission is to provide advocacy, education and resources for everyone involved in administering, operating and participating in USDA's child nutrition programs, and their overarching goal is to ensure nutrition security for families by facilitating access to vital food programs.

NCA has a comprehensive directory of helpful tools and resources that is easy to navigate and includes topics such as: advocacy, meal patterns, meal service, and menu planning- [Directories Resource Directory- National CACFP Association](https://www.nca-cacfp.org/directories-resource-directory)





August




BACK-TO-SCHOOL



MENU IDEAS

Fun CACFP-friendly ideas as programs ramp up for a new school year

1

BREAKFAST IDEAS



- **Blueberry Oatmeal Breakfast** — oatmeal, blueberries, and milk
- **Peach Yogurt Parfait** — yogurt, peaches, whole grain-rich cereal, and milk
- **Egg and Toast Breakfast** — scrambled eggs, whole grain-rich toast, melon, and milk
- **Banana Sunflower Butter Toast** — whole grain-rich toast, sunflower seed butter, banana slices, and milk
- **Apple-Cinnamon French Toast** — whole grain-rich French toast, cinnamon apples, and milk



2

LUNCH & SUPPER IDEAS



- **Turkey Sandwich Plate** — turkey and cheese on whole grain-rich bread, cucumbers, watermelon, and milk
- **English Muffin Pizzas** — whole grain-rich English muffin, cheese and meat topping, vegetables, fruit, and milk
- **Taco Bowl** — ground beef or beans, brown rice, lettuce and tomatoes, corn, fruit, and milk
- **Chicken Quesadilla** — chicken and cheese in a whole grain-rich tortilla, tomatoes, cucumbers, melon, and milk
- **Harvest Chicken Wrap** — chicken, lettuce, carrots, apple slices, and milk
- **Macaroni and Cheese Lunch** — macaroni and cheese, broccoli, berries, and milk



3

SNACK IDEAS



- Apple slices and sunflower seed butter
- Cucumber rounds and hummus
- Yogurt and blueberries
- Cheese cubes and whole grain-rich crackers
- Watermelon and yogurt
- Bell pepper strips and bean dip



4

FUN AUGUST THEME DAYS



- ★ School Bus Snack Day
- ★ Apple for the Teacher Day
- ★ Pack-Your-Backpack Lunch
- ★ Color of the Day
- ★ Maine Harvest Week
- ★ ABC Snack Day



CACFP Tip: Confirm crediting documentation for processed foods, use whole grain-rich items when required, and adjust portions for each age group.



Training Opportunities





Virtual Coffee Chat: Farm to ECE and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Monday, August 10 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Eastern

Join the conversation on connecting Farm to ECE strategies with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Register Free



At the Table: NCA Community Conversations

Wednesday, August 12 | 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm Eastern

Your chance to connect directly with NCA's President and talk about what's happening in the CACFP right now.

Register Free (Members Only)

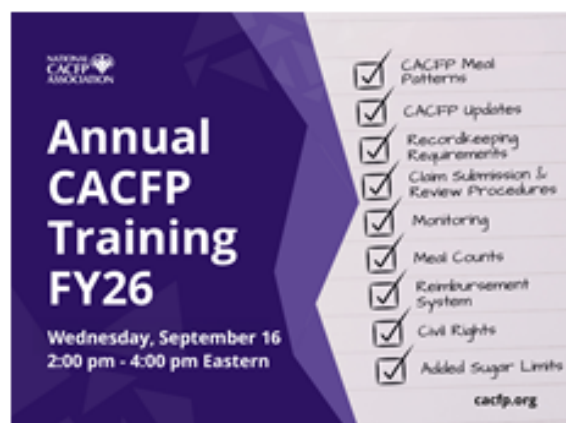


CACFP Virtual Summit

August 19-20 & August 26-27

We're bringing you workshops on nutrition, program administration, operations, financial and nonprofit management, and more!

Register (\$)



Annual CACFP Training FY26

Wednesday, September 16 | 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Eastern

Get a comprehensive review of the essential components of the CACFP.

Register (\$)

LIVE WEBINAR

August 11, 2026 | 7:00 PM CST

Grant Writing for Childcare Providers:

Finding and Securing Funding



Running a childcare program takes heart — but it also takes funding. Whether you’ve never written a grant before or you’ve applied and didn’t get the results you hoped for, this Teach Me Tuesday session is here to help. We’ll walk you through how to find grant opportunities, write a strong proposal, and position your program to stand out. You’ll leave with practical tools and confidence to start pursuing the funding your program deserves.

To Register:

https://www.kidkare.com/resource-hub/grant-writing-for-childcare-providers/?utm_campaign=34261292-The%20Monthly%20Minute%202025&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9K-yIK0ETcWeslbe5a8-pBT4zp-fXlG7ifsehWV0xj8zrdzYeMZgQyNRC_HtGa_hpLADsGZdOswZJ29-3VEaWlNGeDfA&_hsmi=431346854&utm_content=431346854&utm_source=hs_email



On-Demand CACFP Halftime:

Good Food.
Bright Futures.
Stronger
Together.



Thirty on Thursdays Webinar

Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the Child and Adult Care Food Program



New on-demand training resources
from USDA Team Nutrition



1 What's Included

- Recorded on-demand webinar
- CACFP meal pattern training slides
- Companion worksheet



2 What You'll Learn

- Current CACFP meal pattern requirements
- How the standards align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030* and the Real Food Pyramid
- Menu planning flexibilities
- Strategies for offering a variety of meats and meat alternates at breakfast
- Answers to frequently asked questions



3 Where to Find It

Visit the 'Serving Meats and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the Child and Adult Care Food Program' webpage to access the training worksheet, recorded webinar, and training slides.



4 Continuing Education Opportunity

The National CACFP Sponsors Association (NCA) is offering an opportunity to submit and track this training for continuing education credits. See the NCA website for details.



More Information

For more information, visit the
CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays webpage.



Questions? Contact TeamNutrition@USDA.gov



State agencies are encouraged to share this announcement with others who may be interested.



<https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/serving-mma-breakfast>

Maine Office of Child and Family Services
Early Care and Education Division's Listening Tour

VIRTUAL TOWN HALLS 2026

Join Maine's Office of Child and Family Services virtually by stake holder group for a focused conversation based on needs and opportunities.

OCFS warmly invites you to share your experiences and insights. We want to hear from those who are closest to and most impacted by the early care and education sector, including parents and families of children from birth to age 12, employers, and community partners. Join us for a series of virtual town halls where your voice can help shape the future of early care and education in Maine. This series is part of a wider effort of in-person events.

Two virtual town halls will be offered monthly organized by group.

May: Higher Education, Training, Career Technical Professionals

May 18th 1PM-2:30PM OR May 21st 9AM-10:30AM

June: Business / Employers

June 8th 2:00PM-3:30PM OR June 18th 9:00AM-10:30AM

July: Out of School Time Professionals / Representatives of Municipalities

July 20th 12:00PM-1:30PM OR July 30th 3:00PM-4:30PM

August: Early Childhood Community Partners / Non-Profits / SAUs

August 6th 2:00PM-3:30PM OR August 10th 9:00AM-10:30AM

September: Families

September 16th 5:30PM-7:00PM OR September 21st 5:30PM-7:00PM

October: Early Childhood Provider staff, leadership, owners and operators

October 15th 5:30PM-7:00PM OR October 20th 2:00PM-3:30PM

REGISTRATION REQUIRED



Questions? Contact megan.swanson@maine.gov



All Maine Children & Families

**SAFE, STABLE,
HAPPY, HEALTHY**

Maine Office of Child and Family Services invites you to join leadership and key program staff for an in-person event to share how early care and education affects your employment, your family, and your community.

COMMUNITY CIRCLES

5:30-7PM

family friendly - child care provided!

New Locations Added!

PORTLAND: June 2nd The Opportunity Alliance - 50 Lydia Lane, Portland

BELFAST: June 10th Waldo County YMCA - 157 Lincolnville Avenue, Belfast

BATH: June 16th Mid Coast Community Action Program - 34 Wing Farm Parkway, Bath

FARMINGTON June 30th Judith Frost Hope Center (WMCA) 20 Church Street, East Wilton

CARIBOU: July 8th Caribou Parks & Recreation Center – 55 Bennett Drive, Caribou

CALAIS: July 28th Washington County Community College – College Drive, Calais

ELLSWORTH: July 29th ACAP Service Center – 27 Avery Lane, Ellsworth

LEWISTON: August 19th Connors Elementary – 400 Bartlett Street, Lewiston

DOVER-FOXCROFT: August 26th Central Hall Commons 152 East Main Street

RSVP HERE



All Maine Children & Families

**SAFE, STABLE,
HAPPY, HEALTHY**