

December: Time for New Beginnings

The end of 2023 has finally arrived. December is a time to look back on all that has been accomplished in the past year and prepare for the New Year with holiday celebrations, resolutions and lots of good food and fun. Many people will celebrate with baking, music, lights, gifts and religious celebrations like Bodhi Day (December 8), Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe (December 12), Hanukkah (December 18 to 26), Yule (December 21 - January 1), Christmas (December 25) and Kwanzaa (December 26 - January 1). Many others will celebrate the season with kindness, peace and charity.

Following are some great charities and programs to help low-income families, especially during the holidays:

Make-A-Wish: Grants wishes throughout the year for children facing life-threatening medical conditions

Salvation Army: Angel Tree program provides gifts, clothes and toys for children. Salvation Army also helps communities with grocery and food aid, bill-pay assistance and holiday events

Prison Fellowship: Collects "Angel Tree" gifts to help children who have a parent in prison

Toys for Tots: Run by the U.S. Marine Corps, look for toy collection drives happening in your community. Donate new, unwrapped toys for distribution to children in need

United Way: Supports Gift Tree programs and provides Christmas assistance to families

Samaritan's Purse/Operation Christmas Child: Pack a shoebox with toys, school supplies and personal care items. Local churches and collection sites ship the boxes to children in need

One Simple Wish: Help fulfill the wishes of children in foster care

Thank you for partnering with Wildwood in 2023. We look forward to continuing to support and collaborate with you in 2024. Happy Holidays!

Events in December

December 1 - National Eat a Red Apple Day

December 4 - National Sock Day

December 5 - International Ninja Day & Colorado Gives Day

December 6 - Mitten Tree Day

December 15 - International Tea Day

December 19 - National Oatmeal Day

December 23 - Festivus

December 25 - A'phabet (no "L") Day

Holiday Hours for Wildwood Offices

Christmas Eve: Friday, Dec. 22 Closed

Christmas Day: Monday, Dec. 25 Closed

New Year's Day: Monday, Jan. 1 Closed

Winter Crafts

Indulge in holiday nostalgia by making construction paper link chains, popcorn strings or paper snowflakes. Or try these more modern crafts:



Sparkly Snowflakes

Make these lovely holiday decorations using sequins, paint, glue and craft sticks

Paper Cup Luminares

You'll need:

- paper or plastic cups
- pretty scrapbook paper
- hole punch
- flameless battery-operated tea lights
- scissors
- tape

Simply cut the bottoms out of cups (adults only!) for a better glow and make holes in the cups or paper with hole punch. If using card stock, roll into tube shape and secure, and your DIY luminaries are ready to shine!



Paper Plate Snowflakes

- Draw a snowflake pattern on the front of a paper plate
- Use a push pin to make the holes for all the end/intersecting points
- Flip the plate over and use a yarn needle and your favorite yarn colors to sew the pattern onto the plate
- Secure the ends of your yarn with tape



Go Bananas! Oatmeal!

Celebrate National Oatmeal Day on December 19



Recipe courtesy of National CACFP Association. Visit www.cacfp.org and click Recipes for more delicious, creditable foods.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 2 cups water or milk
- 3 large bananas, mashed
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Directions:

- Combine oats, water, mashed bananas and cinnamon in a medium pot
- Bring to a boil over medium heat. Stir frequently until it reaches preferred thickness
- Scoop 1/2 cup into each bowl

1/2 cup oatmeal provides 1/2 oz eq grains and 1/4 cup fruit
Total time: 10 minutes * Serving size: 1/2 cup * Servings: 6

Remember that oatmeal, though it is always Whole Grain-Rich, is subject to the same sugar limits as other ready-to-eat cereals. No more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce is allowed per CACFP meal patterns.





CLAIMS

CORNER

Claims Corner has reminders to help providers receive the most money possible each month.

- Child Enrollment Forms (CEFs) must be renewed annually. Monitor KidKare for children whose paperwork is nearing its expiration date and have parents/caregivers update, sign and date forms to avoid any gaps in enrollments.
- Send CEFs to Sue by the 25th of the month to allow time to update records before the start of a new claims month.
- When Wildwood advances the claim month, children whose paperwork has expired will “fall off” your roster. Feel free to call the Colorado office to have those children reactivated so you can continue to record their attendance and meals. But remember that reimbursement will not be paid until updated paperwork is received and processed by Wildwood.
- Notify your field representative and update your calendar when you will be closed (prior notice). If your field rep attempts an in-person site visit during a scheduled mealtime and is unable to complete the visit because prior notice was not given, Wildwood is required to disallow reimbursement for that meal.
- Contact your field rep if you wish to change your mealtimes. There are many rules to follow regarding how long a meal may last and how much time must elapse between meals.
- If school age children are in care during school breaks, remember to mark them “Out of School” in KidKare.
- If you are open and providing care on a holiday, remember to mark this on your KidKare calendar or your paper claim. Otherwise, Wildwood must deduct meals served on holidays.

Menu Tips:

- Snack may not contain two liquids! Even though 100% fruit or vegetable juice meets the fruit/vegetable requirement at any meal, you may not serve juice and milk together as a creditable Snack.
- Remember, too, that 100% fruit or vegetable juice may be served at any meal, but CACFP meal patterns allow only one serving of juice per day. Colorado’s Healthier Meals Initiative goes even farther, recommending that juice be served no more than twice per week.
- If you are making fruit bread (“fruitcake is a grain based dessert, which is not allowed in the CACFP!) or gelatin with fruit for your holiday meals, remember the following:
 - fruit breads credit only as the grain component
 - gelatin containing fruit must have at least 1/8 cup visible fruit per serving, and only the fruit credits for reimbursement

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Often-Missed Questions on Wildwood Training:

Here are some questions that have stumped providers recently in Wildwood’s training courses:

Milk Allergy in Children (2017)

Q: How do persons allergic to milk get their Vitamin D?

A: All of the above. Choices included soybean milk, D-fortified orange juice and ready-to-eat cereals. Vitamin D promotes calcium absorption and bone growth. Although the body can naturally produce vitamin D when exposed to sunlight, many people are still vitamin-D-deficient and need to get this important vitamin from the foods they eat. Fatty fish, fish liver oils, vitamin D supplements and vitamin-D-containing plants like mushrooms are other potential sources.

Child Nutrition Labels (2024)

Q: CN Labeled foods are guaranteed safe and nutritious for children.

A: False. Child Nutrition (CN) Labels do not indicate that a product is healthier, safer, of higher quality or appropriate for children. CN Labels also do not state whether a food is free of pathogens or allergens. The sole purpose of a CN Label is to determine how much of a creditable food item is in a processed food so one can determine the amount to serve to meet meal pattern requirements.

What Are Combination Foods (2024)

Q: Heating/cooking a store-bought item is the same as home-made.

A: False. Scratch-made/home-made combination foods are made in the home or center from individual ingredients. Because you control the ingredients and measure each food item, you can use a recipe that meets minimum portion requirements for CACFP meal patterns. Store-bought combination food items, on the other hand, cannot be used to meet CACFP meal patterns without special documentation. If a provider wishes to serve a store-bought combination food like boxed macaroni and cheese, one way to ensure the correct amount of meat/meat alternate is present is to add the minimum required amount of real cheese before serving.

Visit Wildwood's website at www.wildwoodonline.org to find FREE online training modules. From the homepage, click **CACFP | Child Care Homes | FREE Online Training**. Use the password **milk2014**. Review the content and complete the training and test online or on paper. Wildwood will provide a certificate for scores of 80% or higher.

***The last day Wildwood can receive original WY & CO November claims for processing is January 24, 2024.**

***The last day Wildwood can receive original WY & CO December claims for processing is February 23, 2024.**