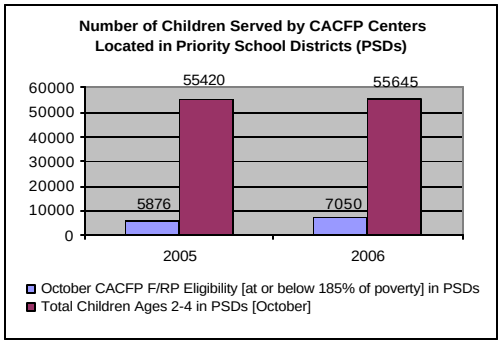
Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template
Part II, Program Accountability Summary

Program Purpose All children will enter kindergarten healthy and ready for school success.

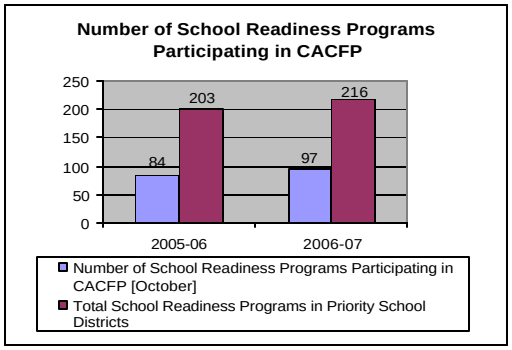
Program Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)/State Department of Education

The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides nutritious meals and snacks to children enrolled for care in child care settings.

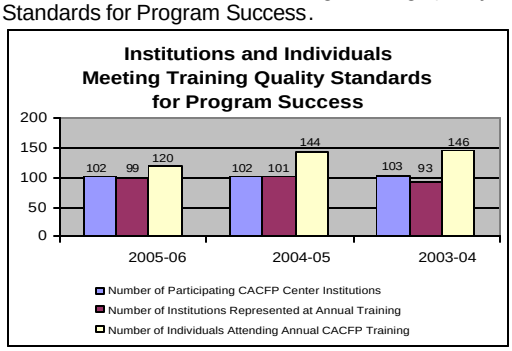
Performance Measure 1:
Number of Children Served by CACFP Centers Located in Priority School Districts.



Performance Measure 2:
Number of School Readiness Programs in Priority School Districts that are participating in CACFP.



Performance Measure 3:
Institutions and Individuals Meeting Training Quality Standards for Program Success.



Key Budget Information (dollars reported in millions)	
Total Current Program Year Funding	$11,000,000
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Population Result	
Program Funding As Percent of Total Agency Budget	
Funding Distribution	
Total Federal Funds	$11,000,000
Total State Funds	$0
Capital Projects Subtotal	$0
Other Funding	$0
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third Parties	0%

Story Behind the Baselines

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service through the Connecticut State Department of Education. CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of daycare and making it more affordable to low-income families. Nutrition services are a critical component of early childhood programs, since nutrition influences how children grow, develop and learn. A direct result of CACFP participation is a regulatory training requirement which ultimately ensures improved nutrition for all of its enrolled beneficiaries. However, data indicates that a small percentage of the total children with the greatest need currently benefit from CACFP in Priority School Districts. Additionally, less than half of all School Readiness Programs located in Priority School Districts are participating in CACFP.

Turning The Curves: What do you propose to do over the next two years and why?

Work with State Department of Education School Readiness program managers and the community liaisons to increase participation by the sub-grantees from 45% to 75% participation in CACFP. This would be accomplished through each School Readiness Council's competitive review process, which determines the programs that will participate in School Readiness in their community. The review process rates School Readiness Program applications, and could provide bonus points to programs that participate in CACFP, thereby raising their total score.*

*Indicates low-cost, no-cost action steps, including reallocation of existing resources.

Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template
Part II, Program Accountability

Program Purpose
The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides nutritious meals and snacks to children enrolled in child care settings.

Program
Child and Adult Care Food Program / State Department of Education

Contribution to Population Result
Nutrition and learning are critically linked, as nutrition is a significant factor in the growth, development and overall functioning of a child. Good nutrition provides the energy and nutrients essential to sustain life and promote physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. CACFP funding supports all eligible children birth through 18 years of age.

Key Budget Information (*Dollars reported in millions)*	
Total Current Program Year Budget	$11,000,000
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Quality of Life Result	
Program Funding as Percent of Total Agency Budget	
Budget Distribution:	
Federal	$11,000,000
State	$ 0
General Fund	$ 0
Capital Project Funds	$ 0
Other State Funding	$ 0
Other Funds (Not Federal or State)	$ 0
Percent of Total Current Funding Spent on Direct Service	92%
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third parties	0%

Basic Program Facts
ABOUT CACFP

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable to low-income families. CACFP is key to good nutrition and quality, affordable child care, which allows children to develop fully, prepares children to enter school ready to learn, and helps working families work.

• CACFP is authorized at section 17 of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1766), with regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under 7 CFR Part 226. CACFP was reauthorized through September 30, 2009 under the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

• USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers CACFP through grants to states; in Connecticut, CACFP is administered by the State Department of Education.

BENEFITS OF CACFP

• CACFP provides nutritious meals and snacks to children and adults receiving child care at family day care homes, child care centers, Head Start programs, school-age child care sites, and adult care centers.

• CACFP ensures that young children in child care have access to a nutritious diet and improved eating habits through nutrition education. It can help start good nutrition habits early in life. CACFP has also been shown to improve the quality of care received.

• Participating programs provide meals according to the nutrition standards set by USDA, ensuring that children and adults in care receive balanced, nutritious meals and snacks. The CACFP meal pattern varies according to age and types of meals served.
• Studies show that children in CACFP receive meals that are nutritionally superior to those served to children in child care settings without the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
• CACFP resources and training supports communities by supporting quality child care. Research cites participation in CACFP as one of the major factors influencing quality care, reporting that 87 percent of the family child care homes considered to be providing qood quality child care participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY
• Eligible public and private licensed child care centers may participate in CACFP independently or as sponsored centers. A family or group day care home must be licensed or approved to provide day care services and must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to participate in CACFP.
• Eligible programs include public or private **nonprofit** group or family child care, child care centers, Head Start, recreation centers, and after school programs. Emergency shelters that provide residential and food services to children in homeless families may also participate.
• **For-profit** child care centers are eligible if they serve 25 percent or more low-income children.
• Child care centers receive payments based on the type of meal served and the income of the child's family.
• All participating CACFP institutions must demonstrate compliance with the Performance Standards of Financial **V**iability, Administrative **C**apability and Internal Controls **A**ccountability as defined by the federal agency.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY
• Children age 12 and younger are eligible to receive up to two meals and one snack daily at a child care home or center. Migrant children age 15 and younger, and persons with disabilities of any age, are also eligible for CACFP.
• After-school snacks are available to children through age 18.
• Homeless shelters may be reimbursed for up to three meals each day for resident children age 18 and younger.

Basic Program Facts, continued

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION IN CONNECTICUT
• During Federal Fiscal Year 2005-06, CACFP provided a total of 6.3 million meals to an average of 12,491 children in Connecticut's child care centers each day.
• 4.6 million meals (73.6%) of the total 6.3 million meals served in Connecticut were provided to children who were at or below 185% of the federal poverty level.

ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEWS OF SERVICES
• CACFP regulations require the State agency to provide annual training sessions and to monitor participating institutions for compliance, through periodic administrative and site reviews to ensure Program quality.
• All participating institutions are required to provide annual training sessions for key staff to maintain program integrity.
• Sponsoring organizations with more than one center must conduct a minimum of three monitoring visits per year at each licensed center claimed for CACFP.

Nutrition services are a critical component of early childhood programs, since nutrition influences how children grow, develop and learn. Preschool programs should meet children's nutrition and nutrition education needs in a safe, sanitary and supportive environment that promotes healthy growth and development. Meals and snacks served in early childhood programs should also provide models of healthy eating patterns and help children establish good eating habits at an early age. Connecticut has over 1,600 state recognized center-based preschool programs with a total capacity in excess of 94,500; in addition, the state has more than 2,700 licensed family day care homes with a total capacity in excess of 16,400. These programs occur in a variety of settings, including licensed child care centers, Board of Education sponsored programs (including public, charter and interdistrict magnet schools), group day care homes and family day care homes. Head Start Programs and Connecticut's School Readiness Programs are provided in many of the center-based sites.

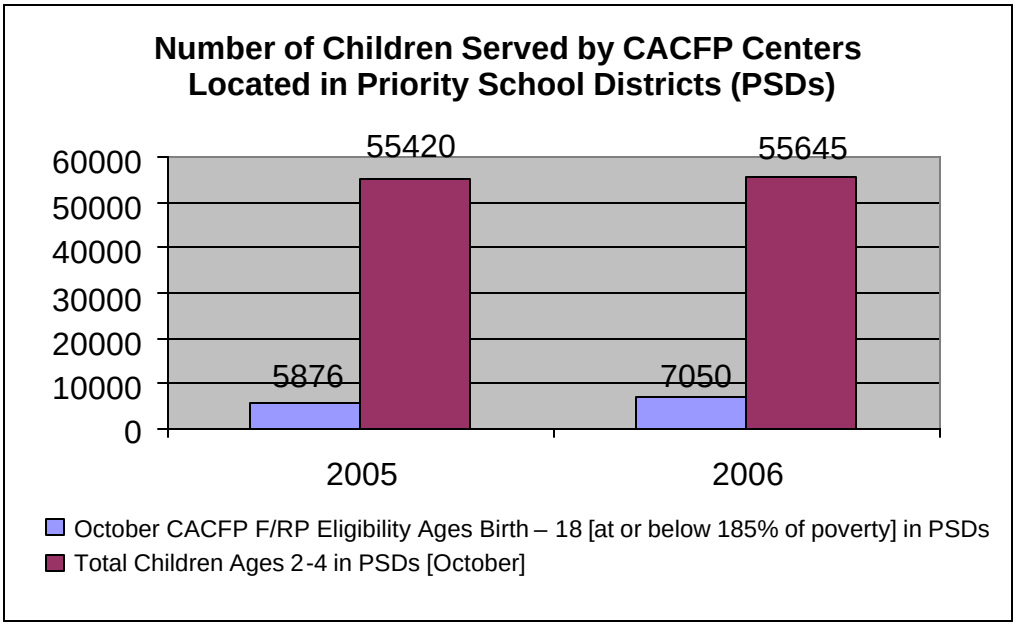
Performance Measures and Story Behind the Baselines

Summary of Story Behind the Baselines:

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service through the Connecticut State Department of Education. CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of daycare and making it more affordable to low-income families. Nutrition services are a critical component of early childhood programs, since nutrition influences how children grow, develop and learn. A direct result of CACFP participation is a regulatory training requirement which ultimately ensures improved nutrition for all of its enrolled beneficiaries. However, data indicates that a small percentage of the total children with the greatest need currently benefit from CACFP in Priority School Districts. Additionally, less than half of all School Readiness Programs located in Priority School Districts are participating in CACFP.

Sources: Food Research and Action Center (FRAC); Connecticut State Department of Public Health; Connecticut State Department of Education, *Child Nutrition: A Focus on Preschool – Guidance for Early Care and Education Programs*, July 2001 and *Nutrition in Action: Dietary Guidelines in Child Care*, December 2001

Performance Measure 1. Total number of children with the greatest need that are served by CACFP centers in Priority School Districts.



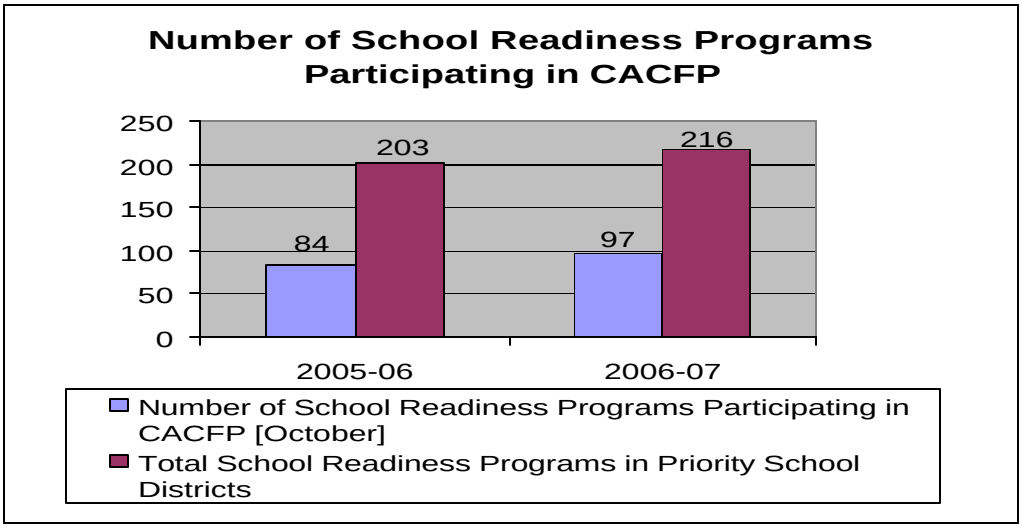
Story Behind Measure 1:

The numbers of low-income children reported by CACFP institutions for 2005 and 2006 (5,876 and 7,050 respectively) reflect not only preschool-aged children, but all CACFP-eligible children in these centers. The vast majority of children served in CACFP centers are preschoolers, aged 3-5 years; however, the Federal reporting format does not report the numbers of eligible children enrolled by specific ages. During 2005, approximately 5,876 children ages birth through 18 years of age (10.6%) were at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and were enrolled in CACFP centers located in PSDs. The following year, 7,050 children ages birth through 18 years of age (12.7%) met the same criteria. The population of children aged 2-4 years in Connecticut's Priority School Districts (PSDs) was approximately 55,420 in the Fall of 2005, increasing by less than one-half of one percent to 55,645 during the subsequent year (2006).

Children from low income households are the primary intended beneficiaries of CACFP. In child care centers, participants from households with incomes at or below 130 percent of poverty are eligible for free meals. Participants in centers with household incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of poverty are eligible for meals at a reduced price. Institutions must determine each enrolled participant's eligibility for free and reduced price meals served in centers. The information submitted by each household is then compared with USDA's Income Eligibility Guidelines and an income eligibility determination is made.

The benefits of participating in CACFP are well-recognized, as demonstrated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' mandate that all federal Head Start programs participate in a U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded Child Nutrition Program such as CACFP or the National School Lunch Program. However, while Connecticut State Department of Public Health licensing regulations require that meals served in child care centers meet CACFP meal pattern requirements, not all state-funded or School Readiness programs participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Some institutions cannot demonstrate compliance with the CACFP Performance Standards of Viability, Capability and Accountability; other institutions choose not to participate due to the complex application process required by the federal agency. The result is a disparity in the numbers of actual versus potentially eligible CACFP beneficiaries in Priority School Districts.

Performance Measure 2. Participation rate of total School Readiness Programs located in Priority School Districts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

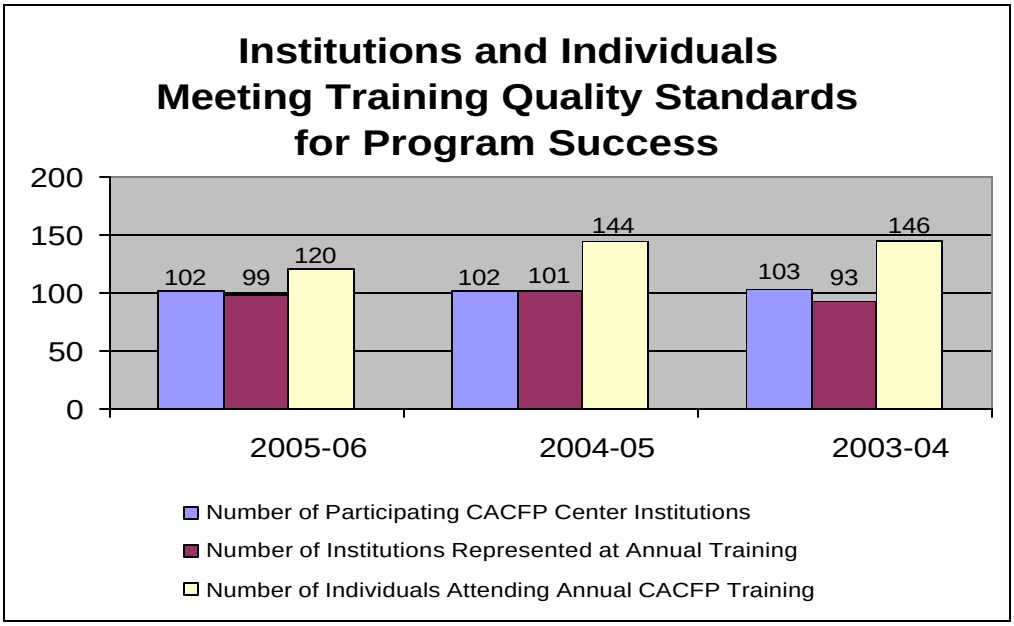


Story Behind Measure 2:

The number of School Readiness programs funded in Connecticut's 19 Priority School Districts increased by 6.4% (from 203 to 216) between school years 2005-06 and 2006-07. At the same time, the number of School Readiness Programs that participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) increased 15.5% (from 84 in October 2005 to 97 in October 2006). The overall participation rate of School Readiness Programs in CACFP increased only slightly between the two years, and less than half of all state-funded centers currently benefit from CACFP. However, not all School Readiness Programs may be eligible to participate in CACFP either as a result of the population served (25% low income for for-profit centers), or an inability to demonstrate compliance with the Performance Standards of Financial Viability, Administrative Capability and Internal Controls Accountability as defined by the federal agency.

All state licensed child care centers are required to provide nutritious meals and snacks based on the CACFP meal pattern to enrolled children. However, state-funded School Readiness Programs are not required to participate in CACFP. Federal regulations allow public or private **nonprofit** child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, Head Start programs, and other institutions which are licensed or approved to provide day care services to participate in CACFP either independently or as sponsored centers. **For profit** centers must demonstrate that at least 25 percent of enrolled children in care are eligible for free and reduced price meals [e.g., are at or below 185% of the poverty level]. Although it is possible that not all of Connecticut's licensed child care centers meet CACFP eligibility criteria, it is also likely that a significant number of centers receiving state monies have chosen not to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Since children can only participate in CACFP through eligible entities, an increase in the number of actual CACFP beneficiaries can only be accomplished by a corresponding increase in the numbers of centers participating in CACFP.

Performance Measure 3



Story Behind Measure 3:

Training is mandated by Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations and must be conducted by both the State agency and participating institutions on an annual basis. The overall objective of the training requirement is to maintain an established standard of Program integrity, management and regulatory compliance. Training allows staffs at participating institutions to obtain information about how to deliver quality services and to make the connections between a child's health, nutrition and overall physical and cognitive development. During federal fiscal years 2003-04 through 2005-06, an average of 95% of participating CACFP institutions attended annual training sessions that were coordinated by the State agency and emphasized the Program's rigorous nutritional requirements. Institution staff members unable to attend CACFP training sessions were provided one-on-one technical assistance by State Department of Education staff to ensure continued compliance with programmatic and regulatory information.

A direct result of CACFP participation is that staffs in child care centers receive nutrition education and support services to help them teach children about healthy eating habits. Similarly, parents are assured that their children are served nutritious meals and snacks while in care at the center. Their children's provider receives training to assist her/him in providing nutritious meals and maintaining a healthy and safe environment. Participating institutions are also periodically monitored for Program compliance by the State agency, which includes observation of the quality of meals served. The CACFP training component directly impacts the quality of services provided by each center and ultimately ensures improved nutrition for all of its enrolled beneficiaries.

Partners and Their Roles

School Readiness Grant Programs – support nutrition education training and practices through Technical Assistance Alerts and guidance; nutrition resource library.

State Department of Public Health – ensure that all center-based child care sites are appropriately licensed.

What do you propose to do to improve performance in the next 3-5 years and why?

No-cost or low-cost actions, including reallocation of existing resources:

1. Partner with State Department of Education School Readiness program managers and the community liaisons to increase participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program by all School Readiness Programs and other licensed child care centers that meet eligibility criteria and are currently operating in Priority School Districts. Over the next two years, encourage CACFP participation among School Readiness Programs and other licensed child care centers with a goal of increasing participation from the current 45% level to 75%. This would be accomplished through each School Readiness Council's competitive review process, which determines the programs that will participate in School Readiness in their community. The review process rates School Readiness Program applications, and could provide bonus points to programs that participate in CACFP, thereby raising their total score. The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a well-documented success, as well as a key source of support for serving nutritious meals and snacks to enrolled children. CACFP provides reimbursement for food and meal preparation costs, ongoing training in the nutritional needs of children, and onsite assistance in meeting the Program's strong nutritional requirements. CACFP plays a vital role in creating and maintaining quality, affordable care for children.

Appendix A, Data Development Agenda
Appendix B, Link to Budget
Appendix C, Information and Research Agenda
Appendix D, Partners (Optional)
Appendix E, What Works (Optional)