



Office of Children and Family Services

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

DAMIA HARRIS-MADDEN, Ed.D., MBA, M.S.
Commissioner

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Dear Provider:

School is out, and the sun is shining! Time to relax and enjoy the warm sun, cool water, and refreshing outdoors. Now is a great time to review the potential impact of warm weather on the health and safety of children, as well as consider how summer might bring with it increased stressors for families, such as an increase in food budget. For children who rely on school nutrition programs, summer often becomes the hungriest time of the year. Fortunately, when school is out, New York's Summer Meals program is in!



Did you know that over 1 in 10 NYS households experience food insecurity, which means they do not regularly have enough food to eat? [Hunger Solutions New York](#) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating hunger. One way they do this is by maximizing participation in and support for federal nutrition assistance programs, like the [Summer Food Service Program](#). The Summer Meals Program serves free, healthy meals to kids and teens ages 18 and under at community sites across the state. See below to find a summer food site in your community and be sure to share this information with your families!

Please see the attached Summer Food Service Program flier, which outlines the program and highlights how to find meal sites near you. **You can order printed copies of the flier at no cost** by submitting the [Resource Order Form](#) provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Simply check the box next to "Summer Food Service Program Specific Resources" and type in the number of fliers you wish to order. NYSED will ship the fliers right to you using the contact information you provide on the form. This is a fantastic way for you to share this information with families.

Find Summer Meals Near You:

- Call: 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 2-1-1 or 3-1-1 in NYC
- Text: "food" to 304-304
- Visit: SummerMealsNY.org

Farmer's markets provide a wonderful and affordable opportunity to buy fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods directly from the farmers who produce them. As you know, proper nutrition is critical for a child's growth and development. Visit the [Department of Agriculture and Markets](#) website for a list of farmer's markets in your area.



And don't forget, as a registered/licensed/enrolled legally exempt provider, you are eligible to participate in the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#) and be reimbursed for the nutritious meals and snacks you serve to the children in your care! Providers receive regular training about nutrition, and children develop healthy eating habits that last a lifetime.

Summer Safety Tips

OCFS has created safety guides on a variety of topics such as field trips, playgrounds, and transportation. To view the entire series, visit the [Information for Providers](#) page on the OCFS Division of Child Care Services website.

Below are some tips to help you keep children safe:

- **Always provide competent supervision** to children in care.
- **Conduct name-to-face attendance during all transitions.** All staff must understand program policies and practices to avoid leaving a child unsupervised.
- Take steps to **prevent dehydration and heat-related illnesses.**
 - Keep plenty of fluids on hand and encourage children to drink water even if they don't feel thirsty.
 - Encourage parents to dress children appropriately for the weather in light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
 - Keep infants out of direct sun and ensure children have a place to rest in the shade while playing outside.
 - [Click here](#) for information on warning signs and symptoms of dehydration and heat-related illness.
- **Water safety is imperative with any type of water play.** Children around water need undivided attention. Stay close, be alert, and watch children in and around the pool and other bodies of water **at all times.** Inspect all fences for holes and double check gate locks are in working order.
 - The **Residential Pool Guidelines** for FDC and GFDC programs has been updated to include guidance on the use of salt water and mineral pools, as well as to align with the most up-to-date staff clearance and training requirements. Please read the revised Residential Pool Guidelines closely, which can be found on the OCFS website, along with more information on pool and water safety tips: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/pool-safety.php>
- Encourage parents to provide sunscreen for their children and to fill out a [Non-Medication Consent Form](#) so you can **apply sunscreen to children prior to going outside.** (This form is not applicable to FCC legally exempt providers.)
- **Always test the temperature of playground equipment, strollers, slides, swings, etc. prior to children encountering them.** Surfaces can get very hot from sun and heat exposure and cause burns to the skin.
- **Remind parents and staff to check vehicles prior to exiting to ensure that no child is left unattended.** Children should never be left inside a car. Even with a window partially or fully open, a car can become dangerously hot in a short amount of time.
- **If a child you were expecting does not arrive to your program at their regular time, call the parent or transportation department to check on the status of the child.** In just 10 minutes, a car can heat up and become deadly, so this action alone could save a child's life.
 - The [OCFS-LDSS-4443 Child Care Attendance Sheet](#) has boxes for each day that should be checked if a child is absent and if the child was a no show to indicate that the parent(s) was contacted. This form serves as a great resource to remind you to **call to check on the status of a child** that does not show up to program.
 - **Prevent a tragic accident from occurring.** [Click here](#) for more tips for keeping kids out of hot cars.



Children are our most precious resource. By securing access to healthy food and maintaining a safe environment, they can grow to new heights! Thank you for your investment in our children's wellness.

Wishing you all a fun-filled summer!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nora Yates". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nora Yates
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services