Barriers to Operating a Meal Program in Upper Valley Early Childhood Education Programs
How it Started

Spring 2021 Director's Retreat
THE ROAD TO A PILOT PROGRAM

1. IDEA FORMATION
   ECEA Spring Retreat: Providers need help with food programs
   Spring 2023

2. WHAT IS THE NEED?
   Survey sent out to providers along with individual interviews
   June 2023 – November 2023

3. DATA ANALYSIS
   Answering research questions and identifying patterns with the data
   July 2023 – November 2023

4. DEVELOP A "MENU"
   Prioritize what is needed and what we can do
   November 2023

5. CONDUCT FOCUS GROUPS
   Host focus groups of providers to further discuss pilot options
   March 2024

6. BUILD A TWO-PART REPORT
   Report our findings and share the report with the community and our partners
   January 2024 - ?

7. IDENTIFY FUNDING & DEVELOP A PILOT
   Develop a pilot program based on our findings, identify and secure funding for a pilot program
   2024

8. LAUNCH PILOT PROGRAM
   While reporting on progress
   Fall 2024
Survey Responses

Total Programs: **21**

NH: **12**
VT **9**

Family-based: **7**
Center-based: **14**

Survey sent out to providers along with individual interviews and focus groups

June 2023 – November 2023
Hire technical assistance for ECE providers to navigate CACFP.

Delivered dried goods from local food producers, if available, and grocery stores.

Delivered fresh, local produce.

Delivered premade, family-style meals.

Delivered local dairy products.

Food to send home with families.

We shouldn't cause the decline in providers using CACFP because it could lose funding.

Will this increase the need for storage?

Infrastructure
Providers need more refrigerators, freezers, counter space, microwaves, bottle warmers, and dry storage.

Hire a contractor to install more counter space.

We buy them more refrigerators, freezers, microwaves, bottle warmers, etc.

Infrastructure
Will delivered premade food lessen the need for counter space?

Delivered premade, portioned meals.

Delivered fresh, local produce.

Infrastructure
Providers need more refrigerators, freezers, counter space, microwaves, bottle warmers, and dry storage.

Hire technical assistance for ECE providers to navigate CACFP.

CACFP
Providers need help with paperwork, trainings, and annual reviews.

Advocate for a state-matched CACFP reimbursement.

Develop a "Menu"
Prioritize what is needed and what we can do.

November 2023
THE ROAD TO A PILOT PROGRAM

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   - Spring 2023

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   - Develop a pilot program based on our findings, identify and secure funding for a pilot program
   - February 2024

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   - While reporting on progress
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• UNH Research
  ○ Dept of Agriculture, Nutrition & Food Systems
  ○ Mena Research Lab

• UNH Extension
  ○ Health & Well-Being
  ○ Nutrition Connections
    ■ SNAP-Ed
    ■ EFNEP

• NH Farm to Early Care
  ○ Statewide Coalition
  ○ Need for sectors of influence (Agriculture)
Farm to Early Care Coalition

- Looking for statewide partners from various sectors of influence throughout NH
  - Agriculture:
    - Building relationships for local social impact
    - Promoting local food purchasing
    - Promoting equity
    - Increasing hands-on family experiences
    - Making connections for families & Educators to build awareness of available local foods

- Creating priorities for areas of focus that are mutually beneficial for all

- Mena Research Lab: Farm to Early Childhood and Parent Engagement in New Hampshire study.
  - Assessment of Farm to ECE activities in NH ECE settings.
  - Guide/inform coalition priorities.

Mena Research Lab: Farm to Early Childhood and Parent Engagement in New Hampshire study.

Who are we?
The Mena Research Lab at the University of New Hampshire focus includes early childhood health.

Why Participate?
Your input will help us better understand how to support healthy food and nutrition ECE environments.

For more information and to enroll in this study, call and leave a message at 603-862-4262.

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Our Partners

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Child Nutrition Initiatives Manager

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Questions?