

Rachel Feuer, parent of children in participating center

“Both of my children were lucky enough to eat [spoonFULL's] food while they were in [child care]. They each came home daily raving about the healthy food...My son has asked me many times why we can't just have [spoonFULL's] food at home, and was disappointed to find out that we can't just order it. Recently, he has started asking for [their] recipes daily and wondering why [they don't] have a cookbook.”



Anna Mercer-McLean, Center Director, Community School for People Under Six

“Early Years' [spoonFULL] program provides good, nutritious and diverse meals that compliment the daily learning and physical development of our diverse population.”



Saleka Thompson, Director, Primary Colors Early Learning Center

“Having the variety in the menus Early Years creates has given our children exposure to some foods they might not ever had an opportunity to try. Parents have been surprised by some of the foods that their children eat here but not at home. Our children really enjoy trying so many new things!”



Early Years, Inc. (formerly Child Care Services Association) opened its original kitchen in Chapel Hill in 1989. Due to high demand, the program added a custom-built commercial kitchen in Durham County in 2008 and began operating a kitchen in Raleigh in 2017. spoonFULL now serves child care programs in Orange, Durham, Wake and parts of Chatham Counties.

For sample menus and more information, contact Brad Pickens

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Early Years
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Early Years has 30 years of experience providing meals to child care centers. Some centers have been with the program for more than ten years.



Providing fresh, unique, liked & local meals to child care centers



We are dedicated to

keeping children healthy and teachers focused on teaching



Nutritious meals delivered right to your center's door

spoonFULL provides high-quality, affordable and nutritious meals designed to support children's health and well-being. Daily lunch, an afternoon snack and breakfast for the following morning are delivered fresh to centers.

Meals are packaged in bulk for easy serving by the center's staff and meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's child nutrition guidelines. The menus feature diverse dishes from various cultures, ensuring every child receives ample food in age-appropriate portion sizes.

To further engage families, centers receive monthly newsletters along with the nutritious menu. These menus highlight scratch-made meals prepared with fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The newsletters aim to inspire families to incorporate healthy eating habits at home.

Why should you participate?

spoonFULL reduces centers' operating costs by purchasing and preparing food in bulk and eliminating the need to employ a cook.



spoonFULL allows center directors and teachers to focus on curriculum and time with the children by freeing them from many of the time-consuming tasks involved in feeding large groups of children (i.e., menu planning, shopping, cooking and cleaning).

Ensures that children receive nutritionally adequate meals each day that promote optimal physical and intellectual development.



Who is eligible?

- Childcare centers with 3- to 5-star licenses issued by the N.C. Division of Child Development.
- Programs with less than 3 stars may participate, but must receive a 3-star license within one year of joining the Meal Services Program.
- Participating centers are required to enroll in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, if eligible.



Participating centers are expected to ...

- Provide specific information in writing to EARLY YEARS regarding any special dietary needs and food allergies of children enrolled in the center. *Appropriate substitutions will be provided.*
- Provide their own milk and serving utensils.
- Serve meals family style at the table and observe best practices for a positive meal time.
- Have provisions for heating/toasting breakfast items.
- Assure delivery personnel easy access to their center.
- Have sufficient staff to serve the meals and clean up afterwards.
- Provide up to date calendars of operating days to spoonFULL.
- Provide three-day notice of any changes in the numbers or types of meals to be ordered. Centers will be billed for meals that were not canceled or changed within the three-day timeframe.

Early Years kitchens meet all restaurant sanitation codes for Environmental Health for the North Carolina Division of Public Health. The kitchen supervisors are Food Protection Managers through SERVSAFE®.