



February 13, 2018

The Honorable Holly J. Mitchell
Chair, Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Budget Committee
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, Budget Subcommittee on Education
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Budget Subcommittee on Education
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for a State Investment in Early Childhood Nutrition

Dear Senator Mitchell, Assemblymember Ting, Senator Pan and Assemblymember Arambula,

We, the undersigned, write in strong support of a state investment in early childhood nutrition. For decades, California supported access to nutrition for our youngest learners by supplementing the federal reimbursement for meals served through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). But in 2012, following the recession, the state eliminated this funding for most of child care. Following the cut, thousands of low-income children lost access to healthy meals served through the CACFP.

We therefore respectfully submit this request for \$16.7 million in the 2018-19 State Budget in order to restore access to food for low-income children. These funds would reimburse child care settings \$0.23 in state funding for breakfast and lunch served to eligible children through the CACFP, in the same way that state funds supplement federal funding for K-12 nutrition.

We commend the legislature for investing in low-income children through school meals, but respectfully request the Committees and the Administration extend similar funding to support children during a critical stage of their development. We know that children who start life with nutritious diets fare better, both physically and academically, and are more likely to thrive in school and later in life. After a decade of budget crises and dire fiscal conditions for the field of early childhood, California has finally turned the page. Policymakers have the opportunity to rebuild our state's early childhood system to support the future of California's children. An investment of just \$0.23 per meal can help thousands of children gain access to healthy meals in child care.

The undersigned look forward to working with both Budget Committees and the Administration to make healthy meals more justly and equitably accessible for our state's youngest learners.

Sincerely,

California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon,
Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de Leon,
Department of Finance,
Department of Education,
Department of Social Services,
Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.