



Study of Food Safety Needs of Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (Summary)

Background

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), plays a vital role in providing children and adults with access to nutritious food, while improving the quality and affordability of day care for low-income families. Food safety is a particularly important consideration for adult day care centers because older adults, like children, are more susceptible to and less able to recover from foodborne illnesses.

Methods

To identify and evaluate food safety education needs of adult day care center program operators, the study team administered a 20-minute survey to a nationally representative sample of directors of adult day care centers that participated in CACFP across the United States in 2018. The multimodal data collection effort took place over a 6-week period from May 6, 2019, to June 14, 2019. This effort used web-based surveys, hard-copy mail surveys, and computer-assisted telephone interviews and surveys. The study obtained an overall response rate of 76.5 percent; 568 centers completed the quick response survey.

The research questions for this study were:

- What are the food safety knowledge gaps among adult day care center program operators?
- How do site level operators want to receive food safety education?
- What is the best way to communicate the availability of food safety education training and resources?

Findings

Overall, this study provides information on knowledge gaps related to food safety practices in adult day care centers and illuminates the best way for center staff to receive future food safety training and information support.

Regarding food safety education, 84.0 percent of adult day care center directors reported they have a written food safety plan, policy, or manual at the center. A smaller percentage reported they have written procedures for foodborne illness (63.9 percent), and about half reported they have written procedures for responding to a food recall (48.9 percent). Most directors reported they have a written plan or schedule for identifying annual food safety training for staff.

Approximately half of center directors reported a need for staff training or information on food recall responses, on food safety considerations for specific populations, on preventing and responding to foodborne illnesses, and on managing food allergies, aligning with the topics on which staff members reported the least training. Center staff generally prefer online training resources over in-person trainings and prefer to learn about new trainings through State agency memorandums and by email blasts. FNS Office of Food Safety (OFS) will use these findings to develop appropriate new trainings for center staff in the future.

For More Information

Nisar, H, Miller, M., and Brotman, S. (2019). Study of Food Safety Needs of Adult Day Care Centers in the CACFP. Prepared by 2M Research, Contract No. AG-3198-C-15-0004. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, Project Officer: Ashley Chaifetz. Available online at: www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis.