

## Overview

Children's Hunger Alliance is the statewide nonprofit organization committed to breaking the cycle of childhood hunger in Ohio. They work with schools, child care providers, faith-based and youth-serving organizations to help them access resources to feed children. This includes connecting child care providers in 70 out of 88 counties with CACFP sponsoring organizations. They help providers reach their full potential by providing nutrition, early childhood and physical activity education, healthy recipes, and kindergarten readiness curricula that includes the CARES (Children Are Ready for Education and Success) program. The primarily Chase Bank funded CARES Program was designed to help home child care providers teach Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards to preschoolers. In 2007, The CARES literacy program combined with the Healthy and Fit program to include nutrition and physical activity.

## The CARES Program

The CARES (Children Are Ready for Education and Success) program was originally designed to help home child care providers teach Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards to preschoolers. In 2007, The CARES literacy program combined with the Healthy and Fit program to include nutrition and physical activity. Teaching kits are delivered to Children's Hunger Alliance sponsored providers' homes each quarter. They give caregivers a core set of age-appropriate activities centered on reading a book and easily expand into songs, recipes, games, physical activities and field trips.

Family Home Provider CARES Kit contains:

- Children's Book about food
- Cards with curriculum ideas based on book
- Items for one suggested activity on curriculum card (i.e. placemats if a lesson is to learn to set the table)

Parents CARES Kit contains :

- Certificate from parent explaining what was learned
- Activities with nutrition and physical activity information for parents

## Training

- One hour trainings on the CARES program are held every month for staff monitors.
- Childcare providers are required to take a 2 hour training to receive credit from the Department of Education. A 2 hour training in which one hour is dedicated to nutrition and nutrition education is provided by the Senior Manager for Education and Training at the Children's Hunger Alliance. This is the primary way to receive credit.

More information on CARES, including kits can be found at:  
<http://www.childrenshungeralliance.org/ECNE/cares.php>

## Partners and Funding

- The Children's Hunger Alliance's dedication to wellness started in 2003 with a Healthy and Fit grant funded by a local foundation to address childhood obesity in Columbus, OH. In 2007, with funding over, the Healthy and Fit concept merged under the CARES (Children Are Ready for Education and Success) program sponsored by JP Morgan Chase to cover all 70 of Children's Hunger Alliance served counties.
- Additional area specific funding for CARES in central and west Ohio comes from Honda, which has manufacturing plants in those areas.
- With their Executive on the Children's Hunger Alliance Board, Victoria's Secret Direct also offers free phone survey evaluations for the CARES program.
- The Children's Hunger Alliance created the CARES curriculum but partnered with local Otterbine University to create the CARES Kit Cards.

## Overcoming Challenges

- There is no childcare licensing agency in Ohio so there are many children in sub-standard care with no educational stimulation.
- The provided CARES tool kits help level the playing field for providers who can range from simply babysitting to comprehensive care due to the lack of child

## Future

Work will be extended to include Franklin County. Focus groups have shown that providers want more nutrition education directed towards parents who pack unhealthy meals.