**C7. USDA Endorsement Letter**

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[Date]

Dear [Child Care Professional/State Agency Administrator]:

As you know, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) focused on improving child nutrition and authorizing funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition programs, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which serves more than [NUMBER] children. Recognizing that there is not enough research on the importance of nutrition and activity in child care, Congress directed the USDA to conduct the Study of Nutrition and Activity in Child Care Settings (SNACS-I), which collected data in 2016‒2017 and was the first comprehensive, nationally representative assessment of child care providers participating in CACFP and the children they serve. Since the SNACS-I data were collected, updated meal pattern requirements have gone into effect to improve the nutritional quality of the meals and snacks that are served. To get an updated picture of the CACFP six years after these meal patterns went into effect, USDA is sponsoring SNACS-II and has contracted with Mathematica and its research partner Westat to conduct the study. We are asking you to help SNACS-II achieve the following important objectives:

* Describe the characteristics of CACFP providers, the CACFP environment, providers’ food service practices and providers’ wellness policies and practices.
* Determine the food, calorie, and nutrient content and quality of CACFP meals and snacks.
* Describe children’s usual food, calorie, and nutritional intake during child care and non-child care days.
* Describe characteristics of children and their families, including child body mass index (BMI), household food security, and participation in food assistance programs.
* Describe the characteristics of youth ages 10 to 18 who participate in CACFP through before and after school programs, and the food content of the meals and snacks they were offered.
* Assess and describe plate waste (edible food that is served but not eaten) in the CACFP.
* Examine infant feeding practices and infants’ food intake and activity levels while they are in child care.
* Determine the cost of producing CACFP meals.

SNACS-II will look at the nutrition and wellness policies and activities in child care centers, family child care homes and before and after school programs across the country. This important study will help providers, sponsors, and USDA understand how CACFP operates so it can better help children to learn and grow.

The study will include more than 1,300 child care centers, family child care homes and before and after school programs in 25 States that participate in CACFP. More than 3,000 infants, children, and youth ages 10 to 18, along with their parents or guardians, will also be involved in the study. Data will be collected primarily between January and May 2023.

While participation in this study is voluntary, sampled providers and their sponsors are strongly encouraged to participate per Section 28 of the National School Lunch Act. Your participation is critical to its success. If you have any questions about the data collection activities for SNACS-II, please contact the study team toll free at [study phone] or email [study email].

Sincerely,

---insert signature image here---

[Name]

[Title]