

Advocacy at



Investing in Early Education

Supporting Stark County Seniors

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Investing in Early Education

Strengthening Stark County's Future

About JRC

JRC is a nonprofit organization committed to serving children, seniors, and the community through high-quality early education and senior programming. Founded in 1974, JRC has over 50 years of experience providing essential services to families in Stark County. Our Gold-Rated Early Learning Centers—recognized through Step Up to Quality—offer accessible, high-quality child care and early education to support working families. Investing in early education is key to workforce development, economic stability, and breaking the cycle of poverty in Stark County.



Why Early Education Matters

- **90% of a child's brain develops by age five.**
- **Children who attend high-quality early education programs are:**
 - 25% more likely to graduate high school
 - 4x more likely to complete a bachelor's degree
- **Early education improves social-emotional skills, cognitive development, and school readiness, setting children up for lifelong success.**

Challenges in Stark County

Child Poverty Crisis:

- 21.9% of children under age 5 in Stark County live in poverty.
- Over 12,000 young children are covered by Medicaid.

Early Learning Gaps:

- 36.8% of kindergartners demonstrated readiness in the 2022-2023 school year.
- 20.8% of economically disadvantaged kindergartners demonstrated readiness.

The Cost of Care:

- The estimated yearly cost for infant center-based care in 2024 is \$12,795, making child care unaffordable for many working families.
- 14.3% of family median income was spent on child care in 2022

Workforce Barriers:

- Many parents cannot work without reliable child care, creating additional economic challenges for families and local businesses.



What Needs to Be Addressed

Critical Funding for Early Education

20% of JRC's revenue comes from *Early Head Start*

- and *CACFP*, making these programs essential for the children and families we serve.



Transportation & Workforce Development

- Reliable child care allows parents to stay in the workforce, supporting local businesses and economic growth.
- Transportation remains a barrier for many families accessing early education programs.

-\$5.48B Estimated loss to Ohio's economy due to childcare issues.

-\$1.52B Estimated loss to Ohio's tax revenue due to childcare issues.

-\$3.97B Estimated cost of employee-turnover and absenteeism to Ohio employers.

Special Needs Support

JRC currently serves multiple children under the

- special needs rate, which reimburses double per week, allowing for additional classroom support.
- Continued state investment in special needs funding would provide essential materials, resources, and staff training.

How You Can Help

Advocate for increased funding for early education programs.

Ensure resources for special needs remain a priority.

Work with JRC to strengthen early learning initiatives in Stark County.

Support funding for *CACFP* (Child and Adult Care Food Program) and publicly funded child care.

Investing in Our Future

JRC 14th Street Campus Improvements

Building Strong Foundations for Stark County Families

For over 25 years, the JRC Learning Center on 14th Street NE has been a cornerstone of early childhood education and care in Canton. Originally opened in 2001 after a \$3.6 million capital campaign, the center now serves hundreds of children each year through Early Head Start, special needs education, and school-age programming. It provides families with accessible, high-quality early learning that supports both child development and workforce participation.

However, the building's infrastructure is aging, and vital improvements are needed to ensure this community anchor remains safe, modern, and welcoming for future generations.



The 14th Street Campus Improvement Project

Planned Upgrades:

- Roof and flooring replacement
- Upgraded security and camera systems
- New ceiling tiles and window treatments
- Playground turf installation for safer outdoor play
- Kitchen improvements to support daily meal service
- Conversion of an existing classroom into a community room for family events and partner workshops
- Addition of a vehicle for student transportation to community trips and intergenerational programming

These investments directly support early education, workforce development, and community revitalization – aligning with Ohio's priorities to strengthen both children and working families.

Total Project Cost: \$555,982

Goal: To preserve and modernize this essential facility while enhancing its use as a neighborhood hub.

Why It Matters

- The 14th Street Learning Center serves economically disadvantaged families, providing care that enables parents to work and contribute to Stark County's economy.
- Improvements will ensure the site remains accessible, inclusive, and sustainable for years to come.
- The project leverages nearly \$300,000 in recent JRC investments toward revitalization – demonstrating strong stewardship and commitment to long-term impact.

How You Can Help

Support policies and funding that invest in early childhood infrastructure and ensure organizations like JRC can continue serving Stark County families for the next generation.

Adult Day Services

Supporting Stark County Seniors

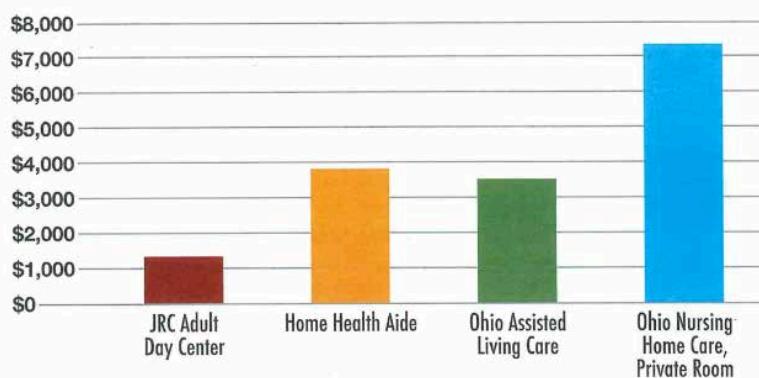


About JRC

JRC is a nonprofit organization committed to serving children, seniors, and the community through high-quality early education and senior programming. Founded in 1974, JRC has over 50 years of experience providing essential services to families in Stark County. Our Adult Day Center offers a safe, engaging environment where seniors and adults receive compassionate care, participate in meaningful activities, and benefit from structured support to enhance their independence and well-being.

Why Adult Day Services Matter:

JRC Adult Day Center Impacting Clients and Families



- Seniors who participate in adult day programs experience:
 - Improved cognitive function and reduced risk of dementia.
 - Enhanced socialization and emotional well-being.
 - Better physical health through structured activities and exercise.
 - Increased independence and quality of life.
- Adult day services provide essential respite for caregivers, allowing them to continue working and supporting their families.
- Adult day is a cost-effective alternative to other care options, such as homemaker services, in-home health aides, assisted living, and residential nursing homes.

Priority Areas for Adult Day Services

Funding

JRC is funded by VA (12%), Passport (39%), Title XX (15%), Care Coordination (6%), Private Pay (28%) and we have

- applied to offer Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers. Additional funding is needed to ensure sustainability.
- Policy changes to allow billing for absent days would help stabilize revenue streams and ensure continuity of care.
- Any potential Medicaid cuts could jeopardize services for seniors who rely on Adult Day programs for socialization, medical support, and personal care.
- A Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment for Assisted Living, Adult Day, and Home Care reimbursement rates would help sustain programs.



Transportation

Reliable and accessible transportation remains a significant barrier for seniors

- needing Adult Day Services. Investment in transportation solutions is critical to ensure access.

Workforce Development

- Home health and personal care aides are the top job in Ohio, but there are no structured plans for upskilling or professionalizing this workforce.
- The availability of this workforce directly impacts the Medicaid budget—without caregivers, individuals are driven to more expensive institutional care.

Food Insecurity

JRC helps combat food insecurity by participating in the Child and Adult Care

- Food Program (CACFP), ensuring seniors receive breakfast, lunch, and a snack each day.
- Seniors also participate in essential food shopping trips and access to food boxes from the Stark County Food Bank, ensuring access to nutritious meals.

How You Can Help

Advocate for increased funding and reimbursement rates for Adult Day Services to ensure sustainability.

Support workforce development initiatives to attract and retain professional caregivers.

Invest in transportation solutions to enhance accessibility for seniors.

Support funding for CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program.)



CACFP

Child and Adult Care Food Program

What is CACFP?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally-funded USDA initiative designed to ensure that children and adults in child care settings have access to nutritious meals and snacks. Through this program, eligible child care centers, adult day care programs, afterschool programs, and emergency shelters receive reimbursements for the meals they serve, supporting the health and well-being of vulnerable populations. At JRC, we utilize CACFP in both our Learning Centers and Adult Day Center to provide healthy meals to the children and seniors we serve.



Why CACFP Matters:



- ◆ It ensures that children and seniors have access to meals that meet the highest nutritional standards, fostering good health and preventing food insecurity.
- ◆ We can provide meals at no cost for families and members, ensuring access to nutritious food that might otherwise be unaffordable.
- ◆ It supports working families by alleviating the burden on families and caregivers, allowing them to focus on their jobs while we care for their loved ones.

How to Support CACFP at JRC:

Raise Awareness

Share information about CACFP's benefits with your community. By understanding the importance of this program, families, caregivers, and community members can advocate for its continued success.

Support Policies

Advocate for policies that ensure all eligible care programs can participate in CACFP and that sufficient funding is provided to maintain these essential services. This is especially crucial as we work to expand our services and support more families.

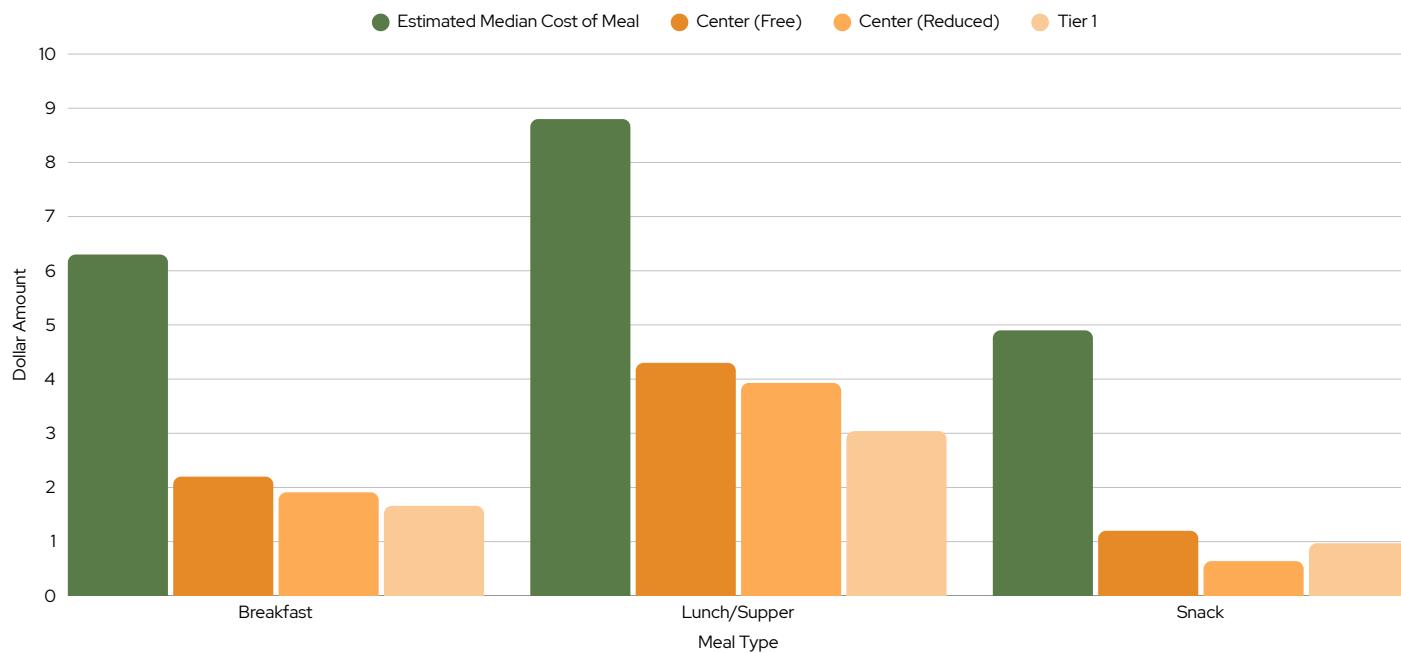
Get Involved

Support National CACFP Week, become a CACFP Ambassador, or join action alerts from the National CACFP Sponsors Association to stay informed and involved in promoting the program.

By supporting the Child and Adult Care Food Program, we can help build a healthier, stronger community for all of Stark County.

Reimbursement Rates

USDA 2022 Estimated Median Cost to Produce CACFP Meals vs 2022-2023 CACFP Reimbursement Rates



Policies to Support

Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act

Passage of the Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act would:

- Increase reimbursement rates by 10 cents for all CACFP providers.
- Eliminate tiering of family day care homes— all homes would receive tier I rates.
- Allow providers to claim their own children's meals for reimbursement.



Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act

Passage of the Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act would:

- Allow providers who are open for more than 8 hours in a day to be reimbursed for an additional meal (up to 3 meals and 1 snack).
- Align the calculation of reimbursement rates for family child care homes with that of centers by shifting to "food away from home."
- Allow annual eligibility for for-profit child care centers to streamline program operations.
- Require a review of the CACFP Serious Deficiency process.
- Establish an advisory committee on CACFP paperwork reduction.

These positive changes would streamline and strengthen the CACFP in order to expand program participation and access to nutritious meals.



Contact Information

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