

# CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August/September/October 2025

## BACK TO SCHOOL

While students were taking a well-deserved break, the IDEA CNP Team had a busy summer that included :



**Professional Development Trainings**



**Menu Creation**



**Recipe Testing our scratched cooked recipes**

We are excited for students to return and we know that school year 2025-2026 will be a great one!

### Looking for menus?

Visit our website for the monthly menu  
[www.idealpublicschools.org/parents/cnp](http://www.idealpublicschools.org/parents/cnp)





**NUTRITION FACTS**

- LOW IN SODIUM  
- LIKE CUCUMBERS
- SUPPORTS DIGESTION  
- LIKE YOGURT
- HYDRATION  
- LIKE WATERMELON
- ANTIOXIDANT  
- LIKE SPINACH



## PICO DE GALLO



TOMATOES, ONE OF THE MAIN INGREDIENTS IN PICO DE GALLO, HAVE NUTRIENTS THAT CAN HELP PREVENT CANCER AND KEEP YOUR HEART HEALTHY.



PICO DE GALLO ALSO HAS POTASSIUM, WHICH HELPS KEEP YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AT A HEALTHY LEVEL.



WHILE MANY PEOPLE THINK OF IT AS JUST A TOPPING, IT'S PACKED WITH VEGETABLES THAT OFFER LOTS OF HEALTH BENEFITS.



PICO DE GALLO IS A TASTY DISH THAT COMES FROM THE ANCIENT AZTECS IN MEXICO.



**VITAMIN C**

IT HAS A LOT OF VITAMIN C, WHICH HELPS YOUR BODY ABSORB IRON FROM FOOD, KEEPING YOUR BLOOD HEALTHY.



THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER.

### Nutrition Spotlight: Pico De Gallo

**Fresh, flavorful, and packed with nutrients! Pico de gallo is a simple mix of tomatoes, onions, cilantro, lime juice, and jalapeños. It's a great way to add flavor and you can try it as a topping for tacos, grilled meats, or as a dip with whole-grain chips!**







**Students**  
**eat FREE at IDEA!**

All IDEA Students are eligible to receive one FREE Breakfast and one FREE Lunch every school day!

Every school day, students can look forward to wholesome and flavourful meals that feature:



**Protein**



**Assorted Milk**



**Fresh Fruit & Vegetables**



**Whole Grains**

## **Farm to School Program**



School Farms are more than just a fun outdoor activity—they're powerful tools for enhancing learning, promoting fresh and satisfying habits, and building community. Here's why they matter:



Our Farm to School program delivers fresh produce from our school farms directly to our cafeterias! By partnering with our CNP Farm Team, we give students the chance to enjoy seasonal fruits and vegetables while learning where their food comes from. It's a fun, nutritious way to support agriculture and inspire lifelong balanced and bold habits!

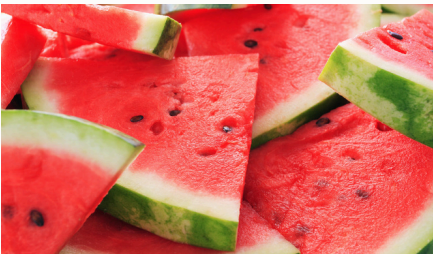
Be sure to  
"Like, Follow & Share"  
"IDEA CNP" on Facebook for more info about our amazing famers!



## Celebrate Fresh!

Celebrate delicious, nutritious foods with these National Food Holidays:

### August is National Watermelon Month



- Watermelon is 92% water, making it a hydrating summer snack!
- Every part is edible—including the rind and seeds!
- It's a great source of vitamin C, vitamin A, and antioxidants.

✦✦✦ Craving something refreshing with a twist? Don't miss our Watermelon Kimchi & Agua Fresca recipes on pages 4 & 5! ✦✦✦

### September is Whole Grains Month



- Whole grains contain all parts of the grain kernel: the bran, germ, and endosperm—making them rich in fiber, B vitamins, and antioxidants.
- Fiber in whole grains helps keep you full and supports healthy digestion.
- Examples include brown rice, whole wheat bread, oatmeal, quinoa, barley, and popcorn!

### October is National Apple Month



- Apples are high in fiber and vitamin C, and they're naturally low in calories and sodium.
- There are over 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the U.S. and 7,500 worldwide!
- The saying "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" comes from apples' long-standing health benefits.

### HOM Recipes & Resources

Visit our website to explore Harvest of the Month resources and get inspired to celebrate fresh at home!

[www.ideapublicschools.org/parents/cnp](http://www.ideapublicschools.org/parents/cnp)

#### HARVEST OF THE MONTH // COSECHA DEL MES

<a href="#">AUGUST 2024</a>	<a href="#">AGOSTO 2024</a>	<a href="#">FEBRUARY 2025</a>	<a href="#">FEBRERO 2025</a>
<a href="#">SEPTEMBER 2024</a>	<a href="#">SEPTIEMBRE 2024</a>	<a href="#">MARCH 2025</a>	<a href="#">MARZO 2025</a>
<a href="#">OCTOBER 2024</a>	<a href="#">OCTUBRE 2024</a>	<a href="#">APRIL 2025</a>	<a href="#">ABRIL 2025</a>
<a href="#">NOVEMBER 2024</a>	<a href="#">NOVIEMBRE 2024</a>	<a href="#">MAY 2025</a>	<a href="#">MAYO 2025</a>
<a href="#">DECEMBER 2024</a>	<a href="#">DICIEMBRE 2024</a>	<a href="#">JUNE 2025</a>	<a href="#">JUNIO 2025</a>
<a href="#">JANUARY 2025</a>	<a href="#">ENERO 2025</a>	<a href="#">JULY 2025</a>	<a href="#">JULIO 2025</a>

► Previous Harvests of the Month // Cosecha Anterior Del Mes





# Watermelon Kimchi



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups watermelon rind (white part only), all green waxy skin removed
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 bunch green onion, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1 inch piece of ginger, julienned
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon gochugaru (Korean chili flakes)
- 1 tablespoon honey



Want more cookbook recipes?  
Scan the QR code or visit  
<https://ideapublicschools.org/parents/cnp>

## Instructions

1. Cut the watermelon rind into thin strips about 2 inches long. Place the rind strips in a large bowl and toss with the salt. Let sit for 1 hour.
2. After 1 hour, rinse the rind to remove excess salt.
3. In a large bowl, combine the rind with the green onion, ginger, garlic, gochugaru (add more or less gochugaru depending on how spicy you like it) and honey. Stir to combine.
4. Transfer the kimchi to a jar or another glass container with a tight fitting lid.
5. Store in refrigerator overnight or up to 5 days to marinate. (the longer kimchi sits, the more flavorful it becomes.)
6. Enjoy!



# Watermelon Agua Fresca



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs watermelon chunks
- 4 c Water
- Sweeten to taste using your choice of sweetener
- Ice

## Instructions

1. Place watermelon chunks, water, and sweetener in a blender and blend until smooth. This takes about 3-5 minutes.
2. Pour ice into cups and then pour in watermelon agua fresca.
3. Enjoy!

\*\*\* Optional step: For a smoother consistency, use a strainer to remove watermelon pulp from the agua fresca before serving. \*\*\*



Want more cookbook recipes?  
Scan the QR code or visit  
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## IDEA CNP Shines at the National School Nutrition Conference!

The IDEA CNP team was honored to be part of the speaker lineup at **SNA's Annual National Conference (ANC)**—the school nutrition event of the year!

We kicked things off at pre-conference with **"Taste the Difference: The Benefits of Robust Farm-to-School Initiatives"** hosted at IDEA Eastside. This inspiring session featured:

- Dr. Keely Hawkins, Sr. CNP Director of Nutrition
- Daniela Villarreal, Sr. CNP Executive Chef
- Deborah Ray, CNP Director of Farms

At ANC, our team continued to lead the way in school nutrition innovation with powerful sessions like:

- **Fueling Success: How Child Nutrition Programs Power Healthy School Ecosystems**
  - Dr. Keely Hawkins & Amanda Krippel
- **Engaging Stakeholder Voices: Enhancing Menu Design Through Feedback**
  - Arinda Rodriguez & Natasha Perales
- **Cooking Up Inclusion: Building Allergen-Friendly School Menus**
  - Ashlea Robertson & Natasha Perales
- **Harvest in the Halls: Transforming Your Monthly Harvest Experience**
  - Stephanie Buentello
- **Inclusive Nutrition Education: Destigmatizing Food Choices**
  - Miranda Barrera

We're proud to represent IDEA and share our commitment to student health and innovation on a national stage.



Find us on 

Search "IDEA CNP"  
to Like, Share & Follow our page!





# Special Diets Protocol

## Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs

At IDEA Public Schools, we are committed to serving nutritious meals that meet USDA and State guidelines for **all students**, including those requiring **special dietary accommodations** due to medical needs such as **disabilities, food allergies, and intolerances**.

### OVERVIEW

Special Diets are menu accommodations for students with:

- Disabilities
- Life-threatening food allergies
- Non-life-threatening medical conditions

To initiate the process, parents/guardians must submit a completed IDEA Special Diet Request Form to their campus Cafeteria Manager. Form must be signed by a U.S. licensed physician or Registered Dietitian

### REQUIRED MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

#### For Life-Threatening Conditions or Disabilities:

Form must be signed by a **U.S. licensed physician**, and include:

- Diagnosis and explanation of condition/disability
- Identifies major life activity affected by condition/disability
- Foods to omit and substitute as needed

#### For Non-Life-Threatening Needs:

Must also be signed by a **U.S. licensed physician** and specify:

- Medical condition
- Foods to avoid/substitute

**\*\*\*Note: There is a 3-week lead time for processing and forms not submitted on the current IDEA Special Diet Request form cannot be accepted and will be returned.\*\*\***





# Special Diets Protocol

## ✓ CONTINUED: ACCOMMODATING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS



### DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

#### Parents/Guardians Must:

- Submit completed forms with accurate information
- Provide an updated form for any dietary changes
- Submit a written statement to discontinue an accommodation

#### IDEA CNP Can:

- Provide meals in line with approved requests

#### IDEA CNP Cannot:

- Make substitutions without an approved form
- Interpret or alter a physician's diet order
- Provide juice or water as milk alternatives

## ! PERSONAL PREFERENCES & RELIGIOUS REQUESTS

While we respect all food-related beliefs and preferences, **only medical-based** accommodations are able to be provided at this time. However, we are happy to support your family by:

- Many **vegetarian options** are available
- Parents may send an entrée from home and use IDEA's fruits, veggies, and milk to complete the meal
- Our **School Café** menu platform lists allergens, pork content, and carb counts

Whether your student has food intolerances or food allergies, we can provide accommodation for medically necessary dietary needs.

Visit our website for more information on Special Diets.

**[www.idealpublicschools.org/parents/cnp](http://www.idealpublicschools.org/parents/cnp)**







# Non-Discrimination Statement

## Texas and Ohio

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email:

[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Florida

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation in the administration of the snap program), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

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