

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FEBRUARY / MARCH / APRIL 2026



Seasonal Celebrations in IDEA'S Child Nutrition Program

February may be chilly, but our kitchens are full of warmth, seasonal flavors, and Farm to School moments that celebrate healthy choices and our dedicated cafeteria teams.

It's National Nutrition Month! This March, IDEA Child Nutrition Program is celebrating smart food choices and delicious meals that keep our students energized and ready to learn.

This April, join us to celebrate Earth Day by highlighting fresh foods, Farm to School connections, and mindful choices that support student health and our planet.

Thank you for supporting our mission to make every meal count!

Looking for menus?

Visit our website for the monthly menu
www.ideapublicschools.org/parents/cnp



the quest for school breakfast

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK

MARCH 2-6, 2026



National School Breakfast Week



National School Breakfast Week is a week-long celebration of healthy and delicious morning meals. During this week, the IDEA Child Nutrition Program is proud to launch our new Spring Menu, featuring delicious choices that support students' bodies and minds.



National Nutrition Month 2026

Did you know?

March is National Nutrition Month. This annual celebration was first introduced as National Nutrition Week in 1973 and expanded into a month-long observance in 1980 due to growing public interest in nutrition and wellness.

The 2026 theme, "Discover the Power of Nutrition," highlights how the foods we choose every day can support energy, immunity, disease prevention, and overall well-being. Sponsored each year by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, this campaign encourages individuals and communities to make informed food choices and develop balanced eating and physical activity habits that promote long-term health.

National Nutrition Month

Is a great opportunity to explore new foods, learn how to build nourishing meals, and reflect on how nutrition supports both physical and mental health at every stage of life.

Get the Kids Involved!

Parents can make National Nutrition Month® fun and interactive by inviting kids to participate in simple, hands-on activities. Try hosting a "rainbow food challenge" where children help pick fruits and vegetables of different colors throughout the week, or let them choose and help prepare one new healthy recipe as a family. Younger kids may enjoy drawing their favorite "power foods," while older children can help plan a balanced meal or pack a nutritious lunch. These activities help build positive relationships with food and encourage curiosity, confidence, and healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Find us on  

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



Child Nutrition Program



Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day

In addition, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day will be celebrated on March 11, 2026, observed annually on the second Wednesday in March. This day recognizes the vital role Registered Dietitian Nutritionists play in translating nutrition science into practical, personalized guidance to help individuals and communities thrive.

Meet IDEA's Registered Dietitians 
Pictured below are IDEA employees who support student nutrition across our campuses.



Breanna Bench
CNP Assistant Director of Nutrition



Miranda Barrera
CNP Nutrition Manager



Victoria Luera
CNP Nutrition Manager



Sarah Schaeffer
CNP Special Diets Coordinator



Stephanie Reese
CNP Director of Compliance



Caryn Fields
CNP Compliance Manager



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

We're excited to spotlight Valerie Estala, Cafeteria Manager at Horizon Vista, who was featured in our February Harvest of the Month (HOM) video! Valerie was invited by our Culinary Team to prepare sesame carrots for the video—and she turned it into the coolest campus event.

On January 15 (Chicken Teriyaki Lunch Day), Valerie hosted a fun and flavorful Veggie Rumble: Sesame Carrots vs. Sesame Cucumber! Students got to taste, compare, and cheer on their favorite veggie, making Harvest of the Month interactive, engaging, and delicious.

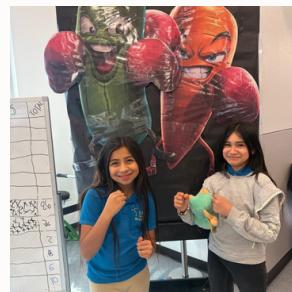
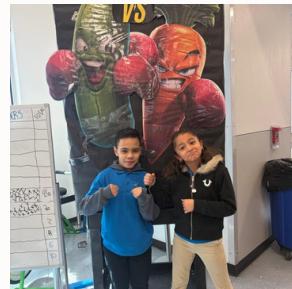
Moments like these bring Farm to School to life, connecting students with fresh produce through creativity, teamwork, and lots of smiles.

Way to go, Valerie!

Be sure to

"Like, Follow & Share"

"IDEA CNP" on Facebook & Instagram for more info about our amazing farmers!





Celebrate Fresh!

Celebrate delicious, nutritious foods with these National Food Holidays:



- Some say "grapefruit" comes from how it grows in clusters like grapes.
- Colorful varieties: Yellow, white, pink, and ruby red, all slightly different in sweetness.
- It's a hybrid! Grapefruit is a cross between a sweet orange and a pomelo.



- Celery has been eaten for over 3,000 years, starting in the Mediterranean.
- Celery contains potassium and sodium, perfect for hydration.
- Chewing celery can help neutralize odors in your mouth.



- Garlic has been used for over 5,000 years for food and medicine.
- Known for supporting heart health and circulation.
- Found in cuisines all over the world, from Italian to Korean to Mexican.

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

HARVEST OF THE MONTH // COSECHA DEL MES

[AUGUST 2025](#)

[AGOSTO 2025](#)

[SEPTEMBER 2025](#)

[SEPTIEMBRE 2025](#)

[OCTOBER 2025](#)

[OCTUBRE 2025](#)

[NOVEMBER 2025](#)

[NOVIEMBRE 2025](#)

[DECEMBER 2025](#)

[DICIEMBRE 2025](#)

[JANUARY 2026](#)

[ENERO 2026](#)

[FEBRUARY 2026](#)

[FEBRERO 2026](#)

[HOM Cookbook \(Updated Monthly\)](#)



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

SESAME CARROTS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pound Fresh carrots, cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " thin
- 2 Tbsp Soy sauce or Tamari*
- 1 Tbsp Sesame oil
- 1 Tbsp Rice vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp Brown sugar**
- 1 Tbsp Sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk together soy sauce or tamari, sugar, sesame oil, and vinegar until sugar dissolves.
2. Pour this dressing over sliced carrots and add the sesame seeds, if using.
3. Toss together until well combined.
4. Let the carrots sit in dressing overnight. Mix before serving to redistribute the dressing.

*For a gluten free version, use tamari

**Feel free to swap brown sugar for your sweetener of choice. Adjust the amount based on your taste



Want more cookbook recipes?

Scan the QR code or visit
<https://ideapublicschools.org/parents/cnp>



Yield
4 svgs

Prep Time
5 minutes

Rest Time
overnight



Tried at school. Loved by students. Easy to recreate at home!

- Sesame Carrots
- Swicy Carrots
- Celery & Carrot Ranch Cup
- Honey Braised Carrots

Check out more HOM content at:

YouTube:
<http://bit.ly/45QGtu1>
Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/IDEACNP/>

HOW WE ACCOMMODATE SPECIAL DIETS



ASHLEA ROBERTSON
SR. CNP SPECIAL DIETS MANAGER



SARAH SCHAEFFER
CNP SPECIAL DIETS COORDINATOR

1

Safe Meals for Special Diets

We ensure all students can safely participate in our meal programs, including those with medically necessary special diets.

2

Our Special Diets Team Has You Covered

All special diet requests are carefully reviewed by our Special Diets Team to ensure every student's needs are safely met.

3

Inclusive Meals for All Students

We can accommodate students with medically-necessary special diets and provide them with safe, healthy, and nutritious menu options.

Visit our website for more information, or scan the QR code below.
www.ideapublicschools.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, audiotape, 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

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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