

Digital Record Keeping

Record keeping is an important aspect of any business. Maintaining accurate, detailed records is vital to tracking expenses, easily preparing your taxes, meeting licensing requirements, and of course--receiving the largest possible reimbursement from the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Previously, you may have recorded some this information on paper. Technology allows you to record and save information digitally directly on your device or to the 'Cloud' (which means it is stored on equipment owned and maintained by someone else).



To track any of these things you can choose existing programs – like QuickBooks or other accounting software. Depending on your computer skills, you could create your own tracking system using excel or another program. Advantages of going digital with your record keeping:

- No need to worry about your printed receipts getting lost or fading over time
- Use less ink and paper
- Digital records require less space to store for the required time frame
- Tax time is SOOO much easier without having to go through an over-stuffed shoebox of crumpled paper receipts to total up your business and personal expenses



As with any record keeping, staying up-to-date is important. If you try to enter all the information at the end of the year, then you aren't going to see the money or time savings you would be entering the information regularly. Keeping digital records requires that you take time each week or

month to input the details, or scan and log your paper receipts. Additionally, you will want to have a plan/system for how and where you save them in your digital files, so that you can find them in the future. You will be amazed that by spending 15-30 minutes each week or an hour per month on your record keeping, you will have more time for the things you enjoy. You'll also have less stress when you know you are taking care of your business instead of putting it off.



How to get started

There are plenty of free or for-purchase options to choose from when you go digital. A wise way to start is to choose just one area to switch to digital. After you master one aspect, you will be more confident expanding into other areas of your business. If you still file paper claims with your food program sponsor, consider starting your digital adventure by signing up to file your monthly food program claims online. Or, you could focus on your finances by learning to use an accounting program to track income and expenses. Or, you could simply start a chronological list showing the training you do to stay up-to-date on current topics in the early childhood field and to meet training requirements for licensing. How you start is up to you, but we'll cover each of these topics to help you decide what best fits your interest. Each person has different interests and motivations, so choose an area that will be helpful for your personally.

Tracking your Training

One of the on-going challenges for child care providers is to meet the required training hours for licensing each year. At Wildwood, we try to make training easier by providing FREE self-paced courses at three home visits per year for our providers. In fact, this course will help meet the annual hours required for licensing. Each of these courses is available online along with the corresponding test, which saves you time and the hassle of mailing in a paper test. When providers take, and pass, an online test, we email a digital certificate instead of printing a paper copy.



Each time you participate in a training course, add it to a list of classes you've taken for the year. That way all your training is listed in one place. Each time you receive a training certificate, scan any paper copies and save them all together in the same digital folder, labelled by year, to easily see how much training you've taken for the year.

Important information to include in your training list: (using this course as an example)

- Course Title: Technology in Child Care
- Date of Training: Date listed on your certificate
- Training hours credited: 1.5 hours
- Content Area of Training: Program/Professionalism
- What Agency Provided the Training: Wildwood CACFP

The next page shows a sample of what your training list might look like:

Training for 2018

| Date | Hours | Course Title | Content Area | Facilitator |
|-----------|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1/10/2018 | 2 Hrs | Friendly Field Trips | Social Emotional | Wildwood CACFP |
| 1/20/2018 | 1 hr | Developing Colorful Eating Habits | Nutrition | Wildwood CACFP |
| 2/5/2018 | 4 Hrs | First Aid & CPR | Health/Safety | American Heart Assoc. |
| 3/30/2018 | 1 Hr | Safe Sleep Training | Health/Safety | American Adac. Of Pediatrics |
| 4/15/2018 | 1.5 Hrs | Standard Precautions | Health/Safety | Wildwood CACFP |
| 5/15/2018 | 2 Hrs | Professionalism is Child Care | Program/Professionalism | Wildwood CACFP |
| 8/20/2018 | 1.5 Hrs | Technology in Child Care | Program/Professionalism | Wildwood CACFP |

*Tip: Wildwood's FREE online training is password protected. If you participate in the CACFP through Wildwood and would like to access Wildwood online training, please give us a call and we will get you the information you need. 😊

Logging Income and Expenses

Let's talk about tracking your finances. At a minimum, this includes recording your income from child care services and the expenses associated with your business. It may also include other income if you have another job, a spouse that works, or you receive funds from other sources like child support or public assistance. Tracking your income provides a record of all the money that is coming into your household. (If you have teenage children who work, you may want to add a page/section for tracking their income as well to help them start-off on the right track, financially speaking.)

*Tip: If you file your monthly food program claims by recording attendance and menus through Minute Menu's KidKare program, there is a low-cost option to add-on an accounting piece, so all of your records are in one place.



The second part of tracking your finances is watching where your money goes by recording your personal and business spending. As you begin logging your spending, it is important to include both large and small purchases, even those that seem trivial or are paid with cash. Every cup of coffee or can of soda add-up to provide a picture of where your money is going. The small items are often the biggest areas of waste or loss in a budget because we see them as unimportant. But don't forget that a few pennies quickly add up to dollars.

While some expenses are shared between your personal and business use – like your utility bill, other items will be completely business related – like toys and activities for the children in your care. How you choose to track these expenses is up to you, but Microsoft Excel is simple for beginners and includes advanced features to use as you learn and master the possibilities. You can easily find online templates and tutorials to get you started. As you

become aware of your spending patterns, you can adjust your categories/headings, and see how your expenses fluctuate month-by-month.

Each person has unique spending habits based on their personal interests, hobbies, and budgeting style. There is not a right or wrong way to track your spending, since many programs will work for a variety of people. The only wrong way is NOT knowing where you spend your hard-earned money.

Focus on Food Costs

One area that is often helpful for child care providers to closely track is your food costs. By using less expensive seasonal fruits and vegetables and buying food staples (the items you use regularly and/or in large quantities) when they are on sale, you can save money and use your food program reimbursement efficiently to cover on-going grocery expenses for your business. Food is one of the largest monthly expenses for child care providers, but there are many ways to reduce your food costs by being a savvy shopper and planning menus based on low cost food items.



Technology can also save you time at the grocery store.

You can sign-up for a frequent shopper/loyalty program and receive discounts and sale specials from your favorite store. Many food retailers now offer Online Shopping which can be a big time-saver. You shop online from the comfort of your home, or where ever it works best for you, and then pick-up the groceries from the store at a preset time or have them delivered. Although there may be a small fee for the service, someone else pushes the grocery cart through the crowded aisles and does the shopping for you. If you're not too picky about your produce this is a fabulous option. The only catch is that you don't get to select your own items. So, if you enjoy choosing the perfect melon or want a particularly green bunch of bananas, online grocery shopping might not be the best fit for everyone.

Again, individual preferences will dictate whether on-line shopping is a benefit for each person. Each of us value our time and money differently, as you weigh those aspects you'll find that either it works for you or it doesn't.

Claiming meals and attendance online through KidKare

Even without the added accounting features mentioned earlier, Minute Menu's KidKare is a great way to use technology to save you time. Because of the build it error reports, KidKare will help you avoid costly errors on your claims as well. The biggest advantage of filing your claim online is that when you use KidKare you don't have to worry that your claim will be late, which means a delay in your payment.



Once you hit the “Submit to Sponsor” button, it arrives almost instantly for your Food Program Sponsoring to review. An unexpected advantage to using KidKare is that you can access your online account using Apple or Android smartphone technology. This means you don’t need to fire-up your computer to log your menus or attendance at the time of the meal service. This also ensures you will have accurate, up-to-date records for your field representative when they stop by for an unannounced visit.

*Tip: If your internet service is interrupted and you are unable to record for daily information, give us a call to let us know. We will help you determine whether you may email or fax your daily menus and attendance to your claim coordinator the next day to have the information added to your KidKare account.

Using Minute Menu helps you to store your records online and allows your sponsor to quickly process your claim with no more forgotten signatures, expired enrollment forms, and no more meals disallowed meals due to missing components. There are notifications that will pop-up within the program to show you what’s missing in your menu to make it creditable. By looking at your monthly error report you can see which kiddos have expiring enrollment forms coming up in the next month. Best of ALL... no paper forms to mail in or drop off by the 5th of the month. You just click on “Submit to Sponsor” and you are ready to start claiming the next month...Just like that.

Technology Today

In the ever-changing world, technology is evolving quickly. Jump aboard the wave to find how technology can help make your job easier. As you become more tech savvy, there will be new things to learn and innovative ways of incorporating technology in your everyday life as well as your business. Instead of fearing the change, embrace it. Remember that anything you do on a computer or device can be reversed if it goes wrong, so don’t let fear stop you from trying something new. We’ve shared a few ways to use technology in your child care to help save time and money, but how you proceed is up to you. Whether you choose to take online training courses or begin claiming your meals through KidKare, the Wildwood team is here to help in any way we can.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, Its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



When you have completed this course, click
[HERE](#) to take the test.
(or you can type this address into your browser:)

<https://tinyurl.com/y7mnlz3>

Be sure to read each field carefully to ensure that
you receive an accurate certificate.

Thank you for choosing
us for your training needs:

Wildwood CACFP

...for those who care for children

12200 E. Briarwood Ave. Suite 175

Visit us online for more great
tips and information:

www.wildwoodonline.org

www.facebook.com/WildwoodCACFP

Phone: 303-760-0460