

# New Child Care Nutrition Program Director | CPD

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Michael Diehl

The [Child Care Nutrition Program](#) welcomes its new director in January, following the retirement of its current director, Jeanie Peck. It's the changing of the guard in a program that quietly affected the lives of more than 13,000 of Utah's children over the last budget year in the state of Utah—and as the CCNP grows, that number is likely to increase. The CCNP operates out of the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University, as one of seven sponsors of the Child and Adult Care Nutrition Programs in Utah. It exists to ensure that children receive the healthy food that supports their brains and bodies as they grow. "I have been working with your current director, Jeanie Peck, and your current monitor, Sonja Larsen, over the past several years," [Michael Diehl](#) said in a letter to CCNP participants. "I am aware of the quality of work each of you put into your centers and homes to benefit children." The father of three young children worked as a child nutrition specialist in the Utah State Office of Education before coming to Utah State University. He begins as the CCNP program director on January 3. The work is important, he said. "The food program plays a large role, especially with the kids who are there all day, in giving them access to healthier meals. A lot of the kids are enrolled in those homes or centers pretty much all day, and those are 75 percent of the meals that they are going to be consuming all year." But eating healthy can be expensive, and day care is

a notoriously low-paying profession. The cost makes it harder for providers to offer healthy meals and snacks. The CCNP offers training on healthy foods and reimburses participating providers according to Federal guidelines. It has provided reimbursements to licensed in-home day care providers in northern and eastern Utah for more than 20 years. In November, the program was able to add center-based programs to its workload. It is authorized to work with adult day care centers as well. Though nutrition for young children is vital, the program's goals go beyond that, Diehl said. Staff members also want to help instill good habits that children will take with them throughout their lives. "We want to make sure we have a great working relationship with the providers, so they know they can call us and get the most current information and help from our staff. ... The thing we want to do as a university is to have a really big educational piece." The education is needed because children and adults may have some misguided ideas about nutrition. "I think there's a mentality that it has to be fresh produce to be nutritious. That's not always true," Diehl said. He also hopes to help people become better, more critical label-readers, because food manufacturers often claim their food is healthier than it really is. While the CCNP is one of seven sponsors in Utah, it covers a large geographic area extending from Ogden north and encompassing all of Eastern Utah, as far south as San Juan county. As the program begins serving centers, it may also extend to those located in other parts of the state. For more information on the Child Care Nutrition Program at Utah State University, visit their [website](#).



To find out more about the Child Care Nutrition Program, call 1-800-540-2169