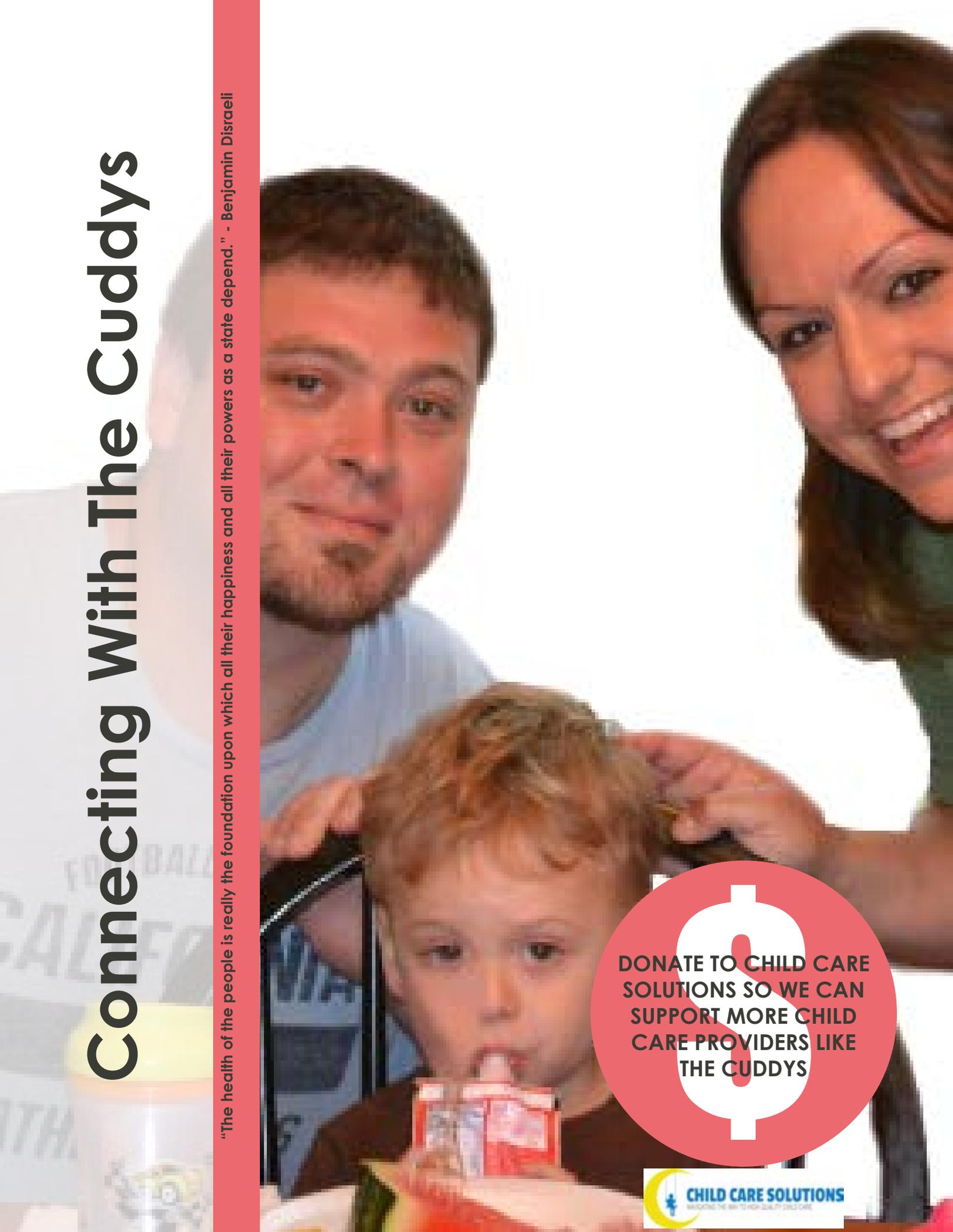


Connecting With The Cuddys

"The health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their powers as a state depend." - Benjamin Disraeli



DONATE TO CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS SO WE CAN SUPPORT MORE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS LIKE THE CUDDYS

The Joy of Good Food

Stretching food dollars to provide healthy meals is a lesson in budgeting for most families. Imagine the cost of feeding ten children healthy meals in your child care program five days a week. That is exactly what Andrea & Rob Cuddy do everyday with the help of the **CHILD AND ADULT FOOD CARE PROGRAM (CACFP)**.

CACFP is a federal program that reimburses registered, licensed, and legally exempt child care providers for serving meals and snacks that meet the USDA guidelines to the children in their care. It is designed to help meet the nutritional needs necessary for physical, intellectual, and emotional development and establish healthy eating habits for life. Providers who participate are required to complete daily menus that are monitored to ensure federal guidelines are being met. Members of the Child Care Solutions CACFP team also observe meal times and help providers comply with the program requirements.

The Cuddy's are perfect examples of putting CACFP to work for the children in their child care program. Breakfast, lunch, and two snacks are served everyday. Breakfast contains milk, fruit/vegetable & a grain/bread. Lunch is the same but also contains a meat or meat alternative. Snacks also meet required guidelines. The program also allows them to provide infant formula for a baby in their care, allowing the baby's single working mother to stretch her food budget at home. Knowing that the children in their program are eating two healthy meals and two healthy snacks a day is what Andrea loves most about participating in CACFP. She knows they could not serve the amount, variety and quality of food without it.

Menus are planned three months in advance which helps Andrea & Rob to organize, grocery shop and budget. They purchase in-season fruit & vegetables and also grow a small vegetable garden that supplements groceries in the summer. Once a week there is "try a new food day," where the children are encouraged to add variety to their diets. The children eat together family style around the dining room table where sometimes Andrea's favorite food to serve, homemade macaroni & cheese is gobbled up.

Initially the Cuddy's were reluctant to enroll in CACFP as they had heard rumors that participating was difficult, time-consuming and a paperwork intensive process that wasn't worth their while. Then one day they received a postcard from Child Care Solutions that detailed the benefits of the program, and they went for it. Since then they have been utilizing recipes, food suggestions, accommodating food allergies and also providing vegetarian meals when families request it. They have eliminated most of the paperwork by utilizing the Minute Menu software system where foods, attendance and claims are recorded easily. They even use the minute menu phone app to accomplish a lot of the recording requirements.

Andrea & Rob utilize CACFP to the full benefit of the children they care for everyday. Their Child Care Solutions Provider Services Specialist, Ana Sojo, says she loves working with them because "they always try and do the right thing for the kids in their care."