

# Case Study: Anna's Bananas Daycare & Preschool

Serving ages 6 weeks to 12 years



## CKC Good Food Elevates & Simplifies Food Service for Multi-Site Childcare

Anna's Bananas Daycare and Preschool has grown from one center to six by fostering a family-like community among its clients that has resulted in many long-term relationships for the private childcare company founded and owned by Anna Achtenberg.

Kids often enroll at 6 weeks of age and attend until kindergarten. At the Farmington center, the company's original location, a school-age program which serves through age 12. Some students then take the opportunity to act as a volunteer, and are hired as aides when they reach high school. One director began as a student in a center, and worked all the way up through the ranks! Another member of management started as a high school aide and now serves as the Head of Corporate Administration.

"Anna's philosophy is that 'your family is my family,'" said Jennifer Meyer, Corporate Administrator for the company that serves 325 little ones year-round. "That is taken to heart by the management and teacher teams." Anna aims to deliver "love, learning and luxury," setting high expectations among its families.

### Meeting Consistently High Standards

The company's administrative and teaching teams work hard to deliver a sense of family and luxury on all fronts. In looking at their operations, they realized the company's food service fell short of the company's and the parents' expectations.

"We were really struggling with our caterer and were not happy with the service," Jennifer said. "It didn't have a friendly feel. The food was stereotypical school lunches – hamburgers, cheeseburgers, chicken nuggets, all with very little spice or seasoning."

It also lacked systems that simplified the administrative tasks and service. Ordering meals was cumbersome, particularly for allergen meals, which had to be ordered individually for each specific allergen. One dairy-free meal here, two gluten-free meals there. Multiply that by the six centers and mealtime was a patchwork quilt. The serving sizes and portion guides varied widely from the actual amount of food provided, resulting in wasted food many days and shorted food on other days.

"We needed a change," Jennifer said.

(more)



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The company was so committed to changing vendors that when it hired CKC Good Food in the fall of 2021, Anna's Bananas coordinated its own pick ups and deliveries initially as CKC Good Food had already established its delivery routes for the 2021-22 school year when the contract was signed.

## Ease and Responsiveness Were Evident from the Start

Jennifer noticed right away the support and responsiveness from CKC Good Food was much better than the previous company. From day one, her Client Services Manager has checked in regularly and addressed any questions or concerns promptly. Even CKC Good Food CEO Nancy Close pays attention to Anna's Bananas' needs. She met with the administrative team to help them evaluate a potential grant opportunity.

Jennifer spends much less time ordering meals now, thanks to CKC Good Food's easy-to-use client portal. In a matter of a few minutes, she submits meal counts for hot lunch, vegetarian and allergen-free meals weekly for each center as well as bulk orders of bananas for breakfasts.

"If I order 22 toddler meals, I get 22 toddler meals," she said. "The portion guide is precise. We don't have excess or wasted food."

While the kids love hamburgers, even they want more variety from one week to the next. They love CKC Good Food's brunch lunches, especially pancakes with berry compote, mac and cheese, the taco bowl with rice, and, of course, pizza. Any meal with dip – broccoli and dip, cucumbers and dips – is a hit, too.

**"The food tastes like it's made from real recipes rather than frozen things put together as components,"**

Jennifer said. "There's more ethnicity within the food choices. For families of non-Caucasian background, they really appreciate the variety and spices."

The ethnic meals also provide an opportunity for teachers to speak about the origins of those meals. If the kids don't respond well to a menu item, Jennifer provides feedback to CKC Good Food and a new recipe is soon incorporated into the menu. CKC Good Food switches up its menus often to keep kids from growing weary of foods.

The little touches don't get past Jennifer either. She was amazed the first time she saw an allergen meal packed into its individual, divided container with one well filled with fresh cilantro. She also appreciates that CKC Good Food provides steamed vegetables for toddlers and fresh vegetables with dip for the preschool-aged kids.

## Working with CKC Good Food Is Easy

Jennifer closed, "Working with CKC Good Food is easy – it's easy to give feedback, it's easy to get an answer, it's easy to submit orders. **No matter the challenge, we're always able to figure it out together.**"

