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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

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Action Required
Due date: Varies
 Informational

BULLETIN NO. 017-26 CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
Assistant Superintendents for Business and/or Business Managers
School Food Service Supervisors
Administrators of Child and Adult Care Food Program Institutions
Administrators of Private Schools

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Waiver of Eligibility for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

CONTACT: Arianne McConchie, Child and Adult Care Program (CACFP) Supervisor
360-688-0270 arianne.mcconchie@k12.wa.us

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended the automatic eligibility of participants in Washington State's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) for a one-year period. The waiver covers children participating in child care centers or Local Education Agencies (LEA) that claim meals under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

This approved waiver is effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY FOR ECEAP PARTICIPANTS

Children enrolled in ECEAP are automatically eligible for free meal benefits without further application or eligibility determination. Automatic eligibility does not extend to siblings. Conditions for automatic eligibility are:

1. The child must be enrolled as a participant in ECEAP under the Washington State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Act.

2. The child care center or LEA must have a list on file from the ECEAP contractor of children enrolled as participants in ECEAP.
 - a. The contractor list serves as documentation of eligibility for free meal benefits and should be obtained prior to the start of the program. This must include ECEAP enrollment start dates and withdraw dates when applicable.
 - b. Without the contractor list, students enrolled in an ECEAP begin the school year in the paid eligibility status. Even if enrollment changes are anticipated, obtain an initial contractor list and make additions or changes as they occur.
 - c. Children enrolled in an ECEAP are determined to be automatically eligible for free meal benefits and should be excluded from the verification process for the NSLP/SBP as they are considered directly certified.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact your program specialist. The OSPI [Telecommunication Relay Services](#) number is 711 or 1-800-833-6384.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

Jenny Plaja
Chief Impact Officer

Leanne Eko, RD, SNS
Chief Nutrition Officer
Child Nutrition Services

CR:ak

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1. **Mail:**
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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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2. **Fax:** 833-256-1665 or 202-690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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