

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management  
June 3, 2008

MEMORANDUM  
CACFP2008-4

**SUBJECT:** Categorical Eligibility for Free Meals Extended to All Enrolled Head Start Children

**TO:** Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors

**FROM:** Susan B. Still, Supervisor  
Child and Adult Care Food and  
Summer Food Service Programs  
Division of Food and Nutrition

On December 12, 2007, President Bush signed the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-134). This Act contains several significant changes for Head Start programs, including the eligibility criteria previously outlined by the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9840). Prior to December 12, 2007, only children enrolled in Head Start Programs and meeting the Head Start income guidelines were eligible to receive free meals and considered categorically eligible in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). With this Act, children enrolled in Head Start but over income, traditionally limited to 10% of the children enrolled, may now be claimed in the free meal category even if the household does not meet the eligible income criteria. *Since Pennsylvania's Pre K Counts funding defines the eligibility threshold at 300% poverty, the changes do not apply to Pre K Counts children enrolled in and receiving Pre K Counts instruction through a Head Start classroom.* For Pre K Counts children, sponsors must continue to collect income eligibility applications and claim the meals in the category determined by the size and income level of each household. This change does not apply to Even Start programs.

Head Start sponsors may now claim these meals as free **retroactively** beginning December 12, 2007, by submitting revised Claims for Reimbursement to change meal categories to free for Head Start enrollees previously claimed in the reduced and paid categories. For December, you must maintain back-up documentation showing that the meals were claimed free **beginning December 12, 2007**, and in reduced and paid categories between December 1 and December 11, 2007. It is not necessary for you to submit this documentation at this time, but upon request from this office, the documentation must be readily available.

Revised claims for December 2007 through April 2008 must be entered for payment on or before June 29, 2008, the 60-day limit for all April claims. *You will receive an error message when entering all claims except April; however, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) staff will resolve these errors prior to payment. It is not necessary for sponsors to contact the CACFP staff when entering claims.* Claims submitted after June 29, 2008, will not be processed at the higher rates. Both meal counts and enrollment counts must be updated.

If you have questions regarding these changes, please contact Melanie Balchunas by e-mail at [mbalchunas@state.pa.us](mailto:mbalchunas@state.pa.us), or by phone at 1-800-331-0129, Extension 225248. Thank you.