

Child Nutrition Program Certification

Summary:

- The way the Illinois Department of Human Services certifies eligibility for Federal Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is changing. Programs affected include the **National School Lunch, School Breakfast and Child and Adult Care Food Programs**.
- For the upcoming 2009-2010 school year, the Illinois Department of Human Services will no longer send the family a certification letter.
- Instead, children whose names are matched in an electronic file will be directly certified for CNP benefits and will not have to turn in a certification letter or complete a paper application for those program benefits.
- This change will hopefully simplify the CNP application process and increase CNP participation.



With some exceptions, a child who receives TANF or Food Stamps and attends a school that participates in one of the Child Nutrition Programs (School Lunch, School Breakfast and Child and Adult Care Food Programs) is eligible to participate in one of the Federal nutrition programs.

Historically the Illinois Department of Human Services sends a letter in July certifying eligibility for the Child Nutrition Programs. This year the family will not receive this letter. The Illinois State Board of Education has begun a new electronic direct certification system, so IDHS will provide ISBE a monthly electronic file of TANF and FS children through age 18. The schools will use the electronic file to identify children eligible for the Child Nutrition Program. Families who believe they are eligible for a Child Nutrition Program, can still contact their school and apply.

ISBE's Electronic Direct Certification (EDC) System: The monthly IDHS electronic file will be uploaded to the EDC. Upon demand the public or private school (or other Child Nutrition Provider), may access the EDC system for confirmation of a child's TANF/FS participation.

ISBE's Annual Public School Report: ISBE will match it's student records against the June DHS electronic file and produce and distribute a report to public schools that will confirm TANF/FS participation for public school students. Families who apply and receive Food Stamp benefits after June 2009 will not be on this electronic file.

Schools or school districts are still able to contact the local IDHS/FCRC to request verification that the child receives TANF and/or FS benefits when the Electronic Direct Certification system does not confirm enrollment in these benefits, but the family says they are enrolled.

Other inquires about the Child Nutrition Program may be referred to:

**Illinois State Board of Education
Nutrition Programs Division Staff @ (800)545-7892**