

PUBLIC RELEASE FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS

Harris County Department of Education Head Start (HCDE) announces its participation in and policy for free and reduced-price meals served under the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Each center and the main office of the Head Start program have a copy of the policy available for anyone to review.

The following household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility:

| Income Standards for Determining Nutrition Program Eligibility | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010 | | | |
| Family Size | Household Incomes | | |
| | Annual Income | Monthly Income | Weekly Income |
| 1 | \$20,036 | \$1,670 | \$386 |
| 2 | \$26,955 | \$2,247 | \$519 |
| 3 | \$33,874 | \$2,823 | \$652 |
| 4 | \$40,793 | \$3,400 | \$785 |
| 5 | \$47,712 | \$3,976 | \$918 |
| 6 | \$54,631 | \$4,553 | \$1051 |
| 7 | \$61,550 | \$5,130 | \$1,184 |
| 8 | \$68,469 | \$5,706 | \$1,317 |
| For each additional family member, add: | + \$6, 919 | + \$577 | + \$134 |

Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Additionally, if your child is enrolled as a participant in the Head Start Program and meets Head Start's low-income criteria, your child is automatically eligible for free meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and Summer Food Service Program without further application.

Although income-eligible children participating in the Head Start program are automatically eligible for free meals without further application, application forms and a letter to parents are provided annually as a part of the Head Start Program enrollment process. Copies of the application and the letter to parents are available at each center and at the main office.

If you need to complete an application for free or reduced-price meals, the staff at your child's center will assist you with the process, including providing you with a letter that certifies your child is currently enrolled as an income-eligible participant in Head Start. In the event a change occurs that results in your child no longer being enrolled as an income-eligible Head Start participant, you must immediately report that change to your child's center. As the information provided on the application is used to determine eligibility, it may be verified at any time during the school year by Head Start staff or other program officials.

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If you are completing an application, it is important to answer all the questions on the form, because if *information about household members and income is missing, federal support may be reduced*. You will be asked the following information when you complete an application:

- The names of children enrolled
- Total household income by source
- All household members' names
- The Social Security number of the adult household member signing the application or an indication that the household member does not possess a Social Security number
- An adult household member's signature
- NOTE: TANF/Food Stamp households must provide only the children's names, their case number and an adult household member's signature.

Households approved for free or reduced-priced meals are not required to report changes in income status, household size or when the household is no longer eligible for food stamps or TANF. This provision does not apply to a household provided with "temporary" approval for meal benefits or to children who are no longer enrolled as income eligible participants in the Head Start program.

Information may be sought and applications may be submitted at any time during the year. The information you provide is strictly confidential and will be used only to determine eligibility and/or verify information. According to the free and reduced-price policy, Harris County Department of Education Head Start (HCDE) reviews applications to verify eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling may request a formal appeal, either orally or in writing to:

Venetia L. Peacock
Head Start Director
6300 Irvington Boulevard
Houston, TX 77022
(713) 694-6300

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, Harris County Department of Education Head Start (HCDE) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to:

United States Department of Agriculture
Director, Office of Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

You may also call toll free (866) 632-9992 or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users).