

1. What is Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)?

The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority to approve States to implement a temporary program called Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT). P-EBT provides children in kindergarten through twelfth grade eligible for free or reduced-price meals with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits. The program is administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Department is partnering with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to ensure children and families receive this important benefit. All children eligible for free and reduced-price meals are eligible for these benefits, not only children currently in receipt of SNAP. This includes all students that are enrolled at a school that falls under the free and reduce priced meals community eligibility option.

2. How much will an eligible child receive?

Each child is eligible for \$5.70 (the federal reimbursement rate for breakfast and lunch) for each day a school is closed due to COVID-19. For children eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of March, the total amount will be \$302.10. For children eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of April, the total amount will be \$239.40.

3. How are P-EBT benefits issued?

ODJFS obtained a list of all of Ohio children eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and will issue the benefits through the EBT vendor. County agencies will not be processing any applications for this program. The benefits will be provided on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that is mailed to the families which they can then use to buy food at local grocery stores. If an eligible child is currently NOT in receipt of SNAP, the P-EBT benefits will be issued on a special P-EBT card in the child's name and mailed to the family. If an eligible child is *currently in receipt of SNAP*, the P-EBT benefits will be issued directly to the existing account and will be available on their SNAP EBT card. If the child cannot be matched to an existing account, a P-EBT card will be mailed to the family. If the child has previously been on SNAP, but is not currently, he or she will receive a P-EBT card. Each child will receive a P-EBT card; benefits of siblings will not be grouped onto one card.

3. When will PEBT benefits be available on the SNAP EBT or special P-EBT card?

The PEBT benefits will be available in SNAP accounts (for children currently on SNAP) by the end of May 2020. ~~P-EBT cards will also be mailed to non-SNAP families at this time.~~

Update 5/28/20: Not all children currently in receipt of SNAP were able to be matched with their current SNAP account, therefore, they will receive a P-EBT card. All P-EBT cards should be received by mid-June. If a family has not received the P-EBT card by mid-June, they should contact the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071.

How do I know if a child is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

If a child was eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of 4/29/20 as determined by the school, they are eligible for P-EBT benefits.

4. How will families with eligible children be notified they are eligible for P-EBT?

A flyer will be emailed to the families from the child's school. The flyer will explain the program, why the child is eligible, how benefits can be used, pin set-up, opt out language, and notification that the card and benefits are non-transferable. Ohio will also communicate about the program through social media, our eligibility system, websites, as well as a press release. Additionally, the EBT vendor will include a single Interactive Voice Response (IVR) message on the cardholder IVR which will provide general information about P-EBT, including but not limited to information such as anticipated benefit delivery schedule and amount.

Update 5/22/20: Instructions on how to activate the card will be included with the card when mailed to the family.

5. Can a family apply for P-EBT benefits?

No. P-EBT does not have an application. Any child eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of 4/29/20 should receive the P-EBT benefits.

6. Are there hearing rights for P-EBT?

No

7. How often will this benefit be issued?

The Federal Guidance at this time is that this will be a one-time issuance for the number of days the child will be out of school.

8. My school doesn't close until June but the benefit calculates to the end of May. Shouldn't I receive money for the days in June my child is out?

No, the state of Ohio determined the average close date for all schools in Ohio and used that date for all children.

9. How long will a family have access to the P-EBT benefits on the card?

The P-EBT benefits will be available for 12 months. If after 12 months, the P-EBT benefits have not been spent, they will be removed (expunged) from the account. Current SNAP households will still have access to their remaining SNAP benefits.

10. Who should a family contact if they have questions regarding P-EBT?

For general program questions or questions about benefits or the P-EBT card, please have the family contact the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071.

If the family has questions about whether or not a child was eligible for free and reduced-price meals on or before April 29, 2020, they should contact their local school district.

UPDATE 5/22/20

11. How is the P-EBT card activated?

The family should call the phone number on the back of the card. The family will need the EBT card number on the front of the card, zip code, and date of birth of the child named on the card. The family will need to enter the need to **enter the four digits of the year of the child's birth (e.g. 1980)** for the last 4 digits of the child's Social Security Number, when prompted. You will need to set a new four-digit PIN number to use the card.

UPDATE 5/28/20

12. Is Pandemic EBT a replacement for "grab-and-go" and/or summer meals offered by schools?

No, schools can continue operating these programs and children may participate in both.

13. Are children who are home-schooled or attend a school that does not participate in the National School Lunch Program eligible for P-EBT?

No, only children who would be receiving free/reduced-price meals if schools were open are eligible.

14. Is P-EBT available to immigrant children?

Yes. Like the National School Lunch Program, P-EBT is available to all school children regardless of immigration status. P-EBT is a replacement for free/reduced-price school meals which is not considered in a "public charge" determination.

15. What address will the P-EBT card be sent to if a child's parents are divorced or are not residing in the same household?

P-EBT cards will go to the address identified by the school. This also applies to children currently in receipt of SNAP but could not be matched to the active case.

16. For foster children who are in receipt of free and reduced-price meals, who will the EBT card go to - the foster parent or the public children services agency?

The card will go to the address identified by the school. It could vary for each child depending on what was reported and updated by the school. Also, if the child was not matched to a current SNAP case, the card will go to the address on file with the school.