Center for Students, Families & Communities

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POLICY STATEMENT

Automatic Eligibility for Free Meal Benefits Extended to All Children Enrolled in Hea Start

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Source:	USDA Memo SP 23-2008, CACFP 07-2008, SFSP 06-2008
Code:	SP, NSLP, CACFP 01-08
Audience:	Head Start Grantees
Effective Date:	**6/30/2008**
Replaces:	N/A
Program:	**All Programs**

INTRODUCTION

On December 12, 2007, the President signed The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-134) which contains several significant revisions to the Head Start program, including amendments to the eligibility criteria in section 645 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9840). Public Law 110-134 also amends 9(b)(12)(A)(iii) and 17(c)(5) of the National School Lunch Act to correspond with the new eligibility criteria.

Head Start serves primarily children from families with household incomes at or below the Federal poverty level. However a small proportion of children in families with household incomes above the poverty level may be served. In the past, only those children who were income eligible for Head Start were considered automatically eligible for free meals in the Child Nutrition Programs.

Public Law 110-134 makes any child enrolled in a Head Start Program automatically eligible for free meals without further application or eligibility determination. Therefore, even a child who is not from a household with an income at or below the poverty level is automatically eligible for free meals if they are enrolled in Head Start.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

- All reimbursable meals served to children enrolled in Head Start may be claimed at the free rate. Institutions and SFAs may submit revised claims for reimbursement to include reimbursable meals served to Head Start enrollees that were not previously claimed at the free rate.

- All such reimbursable meals served on ***December 12, 2007, and thereafter*** may be

claimed. In order to retroactively claim meals at the free rate, SFAs and other institutions must refund any money they received from families of Head Start children who were not previously eligible for free meals.

Ohio Procedure for Claiming:

- All Head Start Grantees and Delegates may submit revised Claims for Reimbursement to include meals for children who were previously claimed as Reduced or Paid, starting Wednesday, December 12, 2007.
- Upon receipt of this memo any claim month remaining open for the 2008 program year maybe submitted as usual with the inclusion of all enrolled children as free. These months would include May 2008 through September 2008.
- Retro Claim for Reimbursement adjustments for claims from December through June months prior to July 1, 2008 must be entered into the CRRS program by **August 29, 2008.** At this time the CRRS program will be opened to allow Head Start Grantees and Delegates the opportunity to make upward claim adjustments.
- All records supporting the revisions must be kept for review by the State Agency upon demand.

Step by Step Instructions for Revisions are attached to this Memo.

If you have question regarding this process please contact Mary Kershaw, Assistant Director, CACFP or Brigette Hires, Assistant Director, NSLP for Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition

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File Attachment