

# Pre-Kindergarten Eligibility Guidance

For School Year 2020-2021

For School Year (SY) 2020-2021, USDA reinterpreted the criteria for a comparable state-funded pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) program. TDA's request for a waiver to permit all Texas pre-K students to receive free eligibility for School Nutrition Programs (SNPs) was denied.

Therefore, starting SY 2020-2021, pre-K student eligibility must be determined by one of the following methods:

## 1. Standard Eligibility Determination. Individual student or household eligibility determination, as appropriate:

- Household application establishing eligibility by income; or
- Categorical participation in one of the following programs as the source of eligibility determination: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster, migrant, Head Start, or homeless (including runaway or displaced) program.

Pre-K students may have a free, reduced-price, or paid eligibility status based on a standard eligibility determination. For more information on standard eligibility determination, see the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 4, Determining Eligibility* available at [www.SquareMeals.org](http://www.SquareMeals.org).

## 2. List of Eligible Pre-K Students. Individual student or household eligibility determination, as appropriate, through one of two ways:

List of pre-K students meeting the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) free or reduced-price eligibility requirements. The list:

- (a) must indicate each student's free or reduced-price eligibility based on income or categorical documentation collected by the pre-K program and
- (b) must be signed and dated by a pre-K program official (electronic or paper).

When a list of pre-K students with eligibility status is shared, the SNP will not review the source documentation. The CE will accept the list as accurate based on the pre-K program official's signature.

**NOTE:** CEs must not use the School Nutrition Program (SNP) household meal application or Texas-ELMS to establish pre-K program eligibility.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides guidance on eligibility for pre-K programs on the TEA website ([www.tea.texas.gov](http://www.tea.texas.gov)), including the use of the *Socioeconomic Information Form* template developed by TEA available at <http://tea.texas.gov/Workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=25769816295>.



Food and Nutrition Division  
National School Lunch Program



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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## Siblings



If a sibling of a pre-K student has an eligibility determination that applies to the entire household, the SNP may share the eligibility status with the pre-K program.

Similarly, after the pre-K list has been shared with the SNP, the SNP may include the pre-K students in its direct certification match in Texas-ELMS. A match in Texas-ELMS for a pre-K student will extend to all students in the household. Direct Certification SNAP/TANF/Medicaid Free will take precedence over pre-K eligibility.

## Point of Service (POS) Designation



In the SNP's Point of Service (POS) system, the CE must have a method to indicate each pre-K student's source of eligibility—free or reduced-price based on a pre-K list.



## Carryover Eligibility for Pre-K Student Eligibility from the Previous Year

Pre-K student free eligibility from SY 2019-2020 will carryover for the first 30 operating days of SY 2020-2021 or until a new determination is made.



## Community Eligibility Program (CEP), Identified Students

If a CE establishes the eligibility of pre-K students using a list that indicates each pre-K student's status as free or reduced, the CE may include all pre-K free students as identified students that count toward a site's CEP identified student percentage (ISP). The eligibility for these students is established without a household meal application.

