

**PERMANENCY PLANNING POLICY, PROTOCOL, AND GUIDANCE
COVID-19 - Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)**

Purpose –

North Carolina has been approved to administer the Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program. The P-EBT program will help caretakers purchase food for children in their care while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Children in foster care qualify for free or reduced lunch in school and therefore are eligible.

Legal Basis -

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority to approve state agency plans for temporary emergency standards of eligibility and levels of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

Guidance -

Foster Families:

For children in family foster care and relative placements, the P-EBT card will come to the address that is on file with the child's school. The card should arrive in the foster parent's name, though in some instances the card may be issued in the child's name. Foster parents caring for a child can still use the P-EBT card even if it arrives in the child's name. However, if the child is no longer in the home, the foster parent will return the card to the child's social worker. The social worker will then provide the card to the new caretaker. If reunification has occurred, the card will be given to the parent.

The P-EBT card should transition with the child. If the child's placement changes, the card and PIN should be provided to the social worker who will get the card to the new caretaker. If a young adult turns 18 and chooses to leave their placement during this period, the P-EBT card should be provided to them at discharge.

Congregate Care Settings:

For children in foster care living in congregate care settings, P-EBT cards will come to the facility address in the name of the child. Every attempt is made to match the child address records to group home/congregate care addresses. If you should receive a card for a child who is no longer residing in your facility, the card will be returned to the child's social worker who will provide the card to the new caretaker or parent, if reunification has occurred.

The P-EBT card should transition with the child. If the child's placement changes, the card and PIN will be returned to the social worker who will get the card to the new caretaker. If a young adult turns 18 and chooses to leave their placement during this period, the P-EBT card should be provided to them at discharge.

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Activation of P-EBT funds:

Once the P-EBT card is received, recipients will need to create a Personalized Identification Number (PIN) for use with the card. Recipients can ask questions, monitor their transaction history, check their balance and use other features through the ebtEdge mobile app, the website <https://www.ebtedge.com/gov/portal/PortalHome.do>, or call center at 1-888-622-7328.

Allocation of Benefits:

Two installments will be made amounting to approximately \$371 in total P-EBT benefits per child. Unused benefits will rollover month-to-month and must be used within 365 days. Additional Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding P-EBT benefits can be found at https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/P-EBT_FAQ.pdf.

After June 12, 2020, the ebtEdge call center can assist if you feel a child in your care should have received benefits but did not receive them. Immediate questions about the status of benefits for children in foster care should be routed to the child's direct social worker or regional child welfare consultant.

Resources

General information regarding DHHS's response to COVID-10 can be found at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/covid-19-information-local-social-services-agencies>.

P-EBT Follow up to 100 County Call was distributed to local agencies on May 13, 2020
<https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/dss/dcdl/dssdirectorsoffice/DIR-02-2020.pdf>.