

Michigan Department of Education Pre-K Michigan School Meals Frequently Asked Questions

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- ❖ **Definition of Pre-K: four-year-old students going to kindergarten the next year.**
- ❖ **Pre-K is used throughout this document to represent any preschool programs.**
- ❖ **To participate in the Michigan School Meals program, the students must be eligible to enter Kindergarten in the 2024-2025 school year.**
- ❖ **Only meals claimed under National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are eligible for the Michigan School Meals Program.**

Pre-K participation in the Michigan School Meals Program

Will Pre-K students be included in the Michigan School Meals program?

If a Pre-K program is for 4-year-old students that would attend kindergarten the following year, they are eligible to participate in the Michigan School Meals.

What do I do with a split Pre-K classroom (a classroom that includes 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds)?

If there are 3-year-olds in a split age classroom with older students, the 3-year-olds must still be claimed through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or billed to the Pre-K program or the household.

If Pre-K students attend a half day program, are they eligible to participate in the Michigan School Meals program if they are not at school for both breakfast and lunch?

Yes. An individual student is not required to participate in both breakfast and lunch at school. The school must offer both breakfast and lunch every day to participate in the Michigan School Meals program.

Can we claim meals for a Pre-K program in our district under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) if the Pre-K program is in its own building?

If the Pre-K program is operated by the district and the meals meet all the requirements of the NSLP and SBP (meal pattern, point of service meal counts, etc.), they can be claimed for reimbursement. The Pre-K building must be listed in the Coordinated Application as an approved site.

Our school participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and rents or provides space to another entity that operates a childcare center in our elementary school. Can we claim the breakfasts and lunches that we serve to children in this childcare program?

No. If a program is not operated under the school or school district, regardless of being in the same building, they are not eligible to participate in the NSLP, SBP, or the Michigan School Meals program. The childcare program may apply to participate in the CACFP.

Our district operates an in-house childcare center for infants, toddlers, preschoolers (3-year-olds) as well as the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). I understand that GSRP will be eligible for state reimbursement through the Michigan School Meals program, what about the rest of them?

Infant and toddler meals are not eligible for additional state reimbursement through the Michigan School Meals program.

Definition of Pre-K: four-year-old students going to kindergarten the next year.

GSRP and Head Start meals can be claimed in NSLP/SBP and be a part of the Michigan School Meals program (breakfast and lunch). Three-year-olds and younger do not qualify and must be claimed under CACFP.

Our school has a Strong Beginnings (SB) State-Funded (Sec. 32t) Three-year-old Preschool/GSRP. Are they eligible for Michigan School Meals?

These children are not eligible to attend kindergarten the following school year. These children's meals may only be claimed through CACFP are not eligible to participate in Michigan School Meals.

My district has a district-run Pre-K program. Are those students eligible to participate in the program?

For a School Nutrition Program sponsor to be eligible to claim meals served to Pre-K students in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, the following criteria must be met:

- The Pre-K students must be enrolled and in regular daily attendance at the approved school building where meals are served and claimed for reimbursement.
- The Pre-K program (including Head Start, Great Start Readiness Program, tuition-based preschool, etc.) must be operated as an administrative unit of the school district. The school district is in fact, the administrative agency (grantee/sub-grantee) for the Pre-K program.
- The Pre-K program students must be 4 years old or older which means all students would be eligible for kindergarten the following year. In order to participate in the Michigan School Meals program, the students must be eligible to enter Kindergarten in the 2024-2025 school year.

Are the only Pre-K programs that qualify for the Michigan School Meals program Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)?

Pre-K students that are 4 years old are eligible for the Michigan School Meals program which includes GSRP and other 4-year-old preschoolers that will be starting Kindergarten the next year. Additionally, ECSE students are eligible for Michigan School Meals regardless of age.

The Pre-K Meal Pattern and Meal Service

What meal pattern should we use for meals that we serve to Pre-K students?

Pre-K students eating in the cafeteria with other elementary students can be served the meal pattern that is used for the other elementary students. Pre-K students eating meals separately from the other elementary students should follow the meal pattern applicable to the age of the students. [Serving School Meals to Preschoolers | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/food-and-nutrition-service)

Is family style meal service required?

Family style meal service is not required for the Michigan School Meals program but is a requirement of Head Start and the Great Start Readiness Program.

I have a split classroom with 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds, can I provide them a different meal/meal service option depending on their age?

No. If you are participating in the federal Child Nutrition Programs, all students in the classroom must have the same access to a meal/meal service regardless of how the meals are funded.



The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

Our school participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and operates a Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Can we claim the breakfasts and lunches that we serve to the GSRP students enrolled in this program through the Michigan School Meals program?

Yes, the meals can be provided for free for the students in this GSRP program through the Michigan School Meals program as long as they meet all of the requirements of the NSLP and the SBP (meal pattern, point of service meal counts, etc.). Note: All Pre-K programs in Michigan are licensed as childcare centers so the license must list whether the program is GSRP or preschool.

If my GSRP classrooms are mostly operated through CACFP but I have a few classrooms that qualify for NSLP and SBP participation, how can I claim these meals?

GSRP can be claimed through either CACFP or NSLP/SBP. CACFP requires students be claimed by income eligibility. Student meals that are not fully reimbursable cannot be charged to the student. However, the GSRP has funding to cover the reduced and paid eligible student meal price per meal or can be charged the difference in reimbursement rates for meals not fully reimbursed at the free rate. Claiming GSRP in NSLP will result in all student meals being reimbursable. However, it may be more feasible for GSRP students to be claimed in CACFP if most of the building is claimed through CACFP and only one/two classrooms are GSRP.

Are Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) who run the GSRP programs in our counties considered community-based organizations (CBO) if they have GSRP classrooms in our buildings?

An ISD is not classified as a community-based organization, and meals can be claimed through NSLP and SBP. The program can participate in the Michigan School Meals program either through the ISD or through the district.

For GSRP, will I need the individual names of the students that are provided breakfast and/or lunch to claim meals now that the students eat for free?

For schools that claim based on free, reduced-price, and paid student eligibility, the answer is yes. Schools will need to claim these GSRP students in the Free, Reduced and Paid categories they qualify for.

For a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school, you claim total breakfasts and lunches served by building, so you do not need to count meals based on student name or eligibility. Note: The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) still recommends using student names or electronic points of service (POS) to track meals served, when possible, for CEP schools.

What date do students have to be 4 years old by? We have GSRP students not yet 4 when school started in September but will be age-eligible for kindergarten next school year.

These GSRP students would be eligible for Michigan School Meals because they are eligible to enter Kindergarten in School Year 2024-2025.

Head Start

Our school participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and rents space in our elementary school to a Head Start program that is not operated by our school district. Can we claim the breakfasts and lunches that we serve to children in this Head Start program?

No. If a program is not operated under the school or school district, regardless of being in the same building, they are not eligible to participate in the NSLP, SBP, or the Michigan School Meals program.

The Head Start program may apply to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

My district has a 4-year-old Head Start program. Can these students be included in CEP and/or the Michigan School Meals program?

Yes, the 4-year-old Head Start students can be included in your CEP application (Head Start students are categorically eligible for free meals regardless of household income) as well as part of the Michigan School Meals program. Keep in mind the Head Start program must be run by the school district or an intermediate school district to include those students in CEP and the Michigan School Meals program.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

Our school participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and operates a childcare center in our elementary school. Can we claim the breakfasts and lunches that we serve to children in this childcare program?

No. Per USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) instruction 776-7, childcare centers are not eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. Childcare centers may participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Childcare may include, but is not limited to, any of the following scenarios:

- the program is licensed or certified as a childcare
- the program serves children under 33 months of age
- the program's hours extend beyond the academic school day
- the program's operating days extend beyond the academic school year



We are a community-based organization (CBO) that operates 13 GSRP classrooms in six school districts. Our classrooms are inside of the school district buildings, but our students are NOT considered students in the district. We purchase our food from the school districts, but we run our own CACFP separate from the districts and must negotiate meal pricing and sign food service contracts with the districts. Can we participate in the Michigan School Meals program?

The legislation only extended funding for universal meals to public schools, public school academies, and intermediate school districts. As a CBO, you must participate in CACFP and are not eligible for the Michigan School Meals program.

Early Childhood Special Education Program

An Intermediate School District (ISD) we provide meals to has an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program for preschoolers ages 3-5. Can those students receive free meals through the Michigan School Meals program? If so, do we have to provide/satellite meals to that program?

Students who attend an ECSE program are eligible for free meals through the Michigan School Meals program if the meals are claimed through NSLP/SBP. The meals can also be claimed through CACFP, but those meals must be claimed based on student eligibility and are not free through the Michigan School Meals program. If you have questions about your ECSE program, CACFP, or the Michigan School Meals program, please contact MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov.

Our school participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and operates an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program. Can we claim the breakfasts and lunches that we serve to the ECSE students enrolled in this program? Can the students receive free meals through the Michigan School Meals program regardless of the student's ages?

Yes, the meals can be claimed as long as they meet all the requirements of the NSLP and the SBP (meal pattern, point of service meal counts, etc.). The meals can also be provided for free through the Michigan School Meals program regardless of the student's ages. *Note: The Early Childhood Special Education students are the only exception for free meals when students are under the age of 4 or are not eligible to attend Kindergarten the next school year.*

Participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

What is the CACFP?

The CACFP provides federal funds to non-residential child and adult care facilities to serve nutritious meals and snacks enrolled in care settings. CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of care by making it affordable for many families. The program's



goal is to improve and maintain the health and nutritional status of participants in care, while promoting the development of good-eating habits. Contact the CACFP team at MDE-CACFP@michigan.gov for more information.

How do I apply for CACFP?

If your school district is interested in applying for CACFP, you do not have to go through a separate, new sponsor application process. You can simply add CACFP to your already existing CNP: Coordinated Application. Contact the CACFP team at MDE-CACFP@michigan.gov for more information.

During school breaks (Winter Break, Spring Break, etc.), can we claim meals served to students attending childcare and Pre-K programs under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP)?

No. Only meals served on academic school days can be claimed under the NSLP and the SBP. Schools interested in providing meals during breaks such as Winter Break or Spring Break may apply for CACFP.

If I add CACFP to one of my buildings, will it prevent me from operating a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) site at that location?

No, it will not prevent the building from operating a SFSP site. There needs to be separation between the SFSP and the students receiving meals through CACFP to ensure students are not receiving meals from both programs. If a building has CACFP during the school year, then the students must be served through CACFP during the summer.

Financial Administration for Pre-K programs

How do we price meals for 3-year-olds if they are being billed as a catering and not claimed in CACFP within our district?

If the meal served is equivalent to a reimbursable meal meeting NSLP meal patterns, price as follows:

Lunch

NSLP Severe Need Free Reimbursement Rate SY23-24	\$4.35
Commodity Entitlement/USDA Foods	\$0.2950
Minimum Total	\$4.65

NSLP Non-Severe Need Free Reimbursement Rate SY23-24	\$4.33
Commodity Entitlement/USDA Foods	\$0.2950
Minimum Total	\$4.63



Breakfast

SBP Severe Need Free Reimbursement Rate SY23-24	\$2.73
Minimum Total	\$2.73

SBP Non-Severe Need Free Reimbursement Rate SY23-24	\$2.28
Minimum Total	\$2.28

National School Lunch Program sponsors must make sure they do not earn less revenue than providing reimbursable meals to eligible students. Not charging enough could put the School Nutrition Program sponsor out of compliance with the Revenue from Nonprogram Food Requirements ([SP20-2016](#)).

How much do I charge for meals to reduced and paid eligible students in CACFP for our tuition-based preschool/daycare classes?

If the preschool program is set up as non-pricing, a portion of daycare or tuition fees are meant to pay for the cost of students' meals that is not covered by the CACFP federal reimbursement. Meals must be tracked and billed to the preschool program, or another non-federal funding source. Funds must be transferred to the Non-profit Food Service Account from that funding source to provide revenue for the meals. The following rates per meal must be used:

CACFP Lunch Meals Billed to Tuition Preschool/Daycare Classes		
Child Eligibility Status	SY 23/24 Reimbursement Rate	Charge to Preschool Program
Free	\$4.25	N/A
Reduced-Price	\$3.85	\$0.40
Paid	\$0.40	\$3.85*
Sponsor must receive equitable revenue per meal type. *Difference between free and paid reimbursement.		

CACFP Breakfast Meals Billed to Tuition Preschool/Daycare Classes		
Child Eligibility Status	SY 23/24 Reimbursement Rate	Charge to Preschool Program
Free	\$2.28	N/A
Reduced-Price	\$1.98	\$0.30
Paid	\$0.38	\$1.90*
Sponsor must receive equitable revenue per meal type. *Difference between free and paid reimbursement.		

CACFP Snack Meals Billed to Tuition Preschool/Daycare Classes		
Child Eligibility Status	SY 23/24 Reimbursement Rate	Charge to Preschool Program
Free	\$1.17	N/A
Reduced-Price	\$0.58	\$0.59
Paid	\$0.10	\$1.07*
Sponsor must receive equitable revenue per meal type. *Difference between free and paid reimbursement.		

What type of agreement or contract do I need to provide preschool meals for another entity?

If you are providing meals to a CACFP sponsor, they may ask you to complete a Vended Meal Agreement with a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Vendor document. For School Districts that have a self-operated meal service, no further agreement is required.

If the School District has a Food Service Contract, they will need to work with MDE's Procurement and Contracts team to ensure the situation is included in the Food Service Contract. Contact the Procurement and Contracts Team for more information at mde-fsmc-vended@michigan.gov.

Additional Resources

[Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#)

[CACFP Staff Directory and Territories](#)

[CACFP Newsletters](#)

[Michigan School Meals](#)

[School Nutrition Program \(SNP\) Analyst Territories and Contact Information](#)

[Great Start Readiness Program \(GSRP\)](#)

[Serving School Meals to Preschoolers | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#)