

OSPI CNS Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Reference Sheet

Study Month Tips

Conducting a Study Month

1. The study month must be conducted annually in the month of **October** to set the rate of reimbursement for the fiscal year.
 - a. New sites added to the agreement after October may conduct a mid-year study month.
 - b. Sponsors that do not start operation at their sites until after October may use the first month, they are operational as their study month.
2. List only those children in attendance during the study month on the Attendance Roster, except:
 - a. If the center participates in the At-Risk Afterschool Program:
 - A school-age child who attends **only after school, on school days** during the study month must not be listed on the roster. This child is not part of childcare.
 - A school-age child who is in attendance before school or on a non-school day during the study month must be listed on the roster.
3. **If a center enrolls infants, they must be included on the Attendance Roster.** Infants must be listed on the Attendance Roster and included in the study month whether the center claims infant meals.
4. If an Enrollment/Income-Eligibility Application (E/IEA) is completed for a child who was **not** in attendance during the study month, **do not** list the child on the Attendance Roster.
5. For an institution with more than one center, children that attend more than one site during the study month should be on each site's attendance roster.
6. E/IEAs are valid for one year. Institutions may use the date that the parent/guardian signed the form, or the date the institution's representative signed the form as the effective date of the E/IEA.
 - a. If the E/IEA expires within the study month, it is valid through the end of the month.
 - b. When using the parent/guardian signature date as the effective date, the form must have been signed by the institution representative within the same month the parent signed the form or the immediately following month.



- c. If the institution representative does not evaluate and sign the E/IEA within these guidelines, the institution representative's signature date must be used as the effective date.
7. Working Connections numbers begin with 2-0-0 and **cannot** be accepted as Basic Food or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) numbers. State-paid childcare does not qualify a child as categorically eligible for free meals.
8. Ensure the E/IEA for a foster child is signed and dated by the child's legal guardian, foster parent, or another official representative, such as a social worker. The child must be placed in the home by the court or the state. Informal arrangements do not apply.
9. Children who are enrolled in Head Start or an Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) are automatically eligible for free meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) without further application.
 - a. Documentation from the grantee agency must confirm the child's enrollment in Head Start or ECEAP during the study month.
 - b. A parent/guardian of a Head Start or ECEAP enrolled child must still complete a CACFP Enrollment Form.
10. Head Start/ECEAP grantees providing services to non-Head Start/ECEAP enrolled children (for example, community children or children in childcare) must complete a study month with an Attendance Roster for each center that provides services to non-Head Start/ECEAP children. A grantee cannot choose to not claim the non-Head Start/ECEAP children.
11. Head Start/ECEAP free meal eligibility does not extend to siblings. To claim sibling meals throughout the year for, siblings in attendance must have a completed E/IEA on file and must be placed on the CACFP Attendance Roster.
12. The parent/guardian is to complete the entire E/IEA. Center staff are not to complete the form for a family and have the parent/guardian sign it.
13. To ensure an accurate income determination has been made, you may need to clarify frequency of reported income with the adult who signed the E/IEA.
14. Income received from the state for foster children does not need to be reported as household income.
15. Report projected annual income as the current income for seasonal workers.
16. Use last year's income to project current year's **net income** unless current monthly income provides a more accurate measure for self-employed persons. Business expenses subtracted from gross receipts equal net income for the self-employed.
17. Do not list student loans and grants on the E/IEA.
18. It is acceptable for the director of the emergency shelter where the child resides or a school official or center director to complete an E/IEA for the homeless child. If E/IEAs are not available for homeless children, it is acceptable to document free

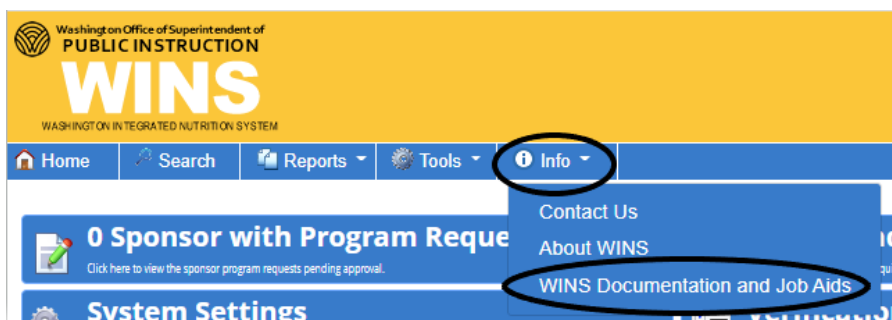
meal eligibility by listing the child’s name, effective date of eligibility, date of withdrawal from school or changes in eligibility, residence, and signature of determining official. Keep the documentation on file. The child is categorically free.

19. When grandparents (or other people) are living in the household, their income should be included in the total monthly income reported if they are considered part of the same economic unit. An economic unit is one in which the household members pool money together to pay for rent, utilities, food, etc.
20. Keep a copy of the CACFP Attendance Roster on file for each study month that is completed.
21. To be eligible to claim meal reimbursement, proprietary (for-profit) institutions must ensure monthly that at each site at least 25% of the children in care (based on total attendance or license capacity, whichever is less) are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. When sponsors have one or more sites that do not qualify in a month, they must **not claim meals** at that site. Once the site again qualifies, meals may be claimed.

Changing a Study Month

Conducting a new study month during the fiscal year may be appropriate when changes to enrollment result in greater free and reduced-price participation. Sponsors may update their study month one (1) time per fiscal year.

1. Sponsors are required to add a note in WINS explaining the reason for a study month change.
2. If an updated study month is conducted, it must be conducted at all sites. For this reason, program sponsors should assess the anticipated change in reimbursement at all sites. If there is not a notable change with the new study month, Sponsors should consider waiting for another month that may significantly change the rate of reimbursement.
 - a. Use the CACFP-Study Month Calculator Tool to estimate the difference in reimbursement when new study month values are entered compared to current study month numbers. To access the calculator, [log into WINS](#) and select the “**Info**” tab. From the dropdown, select “**WINS Documentation and Job Aids**”. Next select the document titled “**CACFP-FY23 Study Month Calculator Tool**”.



Reference

- [7 CFR 226.9\(b\)\(3\)](#)

Resources

- [CACFP Requirements and Materials webpage](#), Study Month Dropdown

Acronym Reference

- CACFP- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- CNS- Child Nutrition Services
- ECEAP- Early Childhood Education Assistance Program
- E/IEA- Enrollment/Income-Eligibility Application
- OSPI- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- TANF- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families