

Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

DATE: March 30, 2023

SUBJECT: Head Start and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

TO: All SNAP State Agencies
All Regions

In April 2022, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released a [joint announcement](#) about a change in Head Start policy which makes it easier for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households to become eligible for Head Start programs. ACF expanded its interpretation of “public assistance,” as used in the Head Start statute, to include SNAP. Now SNAP households can demonstrate their eligibility for Head Start by simply showing proof of SNAP receipt or eligibility, such as a copy of a notice of approval, other documentation of eligibility or benefits from the SNAP agency, or an Electronic Benefit Transfer card with SNAP identification number to become categorically eligible for Head Start services.

FNS is aware of and appreciates the fact that many State agencies are already partnering with Head Start programs to promote this opportunity. To continue improving program coordination and customer service, FNS encourages State agencies to identify opportunities to promote this information, with the understanding they will use non-SNAP funds, including disseminating the enclosed flyer to SNAP applicants and recipients and posting it to your public-facing website.

Additional resources and information about this policy change can be found on the SNAP page of the [Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center](#) website. While eligibility for Head Start does not guarantee enrollment, SNAP offices and interested households can use the [Head Start locator](#) to find local programs and apply for enrollment.

In addition, FNS encourages State agencies to connect with [Head Start State Collaboration Offices](#) to identify allowable and appropriate ways to promote early childhood education and nutrition services. Joint messaging or outreach reduces duplication and provides new ways to increase child development and nutrition security for children and families.

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Thank you in advance for raising awareness of this opportunity for SNAP households and their children. FNS looks forward to continuing to work with you to spread the word about this expanded eligibility for Head Start programs. Please contact your Regional Office representative with any questions.

Sincerely,

MARGARET
JOHNSTON

Digitally signed by
MARGARET JOHNSTON
Date: 2023.03.31
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Moira Johnston
Acting Director
Program Development Division

Do you receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits?



Your child may be eligible for free Head Start or Early Head Start services!



Office of Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start programs deliver free, comprehensive services to children ages birth to 5 and their families

in core areas of early learning, health, nutrition, and family well-being. For more information on Head Start programs, please visit <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/head-start-programs>

Find your local program and apply for Head Start services today:



It's easy to prove eligibility with any of the following:



A copy of notice of SNAP approval



Other documentation of eligibility or benefits from the SNAP agency, such as a screenshot from a SNAP mobile app



Your household's SNAP card (Electronic Benefit Transfer [EBT] card)

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