



# HELPFUL ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

## What is P-EBT?

P-EBT is a federal program that provides food benefits for families with young children (0-6 years) who also got CalFresh Food benefits between October 2020 and May 2021 or school age children who were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the 2020-21 school year. P-EBT provides additional food benefits to make up for free or reduced-price meals usually served at child care or school that children may have missed because of the pandemic.

## Is my young child eligible?

Young children are eligible for P-EBT 2.0 if between October 1, 2020, and May 31, 2020, they were:

- Age 0-6 years old; and
- Part of a household getting CalFresh food benefits; and
- Living in a county where at least one school facility was closed or limiting in-person instruction.

## Is my school age child eligible?

School aged children are eligible for P-EBT 2.0 if they were:

- Enrolled at a school for school year 2020-21 that participated in the federal School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program; and
- Eligible to get free or reduced-price meals for school year 2020-21; and
- Assumed to have attended school via all distance learning or a hybrid learning at least some days of the week during school year 2020-21.

## How do you know that my school age child attended school via distance learning?

The learning model (all distance learning, hybrid learning, or in-person learning) used to determine P-EBT benefit amounts is based on information about the most common learning model at your school or in your area each month of the school year, it is not based on individual attendance. This information was reported directly to the state by schools, including public schools, charter schools and private schools.

## **Where can I apply to get P-EBT benefits?**

You DO NOT need to apply. P-EBT cards are automatically sent to eligible families based on information from other programs, including CalFresh Food benefits and free or reduced-price school meals. You can apply for free or reduced-price school meals through your school. You can apply for CalFresh Food benefits at [www.GetCalFresh.org](http://www.GetCalFresh.org).

## **When will my card(s) arrive?**

Cards will start arriving in early July for kids 0-6 years old who got CalFresh Food benefits between October 2020 and January 2021 and early September for all school age kids. Young children who got CalFresh Food benefits between February 2021 and May 2021 will get their cards beginning in November.

Cards are mailed out in groups based on age (young child or school age child) and in alphabetical order by first name.

## **What is the P-EBT benefit amount?**

Young children (0-6 years) get P-EBT benefits based on the learning mode at schools in their area. The maximum amount per eligible child is \$123 per month for those who lived in a county where at least one school was offering only distance learning and \$68 per month for those who lived in a county where, if no school was only distance learning, at least one school was hybrid learning. If all schools in a county were open for in-person learning, young children living in that county are not eligible for P-EBT.

School age children get P-EBT benefits based on the most common learning mode at their school or schools in their area. The maximum amount per eligible child is \$123 per month for those assumed to have attended school via all distance learning and \$68 per month for hybrid learning. Children who are assumed to have attended school in person are not eligible for P-EBT. The amount may change over time based on when schools reopened in your area.

## **Do P-EBT benefits replace grab and go school meals?**

No. You can get P-EBT benefits AND 'grab and go' meals or meals at school during the 2021-22 school year.

## **Will getting P-EBT affect my family's public charge?**

No, getting and using P-EBT benefits does NOT affect you or your child's immigration status and does not make you a public charge. It is safe to use and the program does NOT report your information to immigration services.

## **What can I buy with P-EBT?**

P-EBT benefits can be used like CalFresh to buy food. P-EBT cards are accepted at most grocery stores, farmers markets, and online at Amazon or other retailers. Foods that are served hot or already prepared (like take out or hot food bars) are not covered. You cannot use your P-EBT benefits at restaurants.

## **Will P-EBT count towards my total income?**

No, P-EBT benefits are NOT reported to the IRS as taxable income.

## **Will I get P-EBT for previous months?**

Young children are eligible for P-EBT 2.0 if between October 1, 2020, and May 31, 2020, they were:

- Age 0-6 years old; and
- Part of a household getting CalFresh food benefits; and
- Living in a county where at least one school facility was closed or limiting in-person instruction.

## **Will I have to pay back these benefits if I'm deemed ineligible?**

No. Because P-EBT benefits are issued automatically to eligible families, you will not be held accountable for any administrative errors. If you think you got your benefits by mistake, you can destroy your card before using it or call the Helpline at (877) 328-9677 (M-F from 6am to 8pm) to let us know.

## **What if I think I got P-EBT benefits by mistake?**

Families who think they got P-EBT by mistake or do not need P-EBT benefits can choose to not accept P-EBT benefits by destroying their card before using it. You can also call the P-EBT Helpline at (877) 328-9677 (M-F from 6am to 8pm) to let us know.

## **What if my child is not financially eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and got P-EBT?**

Children eligible for free school meals based on their attendance at a school where all children can get free breakfast, lunch, or both, are also eligible for P-EBT and will get a card automatically in the mail. This is true even if the child did not individually apply for free or reduced-price school meals. Families who feel they do not need P-EBT benefits can choose to not accept P-EBT benefits by destroying their card before using it.

## **What if I need help with my P-EBT benefits?**

Call the P-EBT Helpline at (877) 328-9677 (M-F from 6am to 8pm). Be prepared to provide your child's name, date of birth, and mailing address to complete the request.

## **Will the amount of my P-EBT benefits change?**

Yes. Because P-EBT benefits are based on the most common learning model at your school or in your area each month of the school year, amounts may change based on when schools reopened.

## **What if I lose my P-EBT card?**

If you lose your card, replacement cards can be obtained through the P-EBT Helpline at (877) 328-9677. Be prepared to provide your child's name, date of birth, and mailing address to complete the request.