



Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program for School Year 2020-2021 for Parents and Guardians FAQ

Introduction

This document of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for parents and guardians is grouped around the following areas:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#),
- [P-EBT Card Information](#),
- [P-EBT Benefit Usage](#),
- [P-EBT Benefit Issuance](#), and
- [Additional Resources and Contact](#).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program?

P-EBT is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program that provides food benefits to pre-kindergarten (pre-K) through 12th grade children who temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals because of school schedule changes and closures due to COVID-19. Federal legislation extended and expanded the P-EBT program through the 2020-21 school year.

Who is eligible to get P-EBT?

Pre-K through 12th graders who:

- Were, or still are, in a hybrid or 100% remote learning school schedule due to COVID-19 AND
- Are enrolled in an eligible school participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) AND
- Are approved to receive National School Lunch Program (NSLP) free or reduced-price school meals for the 2020-21 school year by:
 - Having an approved free or reduced-price meal application,
 - Being directly certified, or
 - Being enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school.

Note: Children learning in-person 100% of the time may be eligible to receive benefits during remote learning days (e.g., school closures due to high COVID-19 positivity rates).

All students at my child's school are receiving free meals this year. Do I still need to apply for NSLP free or reduced-price meals?

Yes. In order to receive P-EBT benefits for the 2020-21 school year, your household needs to have an approved 2020-21 Iowa Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals on file at your school or have been determined to be eligible based on your family's participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Family Investment Program (FIP), or a few specific Medicaid programs.

Your school district can provide an application, and it should be returned to the school before the end of the 2020-21 school year. It is essential to ensure your enrolling school has your current mailing address. Please note that citizenship does not affect eligibility.

Do I need to apply to get P-EBT?

No. There is no application for P-EBT. Children are eligible for P-EBT based on the criteria included under the [Who is eligible to get P-EBT?](#) question in this document.

My child gets Grab and Go meals at school. Can they get P-EBT too?

Yes. Your child can get both.

I receive SNAP benefits. Can my child get P-EBT too?

Yes. Your child can receive both benefits. P-EBT benefits will be issued on a separate card. As always, you can check www.connectebt.com for the balance of both SNAP and P-EBT benefits.

How will I know if my child is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

A P-EBT card will be mailed to the address the school has on file for each eligible child. Refer to the [Who is eligible to get P-EBT?](#) question to make sure your child is eligible.

What if my child lives in multiple residences?

P-EBT cards will be mailed to the address the school has on file for each child.

I read that children in childcare are also eligible to receive P-EBT. When will those children be eligible?

Information about the childcare P-EBT program will be released as soon as it's available from the Iowa Department of Human Services.

How much will my child get for P-EBT?

If your child is approved to receive free or reduced-price meals through the NSLP and is (or was) on a 100% remote or hybrid learning schedule during the 2020-21 school year, the child is eligible for P-EBT benefits. Your child is not eligible for P-EBT benefits if your child attends in-person classes and has access to meals at school.

The monthly benefit amount will vary based on the number of days your child participated in remote or hybrid learning. Benefits are only provided for instructional school days when your child is (or was) in remote learning. P-EBT benefits are not provided for weekends, holidays, non-instructional school closures, scheduled breaks, non-instructional snow days, or any day your child receives instruction in-person.

If eligible, your child will receive \$6.82 for each qualified day. The monthly amount of benefits is based on the number of hybrid and remote days as reported by your child's school.

When will my child receive P-EBT benefits?

School districts will report eligibility for children for each month. P-EBT issuances may be for more than one month at a time. Your child's total benefit is based on what the school reported for each month's in-person, remote, or hybrid status. Unless your child was (or is) on a consistent schedule every month for the entire school year, the amount of benefits will not be the same each month.

P-EBT cards will be distributed through multiple rounds of mailings. The first round of P-EBT card mailings began the week of May 10 and includes students who attend the 186 school districts and 51 nonpublic schools that submitted eligibility information to the Iowa Department of Education in April (see the list of schools [here](#)). Mailings will continue through the summer as more districts and nonpublic schools submit information to the Iowa Department of Education.

The breakdown of when your child will receive the benefits will be between the 11th and 20th, as shown in the following table.

Date Benefits Are Available	First Letter of Last Name
11 th	A – B
12 th	C – D
13 th	E – G
14 th	H – I
15 th	J – L
16 th	M – O
17 th	P – R
18 th	S
19 th	T – V
20 th	W – Z

P-EBT Card Information

Will I receive a new P-EBT card every month?

No. It's important for you to keep the card that is mailed to you with the child's first P-EBT benefit issuance for school year 2020-21. Benefits will be added to that same card throughout the P-EBT program.

When will P-EBT cards be mailed?

The initial batch of P-EBT cards were mailed on May 10, 2021 and will continue to be distributed through the summer. Depending on the school district, some cards will be distributed earlier than others.

I lost my P-EBT card. How do I get a new one?

If your child's P-EBT card has been lost, stolen, or you can't activate it, please call P-EBT card customer service at 1-800-359-5802 (available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week). Any remaining benefits you have on the card will be put on a replacement P-EBT card.

If you moved since receiving your first P-EBT card, you will need to call 1-833-359-5802 to get a new card.

What does the P-EBT card look like?



Card front and back

Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.

How do I activate my card?

Activate each card by following these instructions:

1. Call 1-800-359-5802;
2. Enter the 19-digit number on the front of the card;
3. Enter the date of birth of the child listed on the card;
4. Enter 6666 for the social security number (SSN), do NOT use your child's actual SSN;
5. Set a four-digit PIN. Do not write the PIN on the card.

Once activated, your child's benefit amount will be available to use at any store that accepts EBT benefits.

I am having trouble setting my PIN or activating my card. What do I do?

Call the number on the back of the card, 1-800-359-5802, available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

Why did I get more than one P-EBT card?

You will receive a P-EBT card for each eligible child.

How will I know how much is on the card?

After a simple account setup online, you may check the balance of the card at any time by going to www.connectebt.com. You will need to enter information from the card on the website so make sure your card is handy when you log in.

Do I have to use all the benefits at once?

No. The benefits will carry over month to month. Benefits will expire within nine months after you receive them.

How long do I have to use these benefits?

Benefits will expire within nine months after you receive them.

We moved from the address where the card will be sent. Will I still get my card?

P-EBT cards will not be forwarded. If you do not receive your P-EBT card by June 2, 2021, you may call 1-833-359-5802 to request a replacement. P-EBT cards will not be replaced before June 2, 2021.

I got a P-EBT card in the mail, but I don't want it.

Using the P-EBT card is voluntary. If you choose not to use the benefits available to you and your child, please cut up the card and throw it away.

Can I give the P-EBT card to someone else to use if I don't want or need it?

No, the P-EBT card is non-transferable.

P-EBT Benefit Usage

What can I buy with the P-EBT card?

You can use your P-EBT card to purchase eligible food items anywhere SNAP or EBT cards are accepted. Eligible food items include dairy products, eggs, meat, cereal, rice, pasta, bread, vegetables and fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried), any ingredients you use for cooking, baby formula, diabetic foods, garden seeds, plants for growing food at home, and ice.

You cannot buy already prepared or hot food, pet food, and non-food items. For more information, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>.

Where can I use the card?

You can use the card anywhere SNAP benefits are accepted. All major grocery chains, convenience stores, and big box stores accept EBT cards. P-EBT cards will also be accepted at farmers' markets and local produce tents. For more information, check out [Iowa's Farmers Market Project](#).

See the following list of retailers that offer online grocery purchasing using the P-EBT card. SNAP and P-EBT recipients will be able to use their benefits to purchase eligible food items but will not be able to use benefits to pay for service or delivery charges. For more information, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot>.

ALDI, Amazon, New Pioneer Food Co-Op, Hy-Vee, and Walmart offer online options for Iowans using their SNAP EBT card to purchase food. Visit <https://dhs.iowa.gov/COVID19/FoodSecurity> or the retailer websites to order groceries or get more information.

How do I use the card at the store?

When you use the P-EBT card at the store, choose the EBT option on the point-of-sale machine at the checkout and enter your four-digit pin (for PIN information, refer to the [How do I activate my card?](#) question). Anyone in your household can use your P-EBT card, even if their name is not on the front of the P-EBT card.

My child's name is on the card. Can I use the card at the store?

Yes. Your child doesn't need to be with you when you use the card.

P-EBT Benefit Issuance

I didn't apply for P-EBT. Why did I get this card?

You received the P-EBT card because your child was approved to receive free or reduced-price NSLP school meals and participated in remote learning days. The food dollars are intended to help your household purchase food because your child did not receive free or reduced-price school meals when your child's school was closed or had reduced attendance due to COVID-19. Your child may be eligible due to attending a [USDA Community Eligibility Provisions \(CEP\) school](#).

I applied for my child to receive free or reduced-price school meals after September 1, 2020. Will I get a P-EBT card?

Yes. If your child was approved for free or reduced-price NSLP school meals after September 1, 2020 and before the end of the 2020-21 school year, your child is eligible to receive a P-EBT card. Benefits will be issued only for children who are or were in a remote learning or hybrid instruction schedule. Children who attend in-person instruction are not eligible for P-EBT.

Additional Resources and Contact

Are there additional resources available to assist with feeding my family?

Yes. The following resources are available:

- Food Resources: <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/feedingiowa>
- Summer Food Service Program Feeding Meals for Kids Site Finder: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids>

I believe my child should have received a P-EBT card and didn't. Who do I talk to about this?

You may call 1-833-631-2508 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

I have a question/problem that wasn't answered in this FAQ. Who do I contact?

You may call 1-833-631-2508 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.