



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
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Alexandria, VA  
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DATE: January 14, 2011

MEMO CODE: SP 13-2011

SUBJECT: Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010:  
Letter Method for Direct Certification

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (the Act), Public Law 111-296, was signed into law by the President on December 13, 2010. The purpose of this memorandum is to implement a provision affecting mandatory direct certification for children in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households.

Section 101(c) of the Act amends section 9(b)(4) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(4)) to clarify that in meeting the direct certification requirements for children in SNAP households, households cannot be required to provide the local educational agency (LEA) with any letter notifying the household of eligibility for direct certification or eligibility for free meals. This provision is effective October 1, 2010.

This means that States and LEAs cannot meet the statutory requirement to directly certify children in SNAP households by relying solely on the letter method. Therefore, as soon as possible, all State agencies must ensure they have a method in place to exchange eligibility information from SNAP officials directly with LEAs. A letter notifying SNAP families of their children's categorical eligibility may only be used to help ensure that families whose children are not matched during a data exchange are aware of their eligibility for free meals.

Please note that this provision of the Act applies only to directly certified children in SNAP households. It does not affect the certification requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Regional Directors  
State Directors  
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State agencies should direct any questions concerning this guidance to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office. Regional Offices with questions should contact the Child Nutrition Division.

*Melissa A. Rothstein*

Cynthia Long  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division