

## 1. *What is Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)?*

The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority to approve States to implement a temporary program called Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT). P-EBT provides children in kindergarten through twelfth grade eligible for free or reduced-price meals with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits. The program is administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Department is partnering with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to ensure children and families receive this important benefit. All children eligible for free and reduced-price meals are eligible for these benefits, not only children currently in receipt of SNAP. This includes all students that are enrolled at a school that falls under the free and reduce priced meals community eligibility option.

## 2. *How much will an eligible child receive?*

**Spring 2020 P-EBT:** Each child is eligible for \$5.70 (the federal reimbursement rate for breakfast and lunch) for each day a school is closed due to COVID-19. For children eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of March, the total amount will be \$302.10. For children eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of April, the total amount will be \$239.40.

**Update 9/5/20 - August & September P-EBT:** Each child will receive **\$5.86** (the federal reimbursement rate for breakfast and lunch) for each day a school has a virtual/remote learning period **lasting at least 5 consecutive days** from August 1-September 30, 2020.

For example, a child attending a school operating a hybrid model with one week of in-person instruction followed by one week (5 consecutive days) of virtual/remote learning is eligible only for the days the virtual/remote learning occurs. (P-EBT benefits begin from the first of the 5 consecutive days.)

A child attending a school operating a hybrid model with in-person instruction occurring every other day (M,W,F) with virtual/remote learning on the other days (T, Th) is **NOT** eligible for P-EBT. This is because the virtual/remote learning is not lasting 5 consecutive days.

### **Update 9/11/20:**

“5 consecutive days” includes days the schools have chosen to not have learning/instruction either virtually/remotely or in-person. For example, a school only has remote learning on M, T, Th and F, but no learning/instruction on Wednesdays is eligible for PEBT.

Weekend days are excluded from the determination of 5 consecutive days. For example, a child attending school remotely/virtually W, Th, F, (weekend) M, T, followed by in-person learning W, Th, F, (weekend), M, T would be eligible for P-EBT for the days of remote learning because there were 5 consecutive schools days with the weekend excluded. The child would not receive benefits for the days the in-person instruction occurred.

Full-time virtual/remote learning options (often referred to as virtual academies) that are

offered as part of a school's hybrid model for students to choose instead of in-person instruction (or combination of in-person and remote/virtual learning) meet the requirements for P-EBT. However, online charter schools do not meet the requirements for P-EBT.

### 3. **How are P-EBT benefits issued?**

ODJFS obtained a list of all of Ohio children eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and will issue the benefits through the EBT vendor. County agencies will not be processing any applications for this program. The benefits will be provided on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that is mailed to the families which they can then use to buy food at local grocery stores. If an eligible child is currently NOT in receipt of SNAP, the P-EBT benefits will be issued on a special P-EBT card in the child's name and mailed to the family. If an eligible child is *currently in receipt of SNAP*, the P-EBT benefits will be issued directly to the existing account and will be available on their SNAP EBT card. If the child cannot be matched to an existing account, a P-EBT card will be mailed to the family. If the child has previously been on SNAP, but is not currently, he or she will receive a P-EBT card. Each child will receive a P-EBT card; benefits of siblings will not be grouped onto one card.

**Update 9/5/20 - August & September P-EBT:** A child that cannot be matched to a current SNAP account will receive a P-EBT card. Benefits of siblings will not be grouped onto one card. You will receive a new card even if you received a P-EBT card for Spring benefits and you still have it. The old card will still be active and can be used if there is a balance.

### 3. **When will PEBT benefits be available on the SNAP EBT or special P-EBT card?**

**Spring 2020 P-EBT:** The PEBT benefits will be available in SNAP accounts (for children currently on SNAP) by the end of May 2020. ~~P-EBT cards will also be mailed to non-SNAP families at this time.~~

Update 5/28/20: Not all children currently in receipt of SNAP were able to be matched with their current SNAP account, therefore, they will receive a P-EBT card. All P-EBT cards should be received by mid-June. If a family has not received the P-EBT card by mid-June, they should contact the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071.

**Update 9/5/20 - August & September P-EBT:** If a child can be matched to an existing SNAP account, the benefit will be available in that account in late September. All other children will receive a new P-EBT card by mid-October.

### 4. **How do I know if a child is eligible for P-EBT benefits?**

**Spring 2020 P-EBT:** If a child was eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of 4/29/20 as determined by the school, they are eligible for P-EBT benefits.

**Update 9/5/20 - August & September P-EBT:** If a child is eligible for free and reduced-price

meals, as determined by the school, and has a virtual/remote learning period **lasting at least 5 consecutive days**.

For example, a child attending a school operating a hybrid model with one week of in-person instruction followed by one week (5 consecutive days) of virtual/remote learning is eligible only for the days the virtual/remote learning occurs. (P-EBT benefits begin from the first of the 5 consecutive days.)

A child attending a school operating a hybrid model with in-person instruction occurring every other day (M,W,F) with virtual/remote learning on the other days (T,Th) is NOT eligible for P-EBT. This is because the virtual/remote learning is not lasting 5 consecutive days.

**5. How will families with eligible children be notified they are eligible for P-EBT?**

**Spring 2020 P-EBT:** A flyer will be emailed to the families from the child's school. The flyer will explain the program, why the child is eligible, how benefits can be used, ~~pin set-up~~, opt out language, and notification that the card and benefits are non-transferable. Ohio will also communicate about the program through social media, our eligibility system, websites, as well as a press release. Additionally, the EBT vendor will include a single Interactive Voice Response (IVR) message on the cardholder IVR which will provide general information about P-EBT, including but not limited to information such as anticipated benefit delivery schedule and amount.

Update 5/22/20: Instructions on how to activate the card will be included with the card when mailed to the family.

**Update 9/5/20 – August & September P-EBT:** A flyer will be emailed from the family's school. Families will also receive a robo call from the state once the issuance is done.

**6. Can a family apply for P-EBT benefits?**

No. P-EBT does not have an application. Any child eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of 4/29/20 should receive the P-EBT benefits.

**Update 9/5/20 - August & September P-EBT:** No. P-EBT does not have an application. Any child eligible for free and reduced-price meals should receive the P-EBT benefits for virtual/remote learning periods **lasting at least 5 consecutive days** between August 1- September 30, 2020 if the school district provided the child's information

**7. Are there hearing rights for P-EBT?**

No

**8. How often will this benefit be issued?**

**Spring 2020 P-EBT:** The Federal Guidance at this time is that this will be a one-time issuance for the number of days the child will be out of school.

Update 6/30/20: This is a one-time only payment for each child. Families will receive only one payment per child either on their current active SNAP card or the P-EBT card.

**Update 9/17/20 - August & September P-EBT:** This is a one-time only payment for each child. Families will receive this one payment per child either on their current active SNAP card or a new P-EBT card.

**All benefits must be issued by September 30, 2020.** No benefits are available after this date.

**9. It is October 1, 2020 and my school forgot to submit my information for the Fall (August & September) PEBT payment, how do I receive my benefit?**

If your information was not provided by the school to be included in the August -September benefit issuance at this time there is no way for this omission to be corrected. After September 30, 2020 there is no authority to issue benefits for this program. The Federal Funding had a hard expiration of September 30, 2020. If a person was missed or a school failed to submit their list, they will not receive the benefit.

**10. My school doesn't close until June but the benefit calculates to the end of May. Shouldn't I receive money for the days in June my child is out?**

No, the state of Ohio determined the average close date for all schools in Ohio and used that date for all children.

**11. How long will a family have access to the P-EBT benefits on the card?**

The P-EBT benefits will be available for 12 months. If after 12 months, the P-EBT benefits have not been spent, they will be removed (expunged) from the account. Current SNAP households will still have access to their remaining SNAP benefits.

**12. Who should a family contact if they have questions regarding P-EBT?**

For general program questions or questions about benefits or the P-EBT card, please have the family contact the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071.

If the family has questions about whether or not a child was eligible for free and reduced-price meals on or before April 29, 2020, they should contact their local school district.

General questions and answers about P-EBT can be found at <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ofam/p-ebt.stm>

**13. How is the P-EBT card activated?**

The family should call the phone number on the back of the card. The family will need the EBT card number on the front of the card, zip code, and date of birth of the child named on the card. The family will need to enter the need to **enter the four digits of the year of the child's birth (e.g. 1980)** for the last 4 digits of the child's Social Security Number, when prompted. You will need to set a new four-digit PIN number to use the card.

Update 6/30/20:

The family needs to take the following steps:

1. Call the phone number on the back of the P-EBT card.
2. Identify the EBT card number on the front of the card to enter,
3. Use the date of birth of the child named on the card,
4. When asked to enter the last four digits of the social security number, enter the year of the child's birth (e.g. 1980) and
5. Set a new four-digit PIN number which will be used each time the card is used.

**14. Is Pandemic EBT a replacement for "grab-and-go" and/or summer meals offered by schools?**

No, schools can continue operating these programs and children may participate in both.

**Update 9/5/20 - August & September P-EBT:** Schools can continue to offer the free-and reduced-price meals and/or summer meals in a "grab and go" or delivery method and children can still be eligible for P-EBT.

**15. Are children who are home-schooled or attend a school that does not participate in the National School Lunch Program eligible for P-EBT?**

No, only children who would be receiving free/reduced-price meals if schools were open are eligible.

**16. Is P-EBT available to immigrant children?**

Yes. Like the National School Lunch Program, P-EBT is available to all school children regardless of immigration status. P-EBT is a replacement for free/reduced-price school meals which is not considered in a "public charge" determination.

**17. What address will the P-EBT card be sent to if a child's parents are divorced or are not residing in the same household?**

P-EBT cards will go to the address identified by the school. This also applies to children currently in receipt of SNAP but could not be matched to the active case. If your address is wrong please go to <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ofam/p-ebt.stm> and fill out the form.

**18. For foster children who are in receipt of free and reduced-price meals, who will the EBT card go to - the foster parent or the public children services agency?**

The card will go to whoever was listed on the data provided by the schools. It could vary for each child. Also, if the child was not matched to a current SNAP case, the card will go to the address on file with the school.

Update 6/30/20:

If the PCSA receives the card, it should provide it to the family whom the child is currently residing with.

**19. If a family has thrown away the P-EBT card realizing what it was or has lost the card, what should they do?**

The family should call Conduent at 1-866-386-3071 to request a replacement if the card is lost, stolen or damaged. It is the same process SNAP customers do to replace the Ohio Direction EBT card. The family will have to provide the following information to request the replacement:

When the family calls, their old card will be locked, and a new card will be mailed to them. If the family finds their lost card, they will not be able to use it once they have reported it lost or stolen. The family will have to wait to receive the replacement card in the mail, which can take 7-10 days.

The family can request a replacement via the IVR with their card number or demographic information if they do not know the card number.

To speak with a live Customer Service Representative to request a P-EBT replacement card when the family does not recall the 16-digit P-EBT card number:

Press Option 4 – To report card lost, stolen or damaged

- Prompt asks to enter your SSN (P-EBT caller MUST enter: 9 digits. 0 + child's DOB)
- Prompt asks to enter your DOB (P-EBT caller MUST enter child's DOB: 2 digits for month\2 digits for day\4 digits for the year)
- When prompted to enter your PIN, Do Nothing
- When prompted to enter your PIN the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, Do Nothing.  
This will allow the call to be escalated in order to speak with a live Customer Service Representative.

Reminder: there are recorded messages about COVID 19 benefits, that the P-EBT caller MUST listen through, to the very end. At the end of the message, the caller is encouraged to "Please remain on hold while your call is being transferred to a Customer Service Representative"

**20. What if the wrong address for the child was provided to ODJFS and the family needs to report the correct address?**

If the address is wrong, the family may go to <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ofam/p-ebt.stm> and fill out the form to correct the address. The family may also contact the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071. The family should also contact the school to ensure they have the updated address.

**21. *What if a family never received the P-EBT card for the child?***

The family should contact the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071. ODJFS will review the data provided from the school districts to see if the child was supposed to get a card. If the child was, ODJFS will resend the cards once they have been returned to the card vendor. If the child was not on the list and did not receive the P-EBT on their SNAP card, then the family should contact the child's school district.