

Thornbrook Learning Academy Inc.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is intended for parents or guardians of children enrolled at **First Step Learning Center**. This center offers healthy meals to all enrolled children as part of our participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP reimburses centers for healthy meals and snacks served to children enrolled in child care based on their eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. Higher reimbursement is received for meals served to enrolled participants who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and this reimbursement is then used to purchase healthy food to prepare nutritious meals. Please help us comply with the requirements of the CACFP by completing the attached Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form so that we can determine your child(ren)'s eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

1. Am I required to complete a Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form in order to receive meals? No, but if you choose to do so, this center may receive a higher reimbursement for the meals you receive, which is used to buy nutritious food for meals.

2. Do I need to fill out a Meal Benefit Form for each of my children in day care? If all children enrolled for care at this center live in the same home, you only need to complete and submit one CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form for these children. We cannot approve a form that is not complete, so be sure to read the instructions carefully and fill out all required information. **Return the completed form to: [(Name of Center, address, phone number)].**

3. Who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals? While this center does not charge for meals served, children in households receiving benefits in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); foster children (reference question #7 for more information on foster children); or children designated as homeless are automatically eligible for free meals, and no additional income information needs to be provided.

Children enrolled in a Head Start Program (HSP), Early Head Start Program (EHSP), or Even Start Program (ESP) (must not have yet entered kindergarten) are also eligible for free meals. Households with children enrolled in an HSP, EHSP, or ESP can provide a certification letter from the program of the child's enrollment and do not need to complete the CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form. **Note that only the child or children enrolled in these programs will qualify for benefits.**

All other children living in households with a combined income that does not exceed the household income thresholds attached to this letter and as documented on the Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form are eligible for reduced-price meals and may be eligible for free meals based on the determination of this center.

4. Who should I include as members of my household? You must include everyone in your household (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends who live with you) who shares income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children who live with you, including foster children or homeless children who temporarily live with you.

5. How do I report income information and changes in employment status? The income you report must be the total gross income listed by source for each household member received last month. If last month's income does not accurately reflect your circumstances, you may provide a projection of your monthly income. If no significant change has occurred, you may use last month's income as a basis to make this projection. If your household's income is equal to or less than the amounts indicated for your household's size on the attached Income Chart, the center will receive a higher level of reimbursement. Once properly approved for free or reduced-price benefits, whether through income, providing a current SNAP, TANF, FDPIR case number, or by providing a certification letter establishing participation in an HSP, EHSP, or ESP, your child will remain eligible for those benefits for 12 full months. You should notify us, however, if you or someone in your household becomes unemployed, and the loss of income causes your household income to be within the eligibility standards.

6. What if my income is not always the same? List the amount that you normally get. For example, if you normally get \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you only get it sometimes.

7. What if I have foster children? Foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income. Households may include foster children on the Meal Benefit Form but are not required to include payments received for the foster child as income. Households wishing to apply for such benefits for foster children can provide the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Form 2085FC, *Placement Authorization Foster Care/Residential Care*, to their child's caregiver and do not need to complete the CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form.

8. We are in the military, do we include our housing and supplemental allowances as income? If your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative and you receive the Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance, do not include these allowances as income. Also, in regard to deployed service members, only that portion of a deployed service member's income made available by them or on their behalf to the household will be counted as income to the household. Combat Pay, including Deployment Extension Incentive Pay (DEIP) is also excluded and will not be counted as income to the household. All other allowances must be included in your gross income.

In the operation of child feeding programs, no person will be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

If you have other questions or need help, call **[phone number]**.

Sincerely,

Olempia Green

March 2026

CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form
Letter to Households (Child Care Centers) – Non-Pricing Programs