

Nutrition Benefits

TAC § 89.1605(a)(3)

All students who are identified as homeless or in foster care are eligible for the US Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Program.

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must ensure there is an expedited process in place for all students who qualify to receive nutrition benefits upon enrollment. The process must expedite communication with the LEA nutrition coordinator to ensure that eligible students are not charged in error or experience delays in receiving these benefits.

Best Practices



Appropriate LEA or campus staff should immediately notify food services when a new student enrolls.



Verify student coding is in alignment with effective date.



Ensure student confidentiality.



Collaborate with your Nutrition Coordinator to establish processes, such as sending an approval notification via email.



LEAs should provide annual training to new and returning staff on nutrition eligibility and application processes.



REMINDER: Applications must be expedited when the student qualifies for SNAP benefits. Ensure systems and supports are student and family-centered!

Enrollment Conferences

TAC § 89.1605(b)

Local Education Agencies must convene an enrollment conference with a student who is homeless or in foster care within the within the first two weeks, or as soon as feasible, after a student who is homeless or in substitute care enrolls at a new school. The student’s participation in the meeting should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The convening cannot delay or impede enrollment.



The enrollment conference may be used in conjunction with an existing meeting that is designed for a similar purpose for newly enrolled students.

An **Enrollment Conference** is a student-centered meeting for a newly enrolled student designed to:

- » Identify academic and extracurricular interests.
- » Introduce school processes and opportunities for engagement.
- » Develop course and instructional strategies.
- » Review credits and assessment information.
- » Determine social-emotional support.
- » Communicate confidential information that may impact a student’s success, if needed.



Key People to Consider Including:

-  School Administrators
-  McKinney-Vento Liaisons
-  Foster Care Liaisons
-  School Counselors

Others to Include*:

LEA AND CAMPUS STAFF

- » Special Program Staff (e.g., Special Education, Emergent Bilingual, Gifted and Talented, etc.)
- » Teachers
- » Social Workers
- » Dropout Prevention Specialist
- » Attendance/Truancy Officer

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- » Parent or Guardian
- » Relative or Foster Placement Caregiver
- » Texas DFPS Caseworker
- » DFPS Educational Decision Maker
- » CASA Volunteer

*Additional people may be invited, as needed.

**Discussion topics are required in TAC § 89.1605(b)(3) and should be adapted to meet the unique needs of each student.



Key Discussion Topics**:

- Student’s interests, strengths, and previous successes.
- Student’s attendance, grades, credits, etc.
- Social, emotional, and behavioral supports.
- LEA policies to support enrollment and withdrawal processes.
- Communication preferences of parent/guardians or unaccompanied youth.
- Post-secondary readiness.

Student Welcome Packet Requirements and Best Practices

TAC § 89.1605(a)(1)

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must provide welcome packets to students who are homeless or in foster care within the first two weeks of enrollment. LEAs may include the required welcome packet contents with any existing items being provided to new students.



Welcome Packet Required Items:

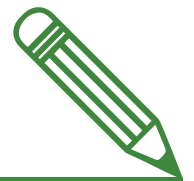
- ▶ Extracurricular activities (e.g., fine arts, athletics, etc.)
- ▶ Club activities
- ▶ Information on fee waivers
- ▶ Tutoring opportunities
- ▶ Student code of conduct
- ▶ Available student supports
- ▶ Contact information for pertinent school staff

▶ Contact information for key school staff members:

- ▷ School counselors
- ▷ Nurses
- ▷ Social workers
- ▷ Foster Care Liaison
- ▷ McKinney-Vento Liaison
- ▷ Principal & Assistant Principals
- ▷ Registrars
- ▷ Nutrition coordinators
- ▷ Transportation specialists
- ▷ Additional support staff (e.g., Special Education, Emergent Bilingual, Gifted and Talented, 504 programs, Pregnancy Related Services)



Additional Foster Care and McKinney-Vento Items:



- ⊕ Student clubs
- ⊕ After school programs
- ⊕ Enrichment programs
- ⊕ Mentor programs
- ⊕ Family engagement opportunities
- ⊕ Student ambassador programs
- ⊕ Post-secondary planning activities
- ⊕ Summer and holiday resources
- ⊕ Other community resources available in your area (e.g., FindHelp.org)

School Introductions to Ease Transitions

TAC § 89.1605(a)(2)

School introductions are welcoming activities provided by the school to new students. Staff can introduce students to the school in a variety of ways, such as giving tours of the campus, hosting welcome events, and providing one-on-one student support. These activities can help students acclimate to their new environment, adjust academically, meet new friends, and participate in extracurricular activities. While LEAs are required to provide introductions to students who are homeless or in foster care, these supports are beneficial for easing the transitions of all newly enrolled students.



Strategies to Ease Transitions

- » Provide introductions (e.g., staff introductions, campus tours, activities, welcome events, etc.) within two weeks of enrollment.
- » Implement mentoring programs in which staff or community mentors can facilitate introductions, have lunch with students, and check-in with students throughout the day.
- » Provide information on peer-to-peer programs, such as student-led activities, clubs, programs, extracurriculars, etc.
- » Designate a staff member to whom the student can reach out for support and services. This person provides a safe space for the student to share any concerns, needs, or life changes.



Key Contacts

- ▷ Campus staff members.
- ▷ Staff members who have been designated as student mentors.
- ▷ Community mentor sponsor. Student-led groups.
- ▷ Student ambassadors and faculty sponsors.



Student Ambassadors

Student ambassadors are students who represent the school and introduce new students to the campus and its culture. Student ambassadors are familiar with the campus environment and have a positive attitude, great communication skills, leadership qualities, and are accepting of others.

Student ambassadors can organize and/or participate in the following activities:

- ▶ Newcomer social events throughout the school year.
- ▶ Tours of the campus library, nurse's office, counseling office, gym, and cafeteria.
- ▶ Accompanying new students to lunch during the first week of school.

