

# Georgia School Nutrition Program Frequently Asked Questions

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## Contact Information Question

**Who do I contact if I have a specific question about my child or school?**

You can contact your county's school nutrition department office; a School Nutrition director or manager will be glad to assist you with any of your questions. You can find School Nutrition contact information for your county [here](#). [\[top\]](#)

**When should I contact the state office?**

If you have contacted your county's school nutrition department office and they were unable to assist you, we are glad to help you in any way we can at the state office. We do encourage you to first contact your county's School Nutrition director, as they may be able to give your more direct and specific information. [\[top\]](#)

# Georgia School Nutrition Program Frequently Asked Questions

## General School Nutrition Questions

### **Q 1: What is the goal of the School Nutrition Program?**

A: The goal of the program is to provide high quality, nutritious meals to our students at a price that is affordable to all. [\[top\]](#)

### **Q 2: Why is lunch served at school?**

A: Every student needs lunch during the school day. Many students would receive no meal or a nutritionally poor meal if they had to bring their own lunch. Research has shown that hungry children cannot learn. A child with an empty stomach is lethargic, irritable and is not able to participate fully in learning experiences. Good nutrition is critical to student achievement. [\[top\]](#)

### **Q 3: Who is in charge of the program at my child's school?**

A: The principal is responsible for the program's operations in each school; the local Board of Education, represented by the Superintendent, makes the ultimate decisions about the program. The program is under the supervision of a state certified nutrition director who supervises and coordinates the general operation of the program. The administrators are governed by the federal and state regulations, as well as policies that the local Board of Education deems necessary. [\[top\]](#)

### **Q 4: How are the lunch menus determined at each school?**

A: The menus are planned at the central office by the nutrition coordinator. School meals must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school lunches to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories.

**We have found that because of this, students who eat school lunches consume fewer calories from fat than students who bring lunch from home. Compared to lunches from home, school lunches contain three times as many dairy products, twice as much fruit, and seven times the vegetable amounts.** [\[top\]](#)

### **Q 5: Why is breakfast so important?**

A: Eating breakfast at school is one of the smartest ways your child can begin the day. Often students simply don't have enough time in the morning to eat breakfast at home and go to class without eating anything at all. A hungry child just cannot concentrate on learning. Research proves breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It breaks the fasting of our bodies while we sleep and gives us fuel for starting a new day. In most studies, children who ate breakfast improved their grades. Teachers observed increased attentiveness, motivation, self-discipline and concentration in students who participate in the School Breakfast program. Studies have found that children who ate breakfast make fewer mistakes and better grades. [\[top\]](#)



# Georgia School Nutrition Program Frequently Asked Questions

## Free & Reduced Price Meal Benefits Program Questions

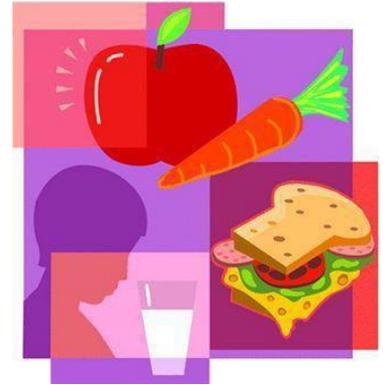
**Q 6: What is the Free and Reduced meals program? Do I qualify?**

A: The Free & Reduced Price Meal Benefits Program, is a part of the National Child Nutrition Program. This program makes Free or Reduced priced meals available to qualifying households.

Qualifications are based on the gross income of all household members and the number of persons living in the house.

Households must submit a new free & reduced application each school year. Applications take up to 10 days to process. Households are responsible for meal payment until the application is approved. Returning students maintain last year’s status for the first 30-days of the new school year.

**Contact your local school nutrition department to fill out a school meal application. [\[top\]](#)**



Below is a Federal Income Chart that will help you to determine your eligibility.

<b>FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART</b>			
<b>For School Year 2015-2016</b>			
<b>Household size</b>	<b>Yearly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Weekly</b>
1	21,775	1,815	419
2	29,471	2,456	567
3	37,167	3,098	715
4	44,863	3,739	863
5	52,559	4,380	1,011
6	60,255	5,022	1,159
7	67,951	5,663	1,307
8	75,647	6,304	1,455
Each additional person:	+7,696	+642	+148

# Georgia School Nutrition Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q 7: Who can get free or reduced priced meals?

A: **Any member** in the household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or TANF benefits are eligible for free meals. You must include the SNAP number or TANF number on the application in Part 1 or Part 2. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income. Also, households where income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines can get free or reduced-price meals. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.

**Contact your local school nutrition department to fill out a school meal application.** [\[top\]](#)

### Q 8: Do I need to fill out an application for each child?

A: No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household. The application cannot be approved if it is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. [\[top\]](#)

### Q 9: Do I need to pay for my child's meals until the application is approved?

A: Yes. The household is responsible for all meal payments until the application is approved. You will be notified in writing. A letter of Eligibility Notification will be sent to the school of your youngest child. [\[top\]](#)

### Q 10: Who should I include as members of my household?

A: You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends). You must include yourself and all children who live with you. [\[top\]](#)

### Q 11: Is the "Box MUST be checked if no Income" required to be marked?

A: Yes. This box **MUST** be checked for all household members that do not have income. **If this box is not checked it will delay processing your child's application.** [\[top\]](#)

### Q 12: What if my income is not always the same?

A: List the amount that you normally receive. 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 get it only sometimes. [\[top\]](#)

### Q 13: My child's application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out another one?

A: Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. [\[top\]](#)



## Georgia School Nutrition Program Frequently Asked Questions

**Q 14: I get WIC. Can my child(ren) get free meals?**

A: Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an application. [\[top\]](#)

**Q 15: Will the information I give be checked?**

A: Yes, we may ask you to send written proof. [\[top\]](#)

**Q 16: If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?**

A: Yes. You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start receiving SNAP, TANF or other benefits. If you lose your job, your children may be able to get free or reduced price meals. [\[top\]](#)

**Q 17: My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?**

A: To find out how to apply for **SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-869-1150. [\[top\]](#)

