

Policy. It is DoDEA policy that all children enrolled in a DoDDS Sure Start Program are considered categorically eligible for free meals served through the Student Meal Program in accordance with DoD Directive 1015.5 (Reference (c)).

Sure Start serves primarily children from families with household incomes at or below the Federal poverty level. However, a small proportion of children in families with household incomes above the poverty level may be served. In the past, only those children who were income eligible for Sure Start were considered automatically eligible for free meals in the Student Meal Program. This memorandum ensures that any child enrolled in Sure Start is automatically eligible for free meals without further application or eligibility determination, even if he or she is not from a household with an income at or below the poverty level. Requirements are as follows:

- Documentation of a child's participation in a Federally-funded Sure Start Program is required to establish categorical eligibility for free meals in the DoD Student Meal Program. This documentation may include an approved Sure Start application for the child's family, a statement of enrollment in Sure Start, or a list of children participating in Sure Start. Confirmation that the child has not yet entered kindergarten must also be included in the documentation from the Sure Start official.
- Verification of eligibility from the household is not required when documentation of categorical eligibility is obtained from Sure Start officials.
- Categorical eligibility does not apply to other family members.

This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and shall be incorporated into the next reissuance of Reference (c). Questions concerning this policy should be addressed to the DoDEA Headquarters School Meal Program Manager, 703-588-3532.



Charles Toth
Principal Deputy Director
and Associate Director for Education