



## Child Nutrition & Wellness

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### Direct Certification Guidance

Distributed to the School Nutrition Program Authorized Representatives Listserv  
Thursday, July 31, 2008

The guidance below applies to sponsors that are **NOT** currently using the new online Direct Certification process to certify free eligibility for all Food Stamp/TAF eligible students. This information should be shared with all school employees who are accepting Applications for Child Nutrition Program Benefits during enrollment.

Implementing Direct Certification is not an option; it is a federal requirement.

Last Monday, July 21, KSDE mailed a letter printed on Child Nutrition & Wellness letterhead to each household with school-age children eligible for Food Stamps or TAF. The letter states that the children listed are eligible for free school meals. Approximately 400 of the 34,000+ letters mailed were returned to KSDE because they could not be delivered to the addressee.

Parents whose children were approved for Food Stamps/TAF after July 1 will NOT have one these letters because they were not on the file KSDE used to print its letters. Parents in this situation may have a similar letter provided by the area SRS office.

During enrollment, if a parent/guardian informs a school employee that their children are eligible for Food Stamps or TAF, but they do not have either of the letters described above, do NOT require them to complete an application. Instead, look up the student(s) using the KN-CLAIM Direct Certification process. This is quick and easy to do and will assure that all eligible students receive the free school meals to which they are entitled.

If it is not possible to look up a student during the enrollment process, follow the steps below:

1. Access the Direct Certification process in KN-CLAIM.
2. Go to the screen titled "Direct Certification Search" and make a screen print of the blank screen. Make copies of the blank screen for use during enrollment.
3. If a parent/guardian states that his/her children are eligible for Food Stamps/TAF **AND** they do not have the KSDE letter, ask them to complete the Direct Certification Search form.
4. At a later time, a school official with access to the KN-CLAIM Direct Certification process will look up the child using information provided by the parent/guardian on the Direct Certification Search form.
5. If the student is found using the KN-CLAIM Direct Certification Search, make a screen print of the student's information to document eligibility. Inform the parent/guardian of the approval verbally or in writing using Form 7A, Letter to Households on the Direct Certification List.

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6. If the student is NOT found using the KN-CLAIM Direct Certification Search, inform the household in writing of the denial using Form 3D, Notification of Eligibility Determination. If the student is denied, the parent/guardian may choose to complete an Application for Child Nutrition Program Benefits based on providing a Food Stamp/TAF/FDPIR number OR household size and income.

If you do not yet have access to the KN-CLAIM Direct Certification process, read the [Direct Certification Quick Reference](#) which is available in KN-CLAIM on the Quick Reference menu or on [www.kn-eat.org](http://www.kn-eat.org), School Nutrition Programs, Forms & Instructions. Then as soon as possible, follow the steps to obtain access to the Direct Certification process.

Obtaining access to the secure website where the Direct Certification process is located requires completing the KSDE User Registration Process. The KSDE Help Desk staff informs me that they are up-to-date on processing all requests received. However, there are many requests for Direct Certification access that are waiting on the approval of a superintendent or authorized representative. If you have registered for access and not received notification of approval, please check with your authorized representative or superintendent. Ask he/she to approve the email about Direct Certification which should have been received from the KSDE Help Desk.

Please contact me or your area consultant if you have questions.

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