

Criteria to Identify Backpack Participants

The Backpack Program is only for children and their families that you identify as missing meals on the weekend. This student may *consistently display negative behaviors and/or a decrease in physical or cognitive development*. The backpacks provide food for the child and his/her family who may not have access to adequate food during the weekend.

To identify a child in need of food assistance, you may regularly observe one or more of these behaviors:

- Rushing food lines/quickly eating asking for more
- Comments about lack of food at home
- Regularly asking staff/classmates for food
- Saving/hoarding/sneaking food to take home

Other factors that may be present and may help in identifying hunger:

Physical Appearance:

Extreme thinness Puffy/swollen skin Chronically dry/itchy eyes/cracked lips

School/Program Performance:

Excessive absences and tardiness Chronic sickness
Short attention span/inability to concentrate Chronic behavior problems (hyperactive, irritable, anxious, withdrawn)

Home Environment:

Moves frequently Loss or low household income Family Crisis
Family is participating in or being considered for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance

Unaccompanied Youth may also receive backpacks:

Student is on their own or staying with friends
Student has been displaced due to parent and/or family absence

The family may fall into the “notch” group which makes them eligible- (one indicator below is sufficient to qualify a child for the program):

The family have income but struggles to buy groceries at the end of the month
The family have to choose between paying for bills and paying for groceries
The family have an income that puts them slightly over the requirements for SNAP/WIC

How many backpacks can I give out PER family?

- **1 Backpack** is designed for a family of four.
- **2 Backpacks (the maximum given to a family)** If you have students in the same family and the family size exceeds four, then both children may receive a backpack, otherwise we offer one backpack per family of four.