

MAY 21, 2026

# Child Nutrition Thursday Update

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# SY 2027 Fall Info Meeting Survey



Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition is planning the School Year 2027 Fall Info Meeting. We want input from schools as part of this planning process. Please reply to this short [survey](#) by end of day, Friday 5/22/26. Thank you for your participation and the quick turnaround.

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## Expanding Fluid Milk Options in the Child Nutrition Programs



On May 8, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service published the final rule, [Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs](#). This rule is effective June 8, 2026. It expands fluid milk options by allowing operators of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Special Milk Program for Children to offer whole and reduced-fat milk to participants two years and older. This rule codifies milkfat requirements following enactment of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 ([P.L. 119-69](#)) and supports the statutory requirements for meals to align with the goals of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030](#).

# Did you miss...

## **Direct Certification, Applications & Verification webinar? Want to watch all or part of it again?**

It is on the [Student Eligibility and Applications](#) page of our website.

If you have not approved Meal Benefit applications in a few years or are new to this and have never completed this process, this is the best method to receive training on this aspect of the process.

## **Annual Financial Report Webinar**

It is on the [Financial](#) page of our website.

This practical webinar will walk through completing the Annual Financial Report (AFR) in CNPweb – step by step. It also highlights the nonprogram revenue ratio—what it is, why it matters, and how to get it right.

# 2026-27 Free & Reduced-price Meal Benefit Documents are Available



Meal benefit applications, letters to households and instructions have been updated for school year 2027.

Although meals are provided at no charge to students in Maine public schools and 60/40 private schools that participate in the NSLP, applications must still be offered to households unless the school is participating in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Special Provision 2 non-base year. Documents are available on our [webpage](#).

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## Updated Resources – Special Dietary Needs



We recently updated two resources related to special dietary needs:

- [Special Dietary Needs in SNP](#)
- [Milk Substitutions in SNP](#)

The revised documents can be found on the NSLP [webpage](#) under the Special Dietary Needs section.

# Three Year Olds



Anyone getting questions about them? We received a couple and after some research have found that the eligible age for a student is now three.

Previous statute which we referenced:

Student Eligibility (State of Maine Title 20-A: Chapter 213: §5201) – The following are minimum ages necessary for student enrollment in an SAU:

- A person who will be at least five years old on October 15 of the school year may enroll in school.
- A person who will be at least four years of age on October 15 of the school year may enroll in a public preschool program prior to kindergarten if it is offered.

New language from LD 2114, includes language to lower the age of a student to three!

Sec. 13. 20-A MRSA §5201, sub-§2, ¶D is enacted to read:

D. A person who will be at least 3 years of age on October 15th of the school year and is not identified as a child with a disability pursuant to section 7001, subsection 1-B may enroll in a public preschool program if it is available and the program provides instruction to children who are 3 years of age.

We will be updating our guidance for you but want to make sure you were aware.

# Open Office Hours

## Annual Financial Report

Jodi will be holding Open Hours the following dates and times

Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00pm

Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am

Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm

Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am

The topic of discussion will be the Annual Financial Report. Please email Jodi, [jodi.truman@maine.gov](mailto:jodi.truman@maine.gov), if you would like to attend.

If you have questions or topics other than the Annual Financial Report that you would like to discuss, please let Jodi know.

**SY2027 SNP Applications will be open on Tuesday, May 26 2026.  
Deadline to complete your 2027 application is August 15, 2026.**

# Summer Harvest of the Month

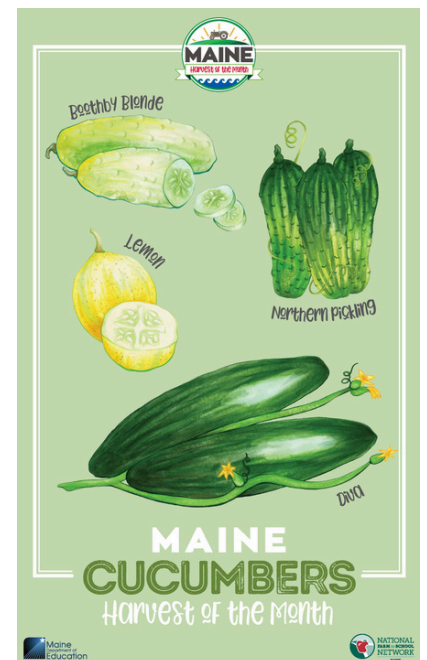
## Pledge Today!!

Now is the time to sign up for Summer Harvest of the Month (HOM)! Summer is the perfect time to participate when Maine's bounty is most plentiful!

By pledging, you'll receive toolkits for July (Maine Summer Squash) & August (Maine Cucumber). This includes promotional posters, source cards, recipes, stickers, & more!

Click [HERE](#) to pledge today.

For more information about HOM, visit our [Child Nutrition Website](#). If you have any questions, email [katie.knowles@maine.gov](mailto:katie.knowles@maine.gov)





The Maine Office for Family Independence is excited to bring SUN Bucks back in 2026! SUN Bucks is a program to help eligible families access food for their children during the summer months. SUN Bucks provides families with a one-time benefit of \$120 for each eligible school-aged child to supplement the summer grocery budget until classes and regular school meals resume in the fall.

Join us for a virtual kickoff event on **Thursday, May 21 from 2:30-3:30 PM** to learn about SUN Bucks, and how you can help spread the word. We will hear all about how SUN Bucks works, how people use it, and new materials for this summer to help raise awareness for the program.

Please feel free to spread the word of our kickoff event, we are excited to share SUN Bucks and these new resources with everyone!

We hope to see you there!

Maine SUN Bucks Team

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/22693702076040?p=btZs2KKjRUjKxMvI9l>

Meeting ID: 226 937 020 760 40

Passcode: mx7rE2MR



You're Invited to  
**David Hartley's**  
**Retirement Party!**

After **34** years, David Hartley is retiring from **Child Nutrition!**



**June 8th**



1 p.m. – 4 p.m.



**Deering Building**  
90 Blossom Lane,  
Augusta

**Open House Style!**



Come help us celebrate David and an amazing **34** years of service!

Want to send David best wishes,  
follow the link below to the e-card

<https://www.groupgreeting.com/sign/ea2bcc0e4e94a69>

Please let Paula know by June 1<sup>st</sup> if you plan on joining us.

# National School Lunch Program Information Portal

## National School Lunch Program Sponsors

Follow the [TWO](#) steps below to join

\*\*Our office is now using EnGiNE, Maine DOE's open-source learning portal. You **must** sign up using this [link](#).

Please be sure to use your school email address.

No matter how many schools in your District, please only register one time.

***\*\*Once you have access to EnGiNE or you already have access to EnGiNE, you MUST enroll in the National School Lunch Program Information Portal using this [link](#).***

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## Not a National School Lunch Program Sponsor?

If you would like access to the NSLP Portal, please contact Paula, [paula.nadeau@maine.gov](mailto:paula.nadeau@maine.gov) **prior** to signing up, using the links above, as your access will need to be approved.

Instructions on how to send a message using the Portal can be found on our [website](#).

# Webinars

paula.nadeau@maine.gov

## End of Year Updates and Reminders

June 10, 2026

1:30pm

Join Jane for the last Child Nutrition webinar of School Year 2026! She will recap the year, as well as share reminders and updates for School Year 2027.



### **Did you miss a webinar?**

You can view it by going to the [Webinars and Training](#) page of our website.

Hosted by the Maine Farm and Sea to School Network

## Maine Farm & Sea to School CONFERENCE



A full day of **networking, hands-on workshops, and learning dedicated to Farm & Sea to School in Maine**

Geared towards K-12 schools and early childhood education (ECE) centers. Open to everyone.

**Friday July 17, 2026**

**8:30-3:30**

**The Ecology School**  
184 Simpson Rd, Saco, ME 04072

**Register Here** →  
[mainefarmtoschool.org](http://mainefarmtoschool.org)



For questions email Sarah Sims at [s.sims@hccame.org](mailto:s.sims@hccame.org)

- Local Procurement**  
sourcing and serving local food in cafeterias and school meals
- Education**  
food and agriculture education and curriculum integration
- School Gardens**  
connecting students directly to where food is grown through hands-on and experimental learning





The Maine Farm and Sea to School Network is excited to host the 7th Maine Farm and Sea to School Conference, the first state-wide convening since 2019.

This event is open to everyone and is dedicated to Farm and Sea to School in Maine. Join schools, early childhood education (ECE) sites, farmers, fishermen, advocates, and partners from across the state for a full day of networking, hands-on workshops, and learning.

Together we'll explore increasing local food in cafeterias, growing school gardens, and integrating agriculture and food systems into the curriculum all while building the connections that make farm and sea to school thrive in Maine.

Together, we can nourish our students, support our farmers and fishermen, strengthen our local economy, and ensure every child in Maine grows up with the food and agricultural literacy to build a more resilient, just local food system for all.

**When: July 17, 2026**

**Where: The Ecology School, Saco, Maine**

**Learn more and register today at [mainefarmtoschool.org/mefarmtoschoolconference](http://mainefarmtoschool.org/mefarmtoschoolconference)**

**Other Available  
Training You May  
Find Interesting**



# Hands-on Foundational Fish Skills Training

Join the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and Healthy Acadia on Friday, May 29th, from 2 pm-5 pm at the Hancock County Technical Center in Ellsworth for a hands-on Foundational Fish Skills Training. Participants will build basic skills around working with raw fish filets in the kitchen, learn about the wide diversity of local seafood available to K-12 schools, and strengthen sea-to-school knowledge and expertise. Participants will walk away with resources and tools to implement sea-to-school programs at their schools. This training provides 2.5 CEU hours. It's free to attend, but please register here to save your spot. [RSVP today!](#)

What: Local fish training for K-12 food service professionals

Date: Friday, May 29

Time: 2 pm-5 pm

Location: Hancock County Technical Center

112 Boggy Brook Rd., Ellsworth, ME

RSVP here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeqxnYAU12mBEey628yxsg7zJXOTtrG50WSE7JrHYIVuse0Ag/viewform?usp=header>

Please reach out to Sophie Scott with questions

[sscott@gmri.org](mailto:sscott@gmri.org)



# MEMORIAL DAY

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**Wishing everyone a safe and restful  
Memorial Day weekend while we  
remember those who made  
the ultimate sacrifice.**