



# *News Release*

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## **How You Can Help Feed Kids This Summer** **Step Up for the Summer Food Service Program**

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Summer is coming and you can help feed kids while school is out. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is requesting community partners to step up and speak out about the *Meet Up and Eat Up* Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

The SFSP provides free nutritious meals to children up to age 18 and living in low-income areas where 50 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

After school lunchrooms close for summer, the SFSP helps 500,000 Michigan children receive the nutritious meals their young bodies need. Filling the summer hunger gap is vitally important because it can help reduce summer learning loss, also known as summer slide, for children.

"The need for healthy meals does not stop when school is out," State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice said. "The Summer Food Service Program helps provide children with healthy meals and countless activities to make summer fun and foster continued learning."

How can you make a difference? Step Up!

Help sponsors by highlighting the *Meet Up and Eat Up* program in your community. Partners can help by offering meeting space, planning the best site location, providing activities and learning opportunities, marketing and advertising the program, and contributing to program costs. If community partners use social media to publicize the SFSP, more families can connect to summer programming and nutritious meals.

“Aligning with the Department of Education’s vision of feeding children the whole year is key to serving children,” Dr. Rice said. “We are working to increase the awareness of the program’s availability, get more community members involved, and provide meals to as many children as we can across the state.”

*Meet Up and Eat Up* sites operate in over 1,750 schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, parks, and faith-based facilities statewide. Last year, nearly 3.2 million meals were served in Michigan.

To find a location in your community, visit the Meet Up and Eat Up SFSP Site Locator Map at [www.michigan.gov/meetupeatup](http://www.michigan.gov/meetupeatup). All Meet Up and Eat Up site information (meal times, days open, and operational dates) is updated daily.

For more information about how you can help with the Meet Up and Eat Up SFSP this summer, please contact SFSP Sponsors directly through the [SFSP Sponsor Directory](#), contact MDE at 517-241-5374 or [mde-sfsp@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-sfsp@michigan.gov). For more information on the SFSP, visit [here](#).

The SFSP is administered by MDE through funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is available to children 18 and under regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

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