

## 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.

### **Top 8 Hunger Identifiers in children include, but are not limited to:**

1. Hunger on Mondays or certain periods in the month
2. Quickly Eating and asking for more
3. Poor concentration
4. Excessive Illness/Absenteeism
5. Rushing Food Lines
6. Anxious for meals to be served
7. Extreme Thinness/puffy swollen skin/ chronic dry lips and/or eyes
8. Family Crisis/ Loss of Income / McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance

### **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:**

Chronic sickness      Excessive absence and tardiness  
 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 Chronic behavior problems (hyperactive, irritable, anxious, withdrawn)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 the bills or paying for groceries.
- The family has an income that puts them slightly over the requirement for SNAP/WIC.