

# Area Eligible for Tier I?



The Tier 1 & 2 meal rate system is frustrating to many providers. Many feel powerless in changing their Tier status in their community. ***There might be some action you can take that may help!***

The Pipestone Daycare Association has been working with their local elementary schools in helping families return the Household Income Statements to their schools. Pipestone elementary schools now qualify as a Tier I area by school eligibility as last October 50% or more children receiving school lunches were free reduced price meals. The providers in that town now receive Tier I rates for children in care.

Contact the local elementary principal, superintendent, dietary staff. It is very important to include head dietary personnel from the school and use that key staff as an ally.

1. Offer to help provide support, information, assistance and any other promotional activity necessary to educate parents and community.
2. Suggest attending the open house (if the local elementary school has one) before school

begins in the fall to encourage parents to return the household income statements.

3. Draft a letter that the school can use and providers can give to families in care will list reasons why returning the household income statement to the school is so important (even if the parents are over income). We have included a copy as a prototype in this newsletter.

Some of the issues that the Pipestone community found is that by returning those Household Income Statements, even if the families are over income it gives the school a better ratio of return. The higher return ratio keeps the school lunch rates the same instead of implementing price increases. It also helps the Early Childhood programs and the community in many other ways.

In addition, some families have not returned the Household Income Statements until after the first few months of school. If the form is returned too late to count free and reduced lunches for ***OCTOBER***, the school may qualify but it will be too late to use to determine a Tier I eligibility in the school district.

***So, whether or not families qualify for free or reduced lunches, returning the household income statements to the school before school starts affects the whole community, neighborhood, school system and increases benefits to our children!***