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To: District Superintendents

Chairpersons of Committees on Preschool Special Education
Organizations, Parents and Individuals Concerned with Preschool Special
Education

From: Christopher Suriano 

Subject: Guidelines for Determining if Mealtime May be Included When Calculating
Instructional Time 

of Special Education (OSE) has determined that there are circumstances when mealtime may be counted as part of the daily instructional schedule for some preschool special education programs. For children attending a full-day class, mealtime may provide learning opportunities when included as part of the instructional day. These opportunities may include experiences with food, encouraging self-help skills, developing fine motor skills, language and vocabulary development and mealtime behavioral expectations. Mealtime can provide a natural environment for young learners to share in conversations that build relationships with peers and adults.

If your program chooses to include mealtime as part of the instructional day, it should be a positive experience for each child and must include meaningful adult-child interactions and opportunities for learning. Listed below are criteria offered to assist a preschool special education program in determining whether mealtime qualifies as part
