**Intended audience:  Parents and community members**

**Intended timeframe:  Early 2020**

**Long Form**

The Census:  It’s important. It’s easy. It’s safe.

This spring, an important event will occur: the U.S. Census.

The census is a count of all people living in the United States and takes place every 10 years. It is simple and confidential to complete. For the first time, you can respond online. You will receive a unique identifying number in the mail, which will allow you to fill out the online form beginning in March 2020. It will ask questions about your household such as how many people reside in your home, date of birth, race, and sex.

**The census is important** for many reasons. The population counts are used to determine the allocation of federal dollars to states, cities and counties, and to help citizens and policy makers understand demographic, economic, and geographic trends needed to inform critical business decisions.

For the [insert name] School District, this means federal funding for  school nutrition programs and supports for students with special needs, who come from poverty, who are learning English, for disadvantaged students to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards and have a well-rounded education. Since the last census, the [insert name] School District has meant $XXX in additional funds to enable these vital services for students. [FIND OUT HERE: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/docs/communications/2011-2018%20Title_IDEA_Nutrition%20Distributions%20FINAL%20-%2008.01.2019.pdf>]

Population totals from the census also determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives, and the totals are also used to redraw federal and state legislative districts. Based on projections, Colorado could receive an additional seat in the House of Representatives thereby increasing Colorado’s voice as Congress debates issues important to all of us.

**The census is easy.**  In 2020 you can respond to the census on-line (using a computer or a smartphone), over the telephone, or by submitting a paper form. Early in 2020 all census addresses will receive a card inviting the residents to complete the census. The 2020 Census provide people with a URL so they can complete the census online, a toll-free telephone number if they want to call in their responses, and an address to request a paper form.

**The census is safe.**  All data collected through the census is protected under Title 13 of the U.S. Code. Records are confidential for 72 years by law. All Census Bureau employees swear a lifetime oath to protect respondent information.  The U.S. Census Bureau will never share a respondent’s personal information with other government agencies. Data is only released in summary tables, no individual records are released. In fact, all Census Bureau employees swear a lifetime oath to protect respondent information. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is up to 5 years imprisonment and/or a fine of $250,000.

**What do you need to do?** Complete the short and easy form online. If you don’t have a computer at home, you can use one at a library or at a location in your community clearly identified Census Questionnaire Assistance Center.

Your kids count, so make sure to count them when you fill out the census form in Spring 2020!