

Procedures for Accommodating Children With Special Dietary Needs

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National School Lunch/ Breakfast Program guidelines require participating school districts to offer substitutions to the regular meal pattern for students that are unable to consume the school meal because of their disabilities when that need is certified by a licensed physician.

The nature of the child's disability, the reason the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal and the specific substitutions needed must be specified in a statement signed by the licensed physician.

CRITERIA:

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, a "person with a disability" is any person who has a **physical or mental impairment** that substantially limits one of more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

The term "physical or mental impairment" includes many diseases and conditions which may be orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments; cerebral palsy; epilepsy; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; cancer; heart disease; metabolic diseases, such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU); food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy); mental retardation; emotional illness; drug addiction and alcoholism; specific learning disabilities; HIV disease and tuberculosis. Major life activities covered by this definition include caring for one's self, eating, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

*This does not include headaches, acanthosis nigricans, obesity, hypercholesterolemia, hypertriglyceridemia, lactose intolerance, non-anaphylactic food allergies, food intolerances, high blood pressure, low blood sugars, failure to thrive, food preferences, low-fat & low cholesterol, no concentrated sweets (NCS), etc.

Students with an IEP containing a nutrition component and/or classified as Section 504 meet the criteria for the required nutrition services. School officials must ensure that CN staff are involved early in decisions regarding special meals.

DIET ORDER:

The physician's statement must identify:

- The child's disability;
- An explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- The major life activity affected by the disability;
- The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

The diet order must be current for the school year. In addition, Child Nutrition Services will need a medical statement to discontinue the diet order.

The doctor's order may be faxed to our office at 956-580-5057. Please allow 4-5 days to process the order and make the necessary arrangements to procure the items needed and meet with campus personnel.

If you need any information, contact Child Nutrition Services at 580-6073.