

Special Dietary Needs (CACFP / SFSP)

USDA Child Nutrition Programs support access to healthy meals to all participants, including participants with disabilities who have special dietary needs. Under the law, a disability is an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, which can include allergies and digestive conditions, but does not include personal diet preferences.

Requirements:

- ✓ Make reasonable modifications to meal(s) on a case-by-case basis to accommodate disabilities which restrict a participant's diet
 - Meals must be provided at no extra charge
 - Accommodations must be made on a case by case basis
 - It is not necessary to offer specific brands or make fundamental alterations to the program

- ✓ The request for meal modifications must include:
 - Food(s) to be omitted/avoided from the participant's diet
 - How the ingestion of the food impacts the participant
 - Food(s) to be substituted

- ✓ Requests for meal modification must be signed by a **State-recognized medical authority**, a licensed health care professional authorized to write medical prescriptions in Washington:
 - Medical Doctor (MD)
 - Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)
 - Physician's Assistant (PA) with prescriptive authority
 - Naturopathic Physician
 - Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)

- ✓ A Request for Special Dietary Accommodations form is available for your use.
 - This form is not required – but other documents that request for meal modifications must include the items indicated above

- ✓ Program operators that employ 15 or more individuals must designate at least one person to coordinate compliance with disability requirements.

OSPI Child Nutrition Programs Reference Sheet

- Best practice is to develop and implement processes and procedures for requests for meal modifications:
 - Ensure that parents / guardians are informed of:
 - How to request meal modifications
 - The process for resolving disputes about meal modifications
 - Provide an impartial process to address grievances related to the request for modification
 - Notify parents / guardians of final decision and procedure for review
 - Provide notice of nondiscrimination
 - Train staff on procedures for handling requests for meal modifications

Reference:

- ✓ [7 CFR 220.8](#)
- ✓ [7 CFR 225.16](#)
- ✓ [CACFP 14-2017, SFSP 10-2017 Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in CACFP and SFSP](#)
- ✓ [Title 18 RCW – Businesses and Professionals](#)

Acronym Reference

-CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
-CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
-CNS	Child Nutrition Services
-OSPI	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
-SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
-USDA	United States Department of Agriculture