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.
- 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**

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-CACFP</td>
<td>Child and Adult Care Food Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>-CFR</td>
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<td>-CNS</td>
<td>Child Nutrition Services</td>
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