

## CACFP Meal Requirements for an Eating/Feeding Disability or Food Allergy/Intolerance

Child care programs on the CACFP are responsible for serving meals and snacks to all children and, in order to claim reimbursement for meals and snacks served, are required to supply all components of the CACFP meal pattern. Sometimes a child is not able to consume one or more meal pattern components, or requires food or eating modification, because of a disability or special dietary need. Depending on the type of disability or special dietary need, your center may be required to supply the food substitution or meal modification. To determine what your center is required to do, work through the following flow chart:

### Disability

OR

### Allergy/Intolerance

**The child has an eating or feeding disability that restricts their diet;** for example a food allergy that results in severe, life-threatening reactions, a metabolic disease such as PKU, or a physical limitation that requires eating modification

See below for more detailed information\*

**The child has a special medical or dietary need that is not considered a disability;** for example a food intolerance/allergy that is not life-threatening such as lactose intolerance, a strawberry allergy, or celiac disease

**Any required substitution or modification must be provided or made by the center**

A medical statement signed by a **licensed physician** must be on file. The statement must identify:

- the child's disability and why it restricts the child's diet
- the major life activity affected by the disability
- the food(s) to be omitted and the food(s) that must be substituted or the modification(s) that must be made

**Is the child still able to consume the full CACFP meal pattern component?**

- YES - example, a child can be served bananas instead of strawberries or cheese instead of peanut butter
- NO – example, a child cannot drink regular cow's milk and there are no other options within the milk component to substitute

Yes

The center can substitute another food within the meal pattern component so the child receives a full reimbursable meal

No

\*Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, a person with a disability means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (caring for one's self, eating, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working).

- Food related diseases and conditions include metabolic diseases such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU); food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy); cancer; heart disease; muscular dystrophy; etc.

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA, and the facility may, but is not required to, provide food substitutions for them. However, when in a licensed physician's assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening reactions, the child's condition would meet the definition of "disability," and the substitutions prescribed by the licensed physician must be provided by the center.

**The center or the parents/guardians may provide food substitutions.** When the parents/guardians supply any food substitution a statement, signed by a registered medical authority, must be on file and should identify:

- the special dietary need
- the food(s) to be omitted from the child's diet
- the food(s) that may be substituted

In order to claim the meal for reimbursement the center must supply all other meal pattern components.

## CACFP Meal Requirements for Lifestyle Choices

Special dietary practices such as eating vegetarian, organic or eliminating certain foods for religious reasons are not exempt from the CACFP meal pattern meaning the full meal pattern must be supplied by the center in order to claim the meal for reimbursement. If a meal component is eliminated because of dietary practices, or if the parent/guardian supplies any component of the meal, the center cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. The only exception to this is with serving a non-dairy milk substitute.

**Is there a medical reason for the parent/guardian wanting their child to drink something other than regular cow's milk?**

Yes

No

**Is there a medical statement from a medical authority on file including:**

- the reason for the milk substitution
- a statement that milk is to be omitted from the child's diet
- the type of non-dairy milk or other beverage that may be substituted

YES

NO

Does the parent/guardian or center supply the substitute?

Yes

Center can claim the meal(s) for reimbursement

Does the center supply a **creditable dairy milk** substitute (e.g. low-fat or fat-free lactose-free, lactose-reduced, buttermilk or acidified milk)?

No

Does the parent/guardian supply a **non-dairy milk** substitute?

Yes

Center can claim the meal(s) for reimbursement

No

Center cannot claim the meal(s) for reimbursement

Yes

**The parent/guardian may request in writing that their child be served a non-dairy milk substitution. The request should include:**

- the reason for the non-dairy milk substitution (i.e. life style choice)
- the specific type of non-dairy beverage to be substituted
  - the substitution must be nutritionally equivalent to milk and meet **all** of the nutritional standards for fortification of calcium, protein, vitamins A and D and other nutrients to levels found in cow's milk **listed below:**

<b>Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards</b>	
Nutrient	Per Cup
Calcium	276 mg
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	500 IU
Vitamin D	100 IU
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	.44 mg
Vitamin B-12	1.1mcg (µg)

See list of approved non-dairy beverages in GM #12C

Does the parent /guardian or center supply one of the approved substitutes?

Yes

No

Does the parent/guardian or center supply an unapproved substitute?

Center cannot claim the meal(s) for reimbursement