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 meal 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 child care provider is required to do, work through the following flow chart:

Disability

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.*

Any required substitution or modification <u>must be provided or made</u> by the child care provider.

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 <u>must</u> be substituted or the modification(s) that must be made

OR

Allergy/Intolerance

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.

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 component to substitute

Yes

No

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

- *Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans 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 child care provider.

The child care provider 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 child care provider must supply all other meal pattern components.