Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Program

Use this flowchart when special dietary requests are received. Document the process.

SFA/school received a request for a meal modification from a:

1. State Licensed Healthcare Professional
2. Parent/Guardian

Does the medical statement include the following?

- Description of the child’s physical or mental impairment,
- Explanation of what must be done to accommodate,
- Signature from a State licensed healthcare professional.

Is the request for a medical condition?

- Yes
- No

The request is for a food, health, ethical or religious preference, that is not a disability.

SFA is not required to accommodate preferences but may choose to make meal modifications.

If modifications are made, they must meet the USDA meal pattern requirements.

Yes

Can the accommodation be made within the meal pattern?

- Yes
- No

A medical statement must be obtained to accommodate the request. Contact parent/guardian to request a medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional.

Accommodate the request within the meal pattern. A medical statement is not required. The SFA may require one and the requirements must be described in their written procedure. SFA may not use OVS to accommodate the request.

Obtain permission from parent/guardian to contact the State licensed healthcare professional to get a complete medical statement.

While waiting for the updated statement, SFA should follow the portion of the medical statement that is clear.

No

SFA is required to accommodate the request.

- SFA should try to accommodate within the meal pattern if possible.
- Student’s meal does not have to meet the meal pattern requirements to be reimbursable.
- SFA may not use OVS to accommodate the request.

Citations and References:

1. 2017 Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs Guide.
2. SP 26-2017 Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Q&As
3. SP 59-2016 Policy Memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs.