



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

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SUBJECT: Statements Supporting Accommodations for Children with Disabilities in the Child Nutrition Programs

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to ensuring that all children have access to healthy meals that meet their dietary needs. FNS has facilitated access for children with special dietary needs through the Child Nutrition Programs (National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)) regulations, (NSLP 210.10(m), SBP 220.8(m), 220.23(d) CACFP 226.20(m), and SFSP 225.16(f)(4)) and guidance, which includes FNS Instruction 783.2, *Meal Substitutions for Medical or Other Special Dietary Needs and Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs*.

The purpose of this memorandum is to expand the list of acceptable medical professionals that may sign a medical statement for meal accommodations in the Child Nutrition Programs and recommend alternate foods for children whose disability restricts their diets. A broader list of medical providers will improve access to meal accommodations for children with special dietary needs while balancing the administrative burden placed on program operators and participants requesting meal accommodations.

Current regulations and guidance require program operators to provide reasonable accommodations for children whose disability restricts their diet for all meals and snacks when supported by a medical statement signed by a licensed physician. However, in many States, laws permit specific State-recognized medical professionals to treat patients and write medical prescriptions. With this in mind, FNS has determined that along with licensed physicians and at the discretion of a State agency, it is reasonable to also permit other recognized medical authorities to complete and sign a medical statement for meal accommodations in the Child Nutrition Programs and recommend alternate foods for children whose disability restricts their diet. A State recognized medical authority for this purpose is a State licensed health care professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. This update is effective immediately.

Regional Directors

State Directors

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FNS is working to update its accommodations guidance in order to reflect this update and other issues currently under review. State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum to program operators immediately. Local Educational Agencies should direct any questions to their State agency and are encouraged to share this information with households as soon as possible. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

Angela Kline

Director

Policy and Program Development

Child Nutrition Programs