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Children with Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs

Schools/Sites participating in a federal school meal program (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Special Milk Program, and Afterschool Snack Program) are required to make reasonable accommodations for children who are unable to eat the school/site meals because of a disability that restricts the diet.

1. Licensed Medical Authority's Statement for Children with Disabilities

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations at [7 CFR Part 15b](#) require substitutions or modifications in school/site meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. School Food Authorities/Sponsors must provide modifications for children on a case-by-case basis when requests are supported by a written statement from a state licensed medical authority.

The third page of this document ("**Medical Plan of Care for School/Site Food Service**") may be used to obtain the required information from the licensed medical authority. For this purpose, a *state licensed medical authority* in West Virginia includes a:

- Physician, (MD or DO)
- Physician assistant,
- Certified registered nurse practitioner, or
- Dentist.
- Registered Dietitian

The written medical statement must include:

- An explanation of how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet.
- An explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child; and
- The food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate.

2. Other Special Dietary Needs

School/Site food service staff may make food substitutions for individual children who do not have a medical statement on file. Such determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and all accommodations must be made according to USDA's meal pattern requirements. Schools/Sites are encouraged to have documentation on file when making menu modifications within the meal pattern.

3. Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act

Under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990* and the *ADA Amendments Act of 2008*, a person with a disability means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or major bodily functions, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. A physical or mental impairment does not need to be life threatening in order to constitute a disability. If it limits a major life activity, it is considered a disability.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to functions of the immune system; normal cell growth; and digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

A child with a disability under Part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) is described as a child evaluated in accordance with IDEA as having one or more of the recognized thirteen disability categories and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the IDEA and its implementing regulations. When nutrition services are required under a child's IEP, school officials need to ensure that food service staff is involved early in decisions regarding special meals.

Nutrition Program Contact

For more information about requesting accommodations to meals and the meal service for children with disabilities at (School or Site Name), please contact:
(Name and contact information)

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

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Medical Plan of Care for School/Site Food Service

Please read pages 1 and 2 before completing this form.

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Grade Level/Classroom
Name of School/Site	WVEIS Number	
Name of Parent/Guardian	Phone Number of Parent/Guardian	
Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date	
1. Provide an explanation below of how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet:		
2. Describe the specific diet or necessary modifications prescribed by the state licensed medical authority to accommodate the child's needs:		
3. List the food or foods to be omitted (please be specific) and recommended alternatives, if appropriate. Foods to be omitted: 1. 2.		
Suggested substitutions: 1. 2. 3.		
4. Indicate texture modifications, if applicable: ☐ Chopped/Cut into bite-sized pieces ☐ Diced ☐ Finely Ground ☐ Pureed ☐ Other: _____		
5. List any required special adaptive equipment:		
Name of Physician/Medical Authority & Title (Please Print)	Provider Phone Number	
Signature of Physician/Medical Authority	Date	
Signing the following section is optional but may prevent delays by allowing the school/site to speak with the physician/medical authority.		
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Waiver		
In accordance with the provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, I hereby authorize _____ (medical authority) to release such protected health information of my child as is necessary for the specific purpose of Special Diet information to _____ (child nutrition program) and I consent to allow the physician/medical authority to freely exchange the information listed on this form and in their records concerning my child with the school/site program as necessary. I understand that I may refuse to sign this authorization without impact on the eligibility of my request for a special diet for my child. I understand that permission to release this information may be rescinded at any time except when the information has already been released. My permission to release this information will expire on _____ (date). This information is to be released for the specific purpose of Special Diet information. The undersigned certifies that he/she is the parent, guardian or representative of the person listed on this document and has the legal authority to sign on behalf of that person. Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____		