When to Request a Medical Statement in the CACFP

CACFP iTrain
Simple Lesson Plan

Institute of Child Nutrition
Resources • Training • Research
When to Request a Medical Statement in the CACFP

CACFP iTrain
Simple Lesson Plan

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Aleshia Hall-Campbell, PhD. MPH

Intended Audience: CACFP personnel and other child care staff
Description: This lesson explains how to identify situations requiring medical statements for meal accommodations.
This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

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, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may 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 complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form.pdf 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;
2. Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

Suggested Reference Citation:

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images. Please contact helpdesk@theicn.org for more information.

©2021, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences 11/02/2021
### Lesson-at-a-Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Introduction and Overview</td>
<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint slide deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Projector (if available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pens or Pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> Identify situations requiring medical statements for meal accommodations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Laws Requiring Meal Accommodations in CACFP Centers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worksheet: Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td>Answer Key: Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasonable Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Statement Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Disability Special Dietary Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk Substitutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Lesson Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worksheet: Speed Action Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Optional: Training Evaluation &amp; Training Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speed Action Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Evaluation (Optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Time: 30 minutes**
References


Internet Resources

- Institute of Child Nutrition: www.theicn.org
- USDA's Team Nutrition: https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Preparation Checklist

Instructions: Use the Preparation Checklist to prepare for the training session. Keep track of your progress by checking off tasks as they are completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Done</th>
<th>Lesson Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gather Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer and Projector Screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worksheets and Handouts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed? Answer Key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speed Action Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pens or pencils (one per participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional: Training Certificate/Evaluation/Feedback Form (one per participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare for Lesson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the training day:

- Review the training script and research any relevant State or local requirements. The content reflects the Federal regulations and/or national best practices or standards. However, it's essential to include any additional State or local requirements when presenting this training.

- Make enough copies of the handouts for each participant.

- Test the PowerPoint on the computer and projector screen.

- Optional: Develop and print a session certificate/evaluation/feedback form (one per participant)

On the training day:

- Place pens or pencils on tables (one per participant).

- Distribute materials to each participant.

On the instructor's table:

- Training Script

- Instructor's copy of handouts and/or worksheets

- Optional: Session Evaluation/Feedback Forms
Instructor’s Note: Each section below has an accompanying slide(s). Review and share the content for each PowerPoint slide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the following tasks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Distribute handouts to participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Welcome participants to the training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Introduce yourself to the participants. Allow participants to introduce themselves by sharing their name and one thing they would like to get from this training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Medical Statement** |
| Ask posing questions: |
| ▶ Do you have parents request special meals for their children? |
| ▶ How do you decide how to honor the request? |
| Share core content: These are common questions regarding meeting special meal requests. Knowing how to respond is key to ensure you align your practices with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. |

This lesson will explore when to require a medical statement for meal accommodations. Particularly, it will explore how to differentiate between medical needs, food preferences, and non-disability needs.

| **Overview** |
| Share core content: These are common questions regarding meeting special meal requests. Knowing how to respond is key to ensure you align your practices with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. |

This lesson will explore when to require a medical statement for meal accommodations. Particularly, it will explore how to differentiate between medical needs, food preferences, and non-disability needs.

| **Objective:** Identify situations requiring medical statements for meal accommodations. |

| **Definition of Disability** |
| Share core content: A disability is defined as a health problem that substantially limits major life activities. The health problem could be related to any of the major systems in the body. |

Some disabilities may call for a meal modification to prevent problems with the child’s health. In these cases, you may need a medical statement.
What Is a Medical Statement?

Share core content: A medical statement provides a description of the disability (impairment), foods to avoid or dietary restriction, and appropriate substitutions or needs. It should also include an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the disability. The statement needs to be signed by a State licensed healthcare professional.

When Do You Need a Medical Statement?

Share core content: If a child has a disability, it doesn't necessarily require a medical statement. A medical statement is only required when a meal accommodation does not align with the meal pattern requirements. For example, a child with severe seizures must have a very low carbohydrate diet. This accommodation eliminates the grain and fruit component from meals and snacks. This accommodation does not align with the meal pattern; therefore, a child must have a medical statement on file.

Example of Disabilities Requiring Meal Accommodations

Share core content: Many conditions require a change in diet to support or improve a child’s health. Some disabilities may include but are not limited to food allergies, diabetes, or kidney failure.

The medical conditions are all different and require clear instructions on foods to omit and foods to serve the child. Therefore, having a well-written medical statement helps you provide the best meal possible for the child.

Essentially, program regulations require program operators to provide modifications for participants with disabilities on a case-by-case basis only when requests are supported by a written statement from a State-licensed healthcare professional, such as a physician or nurse practitioner.

When a Medical Statement Isn't Needed

Share core content: As previously mentioned, meals that do not meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements are not eligible for reimbursement unless supported by a medical statement. If a modification request aligns with the meal patterns, a medical statement is not required.

For example, a child cannot have strawberries due to a severe food allergy. When strawberries are served, this child will receive a different fruit, such as cherry halves or apple slices. In these situations, it is recommended that the parent or guardian request this accommodation in writing.

In other cases, more information may be required. For example, if an infant requires the substitution of a Food and Drug Administration exempt infant formula in place of iron-fortified infant formula to accommodate a disability, this information must be included in the statement.

Milk Substitutions

Ask posing question: How many of you have ever received a milk substitution request?

Share core content: Milk substitutions can be provided without a medical statement as long as the milk substitution is nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. To determine which substitutions are available, check with your State agency for an approved list.

Non-Disability Special Dietary Needs

Share core content: There are times when parents request meal accommodations for non-disability reasons. Generally, the request is based on religious, ethnic, or lifestyle preferences. For example, a parent might ask for a vegetarian diet or a diet without beef. Accommodations are encouraged but not required. For the meal to be reimbursable, centers and homes must follow the meal pattern.

Reasonable Accommodation

Share core content: All disabilities requesting accommodations should be taken on a case-by-case basis. You should refer to your State agency/sponsor whenever there are questions.

Program operators are not required to make modifications that result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program. In these situations, some meal modifications may be so expensive that they would make continued operation of the program unfeasible and create a fundamental change in the nature of the program. However, always refer to your State agency/sponsor before making this decision and for any other questions regarding meal modifications.

Activity: Is a Medical Statement Needed?

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: The purpose of the exercise is to determine if a medical statement is needed.

Materials Needed: Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed? worksheet

Instructions: Distribute the Medical Statement Case Study form. Instruct participants to read each of the case studies and determine if a medical statement is needed. Answer "yes" or "no" after each question. After answering yes or no, go back and answer the questions in the case study.

Conclusion

Lesson Conclusion

Share core content: To conclude the lesson, a medical statement should be requested when a parent asks for meal accommodation for a child with medical disabilities. A definition of a medical disability is substantially limited life activity or major bodily functions. The medical statement must list foods to avoid and appropriate substitutions. A medical statement is not needed when a non-disability accommodation is requested. The meal pattern must be followed for accommodations for non-disability accommodations.

Ask posing question: What questions do you have concerning medical statements?
Activity: Speed Action Planning
Time: 5 minutes

- **Purpose:** This purpose of this activity is to establish future steps for applying the information in their workplace.
- **Materials Needed:** Speed Action Planning worksheet, Planner or Cell Phone Calendar App, and Pencil/Pen
- **Instructions:** Distribute the Speed Action worksheet. Inform participants that it is important to develop a plan for using the training's information. Ask them to take 1–2 minutes to answer the following three questions to establish an action plan.
  - What did you learn in this training?
  - How will you apply this information in your current or future role?
  - When will you apply this information?

Once participants have finished, encourage them to save this goal to a planner, calendar app, or other sources to ensure they follow through with their plan. Following this activity, dismiss participants from the training.

**Thank You!**

Complete the following tasks:
- Conclude the training.
- Refer participants to the Institute of Child Nutrition for additional information at helpdesk@theicn.org or 800-321-3054.
- Distribute any certificates or evaluations.

---

**Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed?**

**Instructions:** Read the following situations and determine if you need to request a medical statement.

- **Case 1** – Molly hasn't been feeling well lately. Her doctor wonders if she has an allergy. An allergy test is scheduled. Before the test, Molly must limit her diet. What is required to follow Molly's diet needs?

- **Case 2** – Ben has a peanut allergy. As an infant, Ben consumed mostly formula and minimal solid foods. He recently turned one, and the center is ready to start him on the 1-year-old's menu. He is too young for an EPI pen, so the mother is especially concerned about his food. The mother wants Ben to limit his solid foods and slowly introduce them, while remaining on formula. The doctor's statement on file only includes information about not serving peanut-containing foods, but nothing about formula. Can formula be offered? Can his food components be limited?

- **Case 3** – A mother has a severe allergy to fish. She requests her son not have fish at day care. She doesn't want to come into contact with any fish on her son. Is this a required accommodation? What are the options?
Handouts and Worksheets

Case Study: Is a Medical Statement Needed?

Answer Key

**Instructions:** Read the following situations and determine if you need to request a medical statement.

**Case 1** – Molly hasn’t been feeling well lately. Her doctor wonders if she has an allergy. An allergy test is scheduled. Before the test, Molly must limit her diet. What is required to follow Molly’s diet needs?

Yes. A medical statement listing food to avoid, allowed food, statement of disability, signed by a physician.

**Case 2** – Ben has a peanut allergy. As an infant, Ben consumed mostly formula and minimal solid foods. He recently turned one, and the center is ready to start him on the 1-year-old’s menu. He is too young for an EPI pen, so the mother is especially concerned about his food. The mother wants Ben to limit his solid foods and slowly introduce them, while remaining on formula. The doctor’s statement on file only includes information about not serving peanut-containing foods, but nothing about formula. Can formula be offered? Can his food components be limited?

Yes. A medical statement listing food to avoid, allowed food and formula, statement of disability, signed by a physician.

**Case 3** – A mother has a severe allergy to fish. She requests her son not have fish at day care. She doesn’t want to come into contact with any fish on her son. Is this a required accommodation? What are the options?

Yes and no. You are not required to make this accommodation but may for non-disability special dietary needs.

---

**Speed Action Planning**

**Instructions:** Today’s training featured key information on when to request a medical statement. Answer the following three questions to establish a plan for using the information.

1. What did you learn in this training?

2. How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?

3. When will you apply this information (e.g., one week, one month, six months, etc.?)
The University of Mississippi
School of Applied Sciences
800-321-3054
www.theicn.org