**Special Dietary Needs in the CACFP**

Programs that participate in the CACFP are required to make reasonable modifications to accommodate participants with disabilities. This is required only when supported by a written medical statement from a state recognized medical authority. North Dakota approved state licensed medical authorities are physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

**What is NOT a disability**

Eating certain foods or eliminating foods from the diet due to a preference.

Ex: Request that a participant does not drink cow’s milk because of a preference, not because the participant is lactose intolerant.

Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (includes eating, breathing, digestive and respiratory functions, etc.). Most physical and mental impairments will constitute a disability; it does not need to be life threatening.

**What is a disability**

**Disability with valid medical statement on file-**

**Families** can supply **ONE or MORE** of the required components. The **Center** must supply **ONE** required component.

**DISABILITY**

Supported by a valid written medical statement

Modifications(s) may or may not meet CACFP meal pattern requirements

**Disability not supported by a valid medical statement:** Programs may choose to accommodate requests related to a disability not supported by a valid medical statement if the requested modifications can be made while meeting the CACFP meal pattern requirements. These meals are reimbursable (Ex. Having a variety of fruits on hand, so participants with an allergy to a particular fruit can be served a different fruit).

**Non-disability-** Families can only supply **ONE** of the required **creditable** components for the meal to still be reimbursable.

Meals are reimbursable (whether or not the CACFP meal pattern is met)

Programs must offer reasonable modifications.

**General health concerns and personal preferences**, such as a family’s preference that a child eats a gluten-free diet or organic foods because the family believes it is healthier for the child, are **not** disabilities and do not require meal modifications. Refer to back page on how to handle a non-disability.

**Reasonable Modifications include:**

* Working with a family to determine a reasonable modification, not the exact one requested, to accommodate a person’s disability (Ex. Not required to provide a particular brand name but must offer a substitute that does not contain the specific allergen).
* Changes to more than one meal component
* Programs that **never require** the family to provide the accommodation

**NOT A DISABILITY**

(non-disability special dietary need request)

**Written Statement from family:**

1. Identifies the non-disability special dietary need, including foods not to be served and allowable substitutions.
2. May include a statement that the family chooses to provide foods (if applicable).

Programs are not required, but may choose to accommodate requests

**Request for ethnic, religious, vegetarian reasons:**

* Programs may choose to supply creditable food(s) and/or creditable beverage substitutes that can be claimed for reimbursement.
* Families may choose to provide **ONE** creditable component; the Program must supply **ALL** other components with creditable foods. Meals and snacks can be claimed for reimbursement.

**Examples of non-disability special dietary need requests:**

The following beverages are **not** creditable:

* Non-dairy beverage **not nutritionally equivalent** to cow’s milk including almond, cashew, coconut, hemp, oat and rice milk
* 2 % milk
* Whole milk after the age of 2
* Water

When served in place of milk, meals or snacks **cannot** be claimed for reimbursement.

**Family Provided Component:**

Families ***may*** choose to provide **one creditable component** towards a reimbursable meal for a non-disability special dietary need.

* Religious
* Ethnic
* Lifestyle preference
* Health reason not supported by a valid written medical statement.
* Other

Request is not supported by a valid written medical statement or request is for religious, ethnic or lifestyle preference (vegetarian, organic).

**Accommodate requests within the meal pattern:**

In many cases, requests can be managed within meal pattern requirements when a well-planned variety of foods are available. Examples:

* Offer one type of **creditable** milk substitute to accommodate participants requesting a non-dairy beverage. Because this modification **is** creditable, the meal is **reimbursable**.
* Accommodate vegetarian eaters by serving creditable meat alternates.

Meal accommodations that **do not meet** CACFP meal pattern requirements are **not reimbursable**

Meal accommodations that **meet** CACFP meal pattern requirements **are** reimbursable.

Request is supported by a written statement from the family

[www.nd.gov/dpi/](http://www.nd.gov/dpi/)