


REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

- For children with special dietary needs caused by disabilities, the sponsor is required to make accommodations. A Medical Statement signed by a physician is required. Medical conditions such as food allergies, celiac disease, diabetes, and others are considered disabilities if the physician documents that they are disabilities.
- For children with special dietary needs not caused by disabilities, accommodations are optional (recommended but not required). If the sponsor makes accommodations, a Medical Statement signed by a recognized medical authority is required. In Pennsylvania, a recognized medical authority is a physician, Physician's Assistant (PA), or Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP).
- The Medical Statement does not need to be updated each year UNLESS there are changes. PDE recommends that you confirm, on a yearly basis, that the diet order has not changed.
- Parents/guardians or recognized medical authorities may request a milk substitute to restrict intake of fluid milk by children with special dietary needs not caused by disabilities. However, the milk substitute must meet the established nutrient standards, as indicated in Question 10 in USDA memo SP35-2009, available on [PEARS | Form Download](#). Providing this accommodation is optional. Juice and water cannot substitute for fluid milk as part of the reimbursable meal for non-disabling special dietary needs. However, if the school implements Offer vs. Serve (OVS), any student can choose a meal without milk, and choose juice as part of the meal if it is offered. All students must have access to drinkable water in addition to the meal.
- For additional instructions, please see the  PDE Division of Food and Nutrition Website (click on the Special Dietary Needs Resources link) [http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/food__nutrition_services/7483].