

## Special Dietary Needs

USDA Child Nutrition Programs support access to healthy meals to all children, including children with disabilities who have special dietary needs. Under the law, a disability is an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, which can include allergies and digestive conditions, but does not include personal diet preferences.

### Requirements:

- ✓ Make reasonable modifications to meal(s) on a case-by-case basis to accommodate disabilities which restrict a child's diet
  - Meals must be provided at no extra charge
  - It is not necessary to offer specific brands or fundamental alterations to the program
- ✓ The request for meal modifications must include:
  - Food(s) to be omitted/avoided from the child's diet
  - How the ingestion of the food impacts the child
  - Food(s) to be substituted
- ✓ Requests for meal modification must be signed by a **State-recognized medical authority**, a licensed health care professional authorized to write medical prescriptions in Washington
  - Authorized in Washington State (as of September 2015)
    - Medical Doctor (MD)
    - Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)
    - Physician's Assistant (PA) with prescriptive authority
    - Naturopathic Physician
    - Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)
- ✓ Develop and implement processes and procedures for requests for meal modifications:
  - Ensure that parents / guardians are informed of:
    - How to request meal modifications
    - The process for resolving disputes about meal modifications
  - Provide an impartial process to address grievances related to the request for modification
    - Give opportunity to the child's parent / guardian to participate and be represented by counsel
    - Notify parents / guardians of final decision and procedure for review
  - Train food service staff on procedures for handling requests for meal modifications
  - Coordinate with school district's [Section 504 Coordinator](#) to ensure compliance with any additional [Section 504 requirements](#)

# OSPI Child Nutrition Programs Reference Sheet

- ✓ Schools are highly encouraged to develop a team approach to providing modifications for children with disabilities
  - Potential team members: Section 504 Coordinator, school nurse, school principal and school food service staff
  
- ✓ Use the Dietary Prescription Form applicable for your program
  - [School Meal Programs](#)
  - [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
  - [Summer Food Programs](#)

## Reference:

- ✓ [7 CFR 210.10](#)
- ✓ [7 CFR 225.16](#)
- ✓ [7 CFR 220.8](#)
- ✓ [SP 59-2016](#)
- ✓ [SP 32-2015, SFSP 15-2015, CACFP 13-2015](#)
- ✓ [SP 36-2013, SFSP 12-2013, CACFP 10-2013](#)
- ✓ [Title 18 RCW – Businesses and Professionals](#)

## Acronym Reference

-CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
-CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
-CNS	Child Nutrition Services
-LEA	Local Education Agency
-OSPI	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
-SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
-SP	School Programs
-USDA	United States Department of Agriculture