

Sample Documentation for Special Dietary Needs

It is important to document the special nutritional needs of children requiring dietary modifications. Keeping a record will protect the school and minimize misunderstandings. The medical statement does not have to be renewed each year if there are no changes in the diet order. Be sure to note and date any changes in the child's medical condition or diet order.

Eating/Feeding Evaluation

Figure 1 includes a sample Eating and Feeding Evaluation: Children with Special Needs. This form should be completed by a parent, a physician, or other recognized medical authority.

Information Card

Figure 2 gives an example of an information card, which can be used daily by SNP department staff in the kitchen to prepare meals for the children who have special dietary or medical needs.

(The Information Card and the Eating/Feeding Evaluation Form were adapted, with permission, from forms developed by Susan Woods, R.D., for Bibb County Schools in Georgia.)

Figure 1. Eating and Feeding Evaluation: Children with Special Dietary Needs

PART A			
Student's Name		Age	
Name of School	Grade Level	Classroom	
Does the Child have a Disability? If Yes, describe the major life activities affected by the disability.		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the child have special nutritional or feeding needs? If Yes, complete Part B of this form and have it signed by a licensed physician.		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If the child is not disabled, does the child have special nutritional or feeding needs? If Yes, complete Part B of this form and have it signed by a recognized medical authority.		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If the child does not require special meals, the parent can sign at the bottom of this form and return the form to the school food service.			
PART B			
List any dietary restrictions or special diet.			
List any allergies or food intolerances to avoid.			
List foods to be substituted.			
List foods that need the following change in texture. If all foods need to be prepared in this manner, indicate "All". Cut up of chopped into bite size pieces: Finely ground: Pureed or Blended:			
List any special equipment or utensils that are needed.			
Indicate any other comments about the child's eating for feeding patterns.			
Parent's Signature		Date:	
Physician or Medical Authority's Signature:		Date:	

Figure 2. Information Card

Student's Name	Teacher's Name
Special Diet or Dietary Restrictions	
Food Allergies or Intolerances	
Food Substitutions	
Foods Requiring Texture Modifications: Chopped: Finely Ground: Pureed or Blended:	
Other Diet Modifications:	
Feeding Techniques:	
Supplemental Feedings:	
Physician or Medical Authority: Name: Telephone: Fax:	
Additional Contact: Name: Telephone: Fax:	Additional Contact: Name: Telephone: Fax:
School Nutrition Program Representative/Person Completing Form: Title: Signature:	Date:

Glossary

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Comprehensive legislation, signed into law on July 26, 1990, that creates new rights and extends existing rights for Americans with disabilities. Title II of the Act is especially significant for the school nutrition programs, as it requires equal availability and accessibility in state and local government programs and services, including public schools.

Anaphylaxis/Anaphylactic Reaction

A rare but potentially fatal condition in which several different parts of the body experience food-allergic reactions at the same time. Symptoms may progress rapidly and include severe itching, hives, sweating, swelling of the throat, breathing difficulties, lowered blood pressure, unconsciousness and even death.

Disability

Under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* and the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, “person with a disability” means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment. The term “physical or mental impairment” includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments; cerebral palsy; epilepsy; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; cancer; heart disease; metabolic diseases such as diabetes and phenylketonuria (PKU); food anaphylaxis; mental retardation; emotional illness; and drug addiction and alcoholism. Major life activities covered by this definition include caring for one’s self, eating, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, the term “disability” refers to specified physical, mental, emotional or sense impairments, which adversely affect a child’s educational performance. Thirteen recognized disability categories, which establish a child’s need for special education and related services, are listed in IDEA. These disabilities include autism; deaf-blindness; deafness or other hearing impairments; mental retardation; orthopedic impairments; other health impairments due to acute health problems (such as a heart condition, epilepsy or tuberculosis); emotional disturbance; specific learning disabilities; speech or language impairment; traumatic brain injury; visual impairment, including blindness, which adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

Food Allergy

Hypersensitivity from an abnormal response of the body’s immune system to food or food additives that would otherwise be considered harmless. Many of the true food allergy symptoms often resemble allergic reactions to other substances, such as penicillin, drugs, bee stings, hives and itching.

Food Intolerance

An adverse food-induced reaction that does not involve the body's immune system. Lactose intolerance is one example of a food intolerance. A person with lactose intolerance lacks an enzyme that is needed to digest milk sugar. When milk products are consumed symptoms, such as gas, bloating and abdominal pain may occur.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, FAPE means special education and related services provided under public supervision and direction, in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP), and at no cost to parents. In appropriate situations, nutrition services could be deemed "special education" (specially designed instruction) or a "related service" (support services required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Formerly the *Education of the Handicapped Act*, originally enacted in 1975, IDEA includes Part B, the basic grants to states program, which provides federal funds to assist states and school districts in making a free appropriate public education available to eligible students with specified disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The Individualized Education Program or IEP means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in accordance with the IDEA and its implementing regulations. The IEP is the cornerstone of the student's educational program that contains the program of special education and related services to be provided to a child with a disability covered under the IDEA.

Some states supplement the IEP with a written statement specifically designed to address a student's nutritional needs. Other states employ a "Health Care Plan" to address the nutritional needs of their students. For ease of reference the term "IEP" is used to reflect the IEP as well as any written statement designating the required nutrition services.

Licensed Dietitian (L.D.)

A nutrition professional licensed under the laws of the State of Texas to use the title of licensed dietitian. A licensed dietitian applies and integrates scientific principles of nutrition under different health, social, cultural, physical, psychological and economic conditions to the proper nourishment, care and education of individuals or groups to achieve and maintain health throughout the life cycle. The term includes without limitations the development, management and provision of nutritional services.

Osteopathic Physician or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

A fully trained physician who is licensed by the state to prescribe medication or to perform surgery. The American Medical Association includes doctors of osteopathy (D.O.) as equal members with medical doctors (M.D.). The majority of doctors of osteopathic medicine are primary care physicians.

Recognized Medical Authority

Physicians, physician assistants or advanced practice nurses.

Registered Dietitian (R.D.)

A nutrition professional who has earned a B.S. or B.A. degree, met basic academic and clinical training requirements and passed the qualifying examination for professional registration for dietetics. The registration program is maintained by the Commission on Dietetic Registration of the American Dietetic Association. R.D.s can answer questions on special diets, menu planning and related topics and conduct a nutritional assessment. An R.D. may work with the physician and school staff to assist in meeting a child's special nutritional needs and to ensure that menus are in compliance with the physician's diet order.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The principal federal legislation aimed at promoting the employment and independent living of people with disabilities. Section 504 of Title V of this legislation prohibits discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities in the programs or activities (including hiring practices) of any organization receiving federal financial assistance.

Special Dietary Needs

An individual with a special dietary need is one who does not have a disability, as defined by USDA, but is unable to consume a particular food because of a medical or other special dietary condition. The individual's special dietary need and the needed substitution(s) must be supported by a medical statement from a licensed medical authority or other appropriate health professional as designated by the state. A person with special dietary needs may have a food allergy or intolerance (for example, lactose intolerance) but does not have life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions when exposed to food(s) to which he/she is allergic.