

Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs

For a child with a disability

Substitutions **must be made** to the regular meal, including milk for any child with disabilities (i.e. a life-threatening reaction when exposed to the food and/or beverage) when the following two requirements are met:

A licensed physician's statement is required. Pursuant to Section 27-8.1 of the School Code, the licensed physician that may perform student health examinations is a physician licensed to practice medicine in all of its branches. Schools can provide the [Physician's Statement for Food Substitutions](#) sample form to families for a physician to complete. The statement must include the child's disability, explanation as to how the disability restricts the child's diet, the major life activity affected by a disability, and food(s)/beverage(s) to be omitted and foods/beverages to be substituted. For children with disabilities only requiring modifications in food texture (such as chopped, ground, or pureed), a licensed physician's written instructions indicating the appropriate texture is recommended, but not required

For a child without a disability

Substitutions **may be made** to the reimbursable meal for any child who has a food intolerance or allergies that do not rise to the level of a disability when the following two requirements are met:

A signed statement from a "medical authority" is required. A medical authority would include licensed physicians, chiropractic physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners. Schools can provide the [Physician's Statement for Food Substitutions](#) sample form to families for a physician to complete. The statement must include the medical or other special dietary reason for the need for substitution, the food(s)/beverage(s) to be omitted, and food(s)/beverage(s) to be substituted. If a non-dairy milk substitute (ie; soy milk) is served, it must meet the nutritional standards of milk as outlined below.

For a child without a disability who is requesting JUST a fluid milk substitution from the meal pattern requirement

Any fluid milk substitution that meets these requirements **may be made** by the SFA for non-disabled students when the following requirements are met:

A signed statement from a medical authority, parent or guardian which includes the medical or other special dietary reason for the need for substitution. Any reasonable request could be accepted (e.g. milk allergy, vegan diet, and religious, cultural or ethical reasons). If a request only states that a child does not like milk, the student can be offered flavored milk instead of a milk substitute.

For a child without a disability who has special dietary restrictions

If a child has special dietary restrictions due to vegan diet, religious, cultural or ethical reasons please send a signed statement from a parent or guardian stating their restrictions. The student may choose a cheese sandwich as the alternate entree or may choose to replace the whole meal with a pre-ordered Garden Chef Salad (romaine lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, beans, mozzarella and cheddar cheese, whole grain crackers) may also choose fruit and or milk with salad.

