

Meal Accommodations Quick Guide Maine Child Nutrition Programs

Participants with a Disability

Federal regulations **require** sponsors participating in child nutrition programs to make reasonable modifications to meal requirements for participants **with disabilities** when requested.

The request must be supported by a **Medical Statement completed & signed by a Licensed Physician**. The medical statement must identify:

1. The participant’s major life activity or bodily function affected by the disability affected by the physical or mental impairment restricting the diet;
2. An explanation of what needs to be done to accommodate the disability;
3. The food(s) to be omitted from the participant’s diet, or other dietary accommodations to be made; and,
4. The food(s) that must be substituted.

Medical Statements do not need to reference a disability and Sponsors do not need to determine if the participant has a disability. This is determined by a **licensed physician**. The physician’s determination of the participant’s disability must be based on the regulatory criteria for a “disabled person.” (7 CFR 15(b)(3))

Licensed Physician include Medical Doctors (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Physician’s Assistant (PA), and Nurse Practitioner.

Meal Preference Requests

Sponsors **may** make meal modifications for individual participants who do not have a disability.

To be eligible for meal reimbursement, the accommodation must meet meal pattern regulations.

Nutritionally Equivalent Milk Substitutions

A sponsor **may** make substitutions for participants who request a substitution for cow’s milk. The substitution **must be nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk**. *Juice and water are NOT allowable substitutions*. Participants must provide the sponsor with a signed milk substitution request from a parent/guardian or recognized medical authority.

Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards	
Nutrient	Per Cup
Calcium	276 mg
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	500 IU
Vitamin D	100 IU
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	.44 mg
Vitamin B-12	1.1 mcg

Participant Meal Charges

There can be **no** additional charges to participants with or without disabilities for meal substitutions.

USDA Meal Reimbursement

Reimbursement for meals served to participants with a disability or participants with other special dietary needs are paid at the standard meal reimbursement rate. While any additional costs for substituted foods are considered allowable program costs, no additional Child Nutrition Program reimbursement is available. Sources of supplemental funding may include special education funds (if the substituted food is specified in the student’s individualized education program), the general account of the school district, or the nonprofit school foodservice account.

Communication & Documentation

Communication between the sponsor, student, and the parent/guardian is key to ensure reasonable accommodations are made for participants with disabilities. This includes balancing the safety of the student with inclusion when considering “allergy-free” seating arrangements.

Keep all documentation on file including the medical statement and notes from conversations.