

OSPI CNS Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Reference Sheet

Infant Feeding— Special Dietary Needs

Infants may have special dietary needs requiring food substitutions or meal modifications. These dietary needs may be due to a documented medical need specific to a disability or food allergy. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsors must make reasonable modifications to meals when special dietary needs are supported by a State-recognized medical authority.

Special dietary needs do not include personal preferences or religious belief, although it is best practice that program sponsors accommodate dietary requests in these instances when modifications meet meal pattern requirements.

Requirements

✓ **Food Substitutions**

- Modifications or substitutions to meals that do not meet the CACFP infant meal pattern are allowed when supported by a medical statement.
 - The statement must be kept on file by the institution.
- Substitutions may be made without a medical statement when the meal replaces a food from the same component group to meet the meal pattern requirement.

✓ **Food Provided for Infants by Parents/Guardians**

- The [CACFP Infant Meal Form](#) must be completed by the institution with the parents or guardians to document foods provided by the parents/guardians. This must be updated as needed.
- When the parent/guardian provides the infant formula, it must be iron-fortified, age-appropriate formula unless there is a note on file from a recognized medical authority indicating otherwise.
- Infant meals claimed for reimbursement must contain all the required meal pattern components for the age of the infant being served, whether provided by the parent/guardian or provided by the institution.
- When the parent/guardian chooses to provide all their infant's food and the infant is 6 through 11 months old, the meals are not reimbursable.
- When a documented special dietary need exists, the parent may provide the component(s) to accommodate the dietary need **and** one additional component that meets the meal pattern.



- Institutions may have a written policy that the institution will provide all food and the parent-specified formula for their infant.
 - Grocery receipts must make it clear that the institution is purchasing formula.
- ✓ **Transitional Period**
 - A one-month period, between 12 and 13 months, is allowable to ease the transition from infant formula or breastmilk to whole milk.
 - Meals containing infant formula served to 12-month-old participants qualify for reimbursement without a medical statement.

Reference

- [7 CFR 226.20](#)
- [7 CFR 226.20 \(g\)](#)

Resources

- [CACFP Infant Meal Pattern Chart](#)
- [CACFP Infant Meal Form](#)
- [Feeding Infants in the CACFP Handbook](#)
- [Special Dietary Needs Reference Sheet](#)

Acronym Reference

- CNS- Child Nutrition Services
- CACFP- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- OSPI- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- USDA- United States Department of Agriculture