



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

FROM: Therese Dandeneau, Education Consultant *Therese A. Dandeneau*
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SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #9-13
Dietary Accommodations for Celiac Disease in Child Nutrition Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently provided clarification regarding dietary accommodations for children with celiac disease in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA considers celiac disease to be a disability. Therefore, school food authorities (SFAs) are required to make special dietary accommodations for children with celiac disease who participate in school nutrition programs.

Before SFAs can make any dietary accommodations, the child's family must provide a medical statement signed by a **licensed physician**. This statement must identify the following:

- the child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- the major life activity affected by the disability; and
- the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

The medical statement must be completed in its entirety and all required information must be provided before the school food service program can make any meal modifications or substitutions for children with disabilities. This ensures that the modified meal is reimbursable and that any meal modifications meet nutrition standards that are medically appropriate for the child.

SFAs should use the *Medical Statement for Children with Disabilities* form for all students with celiac disease. This form is available in PDF and Word formats on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Special Diets Web page at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=333730>.

The new school meal patterns and dietary specifications do not apply to meals provided to children with recognized medical disabilities that restrict their diet. Therefore, special meals for children with celiac disease are not required to meet the meal pattern requirements or weekly dietary specifications because the USDA considers celiac disease to be a disability. Optional accommodations for children with special dietary needs (without recognized medical disabilities) must continue to be consistent with the new meal patterns and dietary specifications.

The CSDE has updated *Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs* to reflect this information. This guide is available on the CSDE's Special Diets Web page at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/student/nutritioned/accommodatingspecialdiets.pdf>. Please discard the previous edition dated November 2011.

Questions may be directed to:

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