## Purpose

This Policy Alert ACCOMPANIES:

- Policy Alert CACFP CCC 2007-12, *Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs Requirements*; and
- Notice CACFP-CCC 2006-5, *Obligations of Child Care Centers to Offer Infant Meals in the CACFP*.

This Policy Alert is issued to provide guidance and answer questions regarding feeding infants in the CACFP.

## Implementation

Immediately

## Procedure

Contractors must ensure that all CACFP requirements are met, including serving meals which meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements to all infants enrolled for care, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

A contractor must not exclude any group of infants by stating that they are not claiming the meals or that the infant is not enrolled for childcare.

Contractors who previously did not offer infant meals must begin offering infant meals which meet CACFP meal pattern requirements to all infants (ages 0-11 months) enrolled for childcare in their facility(ies).

The following are some questions and answers regarding feeding infants in the CACFP:

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Question 1: How often must an institution update documented exceptions to the Infant Meal Pattern requirements?

Answer: Institutions must update documented exceptions (for disabilities and medical or special dietary needs) to the Infant Meal Pattern requirements each time the infant transitions from one category to the next. The Infant Meal Pattern consists of three categories:
- 0 - 3 months;
- 4 - 7 months; and
- 8 - 11 months.

Question 2: An infant has been ill and returns to the center with a statement from the doctor to feed Pedialyte. Is this infant considered an infant with special dietary needs and the center must purchase the Pedialyte or because this is only a temporary condition is the parent responsible for providing the Pedialyte?

Answer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the Pedialyte is …</th>
<th>Then the …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being served as a substitution to a meal component in the Infant Meal Pattern due to the infant’s disability¹,</td>
<td>Center is required to provide the Pedialyte as a meal component substitution to the infant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being served as a substitution to a meal component in the Infant Meal Pattern due to the infant’s medical or special dietary need¹,</td>
<td>Decision as to whether or not the center will provide the substitution is at the discretion of the child care center. A child care center is not required to satisfy the unique dietary needs of each infant. SNP urges child care centers to make every effort to satisfy the unique medical or special dietary needs of each infant; however, we recognize that this may not always be possible due to operational and financial constraints. As a result, if the center chooses not to provide the Pedialyte, then it is the parent’s (or guardian’s) responsibility to provide the center with the Pedialyte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being served as a substitution to a meal component in the Infant Meal Pattern,</td>
<td>Infant is not considered to have a disability or a medical or special dietary need, and it is the parent’s (or guardian’s) responsibility to provide the center with the Pedialyte.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Reference Policy Alert CACFP CCC 2007-12, Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs Requirements, for additional guidance.
**Question 3:** Some Special Dietary Formulas are very expensive. Do centers have the option to not take a child for care because they cannot provide the "required special diet"?

Answer: The SNP does not regulate child care requirements, so whether or not a center has the option to not take a child for care because they cannot provide the “required special diet” would be a question that would need to be asked of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Child Care Licensing.

A center that is participating in the CACFP is required to serve meals that meet CACFP meal pattern requirements. In the case of meeting a child’s special dietary need, the decision as to whether or not the center will provide the special dietary formula is at the discretion of the child care center. A child care center is not required to satisfy the unique formula needs of every infant. Although we urge child care centers to make every effort to satisfy the unique formula needs of each infant with a formula that meets program requirements, we recognize that this may not always be possible due to operational and financial constraints.

**Question 4:** In order to claim an infant meal that has component(s) other than breast milk/formula, does the center have to provide all of the other components?

Answer: If the infant is developmentally ready for solid foods, it is required that those solid food meal component(s) be provided to the infant. The required meal component(s) may be provided by the center and/or the parent (or guardian). However, in order to claim reimbursement, the center must provide at least one of the required meal components in the minimum quantity specified in the infant meal pattern.

**Question 5:** Instead of purchasing pre-packaged baby food can the center blend their own strained vegetables, fruits, etc.?

Answer: Yes, a center may blend their own strained vegetables and/or fruits. Additional information regarding infant meals and blending foods is available in the “Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs” publication at www.fns.usda.gov/TN/Resources/feeding_infants.html. You can also access other resources on the Special Nutrition Programs (SNP) website at www.snptexas.org and click on “Nutrition Links”.

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**Question 6:** Does the center have to offer a variety of infant formulas or is offering one formula sufficient?

Answer: No, a center is not required to offer a variety of infant formulas. It is sufficient to offer one standard formula that meets CACFP requirements (i.e., iron fortified). Reference Notice CACFP-CCC 2007-10, *Iron Fortified Infant Formulas that Do Not Require a Medical Statement*, for a list of formulas that meet program requirements.

**Question 7:** If the parent signs a waiver stating they are declining the infant formula offered by the center, and provides their own infant formula, is the center still required to claim that infant?

Answer: No, a center is not required to claim meals. However, centers are required to serve meals that meet CACFP requirements to all children/infants enrolled for child care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the parent signs a waiver declining the formula offered by the center, and …</th>
<th>Then the center may claim that meal when the …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant formula or breast milk is the only required component,</td>
<td>Meal is fed to the infant by the center’s staff. Reference Policy Alert CACFP-CCC 2007-16, <em>Meal Pattern Charts – Infants</em>, for additional guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are other meal components,</td>
<td>Center provides all other required meal components that the child is developmentally ready to accept.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 8:** The infant pattern has "optional" components that the center may feed. Since it is optional, would a center have to include it on the meal production record when they served it?

Answer: Yes, the center is required to include “optional” components on the meal production record when they are served. Although the infant meal pattern indicates “Optional” components, a serving of this component becomes a requirement if the infant is developmentally ready to accept it. As a result, any item that is used toward meeting the CACFP meal pattern requirements must be included on the meal production record.

**Question 9:** If an infant age 13 months or older still must stay on the infant feeding pattern due to dietary concerns and the doctor has provided a statement, is that child kept on the infant meal production record or moved to a separate meal production record because of their age?

Answer: The center would record the meal on the meal production record appropriate for the child’s age group, and make a note that the doctors’ statement is in the child’s file. Refer to Policy Alerts CACFP CCC 2000-8, *Questions and Answers Regarding Infant Feeding in the CACFP*, and CACFP CCC 2007-12, *Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs Requirements*, for more guidance and information.

continued
Training

The SNP Training Unit will be offering a revised version of “Feeding Infants: During the First Year” (event code NUTR-FI). This course is OPTIONAL for contractors who wish to learn more about USDA requirements and recommendations for feeding infants up to one year of age.

Once you have received SNP notification that the course is available for registration, you can access the dates and locations for the nearest training event (event code NUTR-FI) by going to the SNP website at www.snptexas.org and click on “Program/Nutrition Training”. Choose the “Scheduled Classes” link to enter the training registration system. The upcoming NUTR-FI classes will be located on the “Search” link as “NET – Nutrition Education and Training” events.

Adverse Action

Failure to properly administer the CACFP in accordance with CACFP requirements is a serious deficiency. See Policy Alert CACFP CCC 2003-09, Serious Deficiency Process for Participating Contractors, for more information on the Serious Deficiency Process.

Authority


Contact

If you have any questions please contact your Area Program Office.