POLICY ALERT

Date: January 15, 2008
Reference: # NSLP/SBP 2008-6
To: National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program (NSLP/SBP) Contractors
Subject: Additional Questions and Answers Regarding Feeding Infants in the NSLP/SBP
Effective Date: Immediately

Purpose
This Policy Alert ACCOMPANIES:
• The NSLP/SBP Handbook, Chapter 4, Managing the Program, Section, Planning the Meals, Subsection, Feeding Infants and Preschool Age Children;
• The NSLP/SBP Handbook, Chapter 4, Managing the Program, Section, Meal Patterns, Subsection, Infant Meal Pattern;
• Policy Alert NSLP/SBP 2008-5, Meal Pattern Charts – Infant; and
• Notice NSLP/SBP 2007-13, Iron Fortified Infant Formulas that do not Require a Medical Statement.

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

Implementation
Immediately

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

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

A school who previously did not offer infant meals must begin offering infant meals which meet NSLP/SBP meal pattern requirements to all infants (ages 0-11 months) enrolled in their school(s).

The following are some questions and answers regarding feeding infants in the NSLP/SBP:

**Question 1: How often must a school update documented exceptions to the Infant Meal Pattern requirements?**

Answer: Schools 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.

continued

This Policy Remains in Effect Until Further Notice
Questions 2: An infant has been ill and returns to the school with a statement from the doctor to feed Pedialyte. Is this infant considered an infant with special dietary needs and the school 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being served as a substitution to a meal component in the Infant Meal Pattern due to the infant’s disability,</td>
<td>School 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 need,</td>
<td>Decision as to whether or not the SFA will provide the substitution is at the discretion of the SFA. An SFA is not required to satisfy the unique dietary need of each infant. FND urges SFAs 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 school chooses not to provide the Pedialyte, then it is the parent’s (or guardian’s) responsibility to provide the school 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 school with the Pedialyte.</td>
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Question 3: Some Special Dietary Formulas are very expensive. Do schools have the option to not enroll a child because they cannot provide the “required special diet”?  

Answer: Food and Nutrition Division (FND) does not regulate requirements as to whether or not a school has the option to enroll a child because they cannot provide the “required special diet”.

A school that is participating in the NSLP/SBP is required to serve meals that meet NSLP/SBP meal pattern requirements. In the case of meeting a child’s special dietary need, the decision as to whether or not the school will provide the special dietary formula is at the discretion of the school. A school is not required to satisfy the unique formula of every infant. Although we urge schools to make every effort to satisfy the unique formula 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 school 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 school and/or the parent (or guardian). However, in order to claim reimbursement, the school 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 school blend their own strained vegetables, fruits, etc.?

Answer: Yes, a school 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 FND website at www.snpntexas.org and click on “Nutrition Links”.

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

Answer: No, a school is not required to offer a variety of infant formulas. It is sufficient to offer one standard formula that meets NSLP/SBP requirements (i.e., iron fortified). Reference Notice NSLP/SBP 2007-13, Iron Fortified Infant Formulas that Do Not Require a Medical Statement, for a list of formulas that meet program requirements.

Question 7: The infant pattern has “optional” components that the school may feed. Since it is optional, would a school have to include it on the meal production record when they served it?

Answer: Yes, the school 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 NSLP/SBP meal pattern requirement must be included on the meal production record.

Training

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

Once you have receive FND 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 FND website by accessing the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) website at [www.snptexas.org](http://www.snptexas.org), select “Continue to SNPTexas.org” and click on click on “Program/Nutrition Training” on the left hand side of the page. 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 NSLP/SBP in accordance with NSLP/SBP requirements will result in adverse action up to and including termination of your NSLP/SBP contract.

### Authority

7 CFR 210.10 and 7 CFR 220.8.

### Contact

If you have any questions please contact your Food and Nutrition Field Operations Office.