



Provider's Food Program

October 2014 Newsletter

MEDICAL EXEMPTION

More and more children seem to be developing allergies and having medical issues affecting the foods they can be served. Add to this the differing preferences that parents may have and the result is a lot of questions that providers are asking about when and how to collect doctor's notes on the needs of the children in their homes.

Let's start by discussing the difference between an actual medical need and what is simply a preference:

MEDICAL NEEDS: A child with a medical need that affects the food they can eat should be something that the pediatrician is aware of. This could be due to an allergy (or sensitivity) to certain foods. It could also be due to a developmental issue that limits their ability to digest or process foods the way other children do.

PREFERENCES: Sometimes parents may have a preference for the types of foods served to their children. For example, this could be a family that prefers to eat Vegan. Another example is a family that has a different cultural background making them reject certain foods, such as Hindus no wanting beef or Jews not wanting pork.

So when do you get a Doctor's statement? If it is just a parent's preference, then obviously a doctor is not going to be able to sign a form. The only time a doctor will sign a form is when the problem is physical.

Handling Parent Preferences

How do you handle a parent preference? If a parent does not want you to serve a child certain foods that are required by the CACFP, then the parent can "opt-out" of the food program. They do this by selecting that option and signing the Enrollment form. You need to instruct the parent where to do this and collect the form from them.

REMINDER

Parents do not HAVE TO enroll their children in the CACFP. A parent may choose NOT to enroll their child due to personal preferences for their own family that prohibit a child from being fed a required component.

If so, then the parent MUST fill out the Child's Name portion of the Enrollment form and then check the box right above the signature line stating they DO NOT want the CACFP benefits.

MEDICAL STATEMENT

So what qualifies as a Medical note? Can the doctor just write a letter about the child? – No.

As we wrote in the August issue of our newsletter, there is an official form that has been supplied for this purpose. This form is the only one that is accepted as proof of the Medical need for a child in the CACFP.

Give the parent this form and let the child's doctor fill it out. When the parent gives it back to you, you may accept it as proof of the child's needs.

Simply a letter from the doctor, even if it is on official letterhead, does NOT qualify.

What do I do with this form now?

So, now you have an official Statement. What do you need to do with it? That depends on how it applies to the food you are serving. Does it stop you from serving a required meal component entirely? Or can you serve another food that completes the component? Let's examine each possibility:

Component Options Available

If other options are available to you for serving the child a required component, then just put the form in your file and serve the foods the child can have. An example of this might be if the child is allergic to Strawberries. Then just serve some other fruit instead. The note may be required by your Monitor if she sees you serving Strawberries to the other children but Bananas to that child. You can show the form to explain why.

Component Options NOT Available

If the food restriction will actually cause you to NOT be able to serve a required component AT ALL, then you will need to send a copy of that form to the office so that you will not be disallowed for that meal. An example of this is where a child is allergic to milk and that component is required for the meal you are serving.

Once the form is received and approved here in the office then your claim for meals to that child will allow you to hold out that component and you will be reimbursed as usual.

**NOTE: Using the Minute Menu Web Kids program makes claiming much easier!
Call us today to find out how to switch to Web Kids for FREE!**