

Disabled Students Special Dietary Needs

Program regulations for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program require meal substitutions at no additional cost for students who meet the definition of "disabled," provided a licensed physician has submitted (1) a signed statement, (2) describing the disability preventing the child from eating the regular school meal, attesting to this fact, and (3) prescribing specific substitution(s) needed.

According to the **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** and the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, a person with a disability means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

The term "physical or mental impairment" includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as:

- Orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments
- Cerebral palsy
- Epilepsy
- Muscular dystrophy
- Multiple sclerosis
- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Metabolic diseases, such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy)
- Mental retardation
- Emotional illness
- Drug addiction and alcoholism

The term "disability" under the **Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** refers to specific mental, physical, emotional or sensory impairments that adversely affect a child's educational performance. These disabilities include:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness or other hearing impairments
- Mental retardation
- Orthopedic impairments
- Serious chronic or acute health problems, such as a heart condition, epilepsy, or tuberculosis
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Specific learning disabilities
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Blindness or a visual impairment which adversely affects a child's educational performance