



# Spokane County Head Start/ECEAP/EHS SPECIAL DIET LETTER

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

If your child has a food allergy or a special dietary need, certain steps must be taken **before your child may attend** a Head Start/Early Head Start classroom.

1. If your child is allergic to a food that causes a life threatening (anaphylactic) reaction when the child is exposed to the food allergen and/or interferes with your child's ability to participate in our scheduled daily activities, then your child will receive dietary substitutions as prescribed by your child's doctor.
  - Your FSC will provide you with a copy of the **Food Allergy/Intolerance** form to be filled out by your medical provider; **or**
  - You must provide a signed statement from a recognized medical authority (physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner) that states the following:
    - ✓ The child's life threatening food allergy;
    - ✓ The major life activity affected by the life threatening food allergy;
    - ✓ The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet; and
    - ✓ The food or foods to be substituted.
2. If your child has other special dietary needs (such as lactose intolerance) or a food allergy (but does not have a life threatening reaction), you must document what the special dietary need is on the **Health, Dental, and Diet History** form.
  - You must provide a signed statement from a recognized medical authority for milk allergies requiring a non-cow's milk substitute.
  - For other foods, the program's Nutrition Specialist may determine that you need to provide a statement signed by a recognized medical authority which identifies the following:
    - ✓ The medical or other dietary need which restricts the child's diet;
    - ✓ The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet; and
    - ✓ The food or foods to be substituted.
3. If your child has a chewing or swallowing problem and needs to have the food texture modified (such as chopped or ground meats or cooked rather than raw vegetables) a recognized medical authority must provide a list of foods the child cannot have.

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In addition to the above requirements, HS/EHS requires you to take two more steps to ensure that we don't give your child any food he/she cannot have.

1. The **Special Diet Request** form lets the kitchen and classroom staff know what food or foods your child can not eat.
2. You must review menus monthly with the site cook and identify all foods that could be a problem and make a suggestion for a substitution.
3. The cook may decide whether to continue menu reviews after the first month.

Thank you,

Claudia Hume, R.D.  
Nutrition Specialist  
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