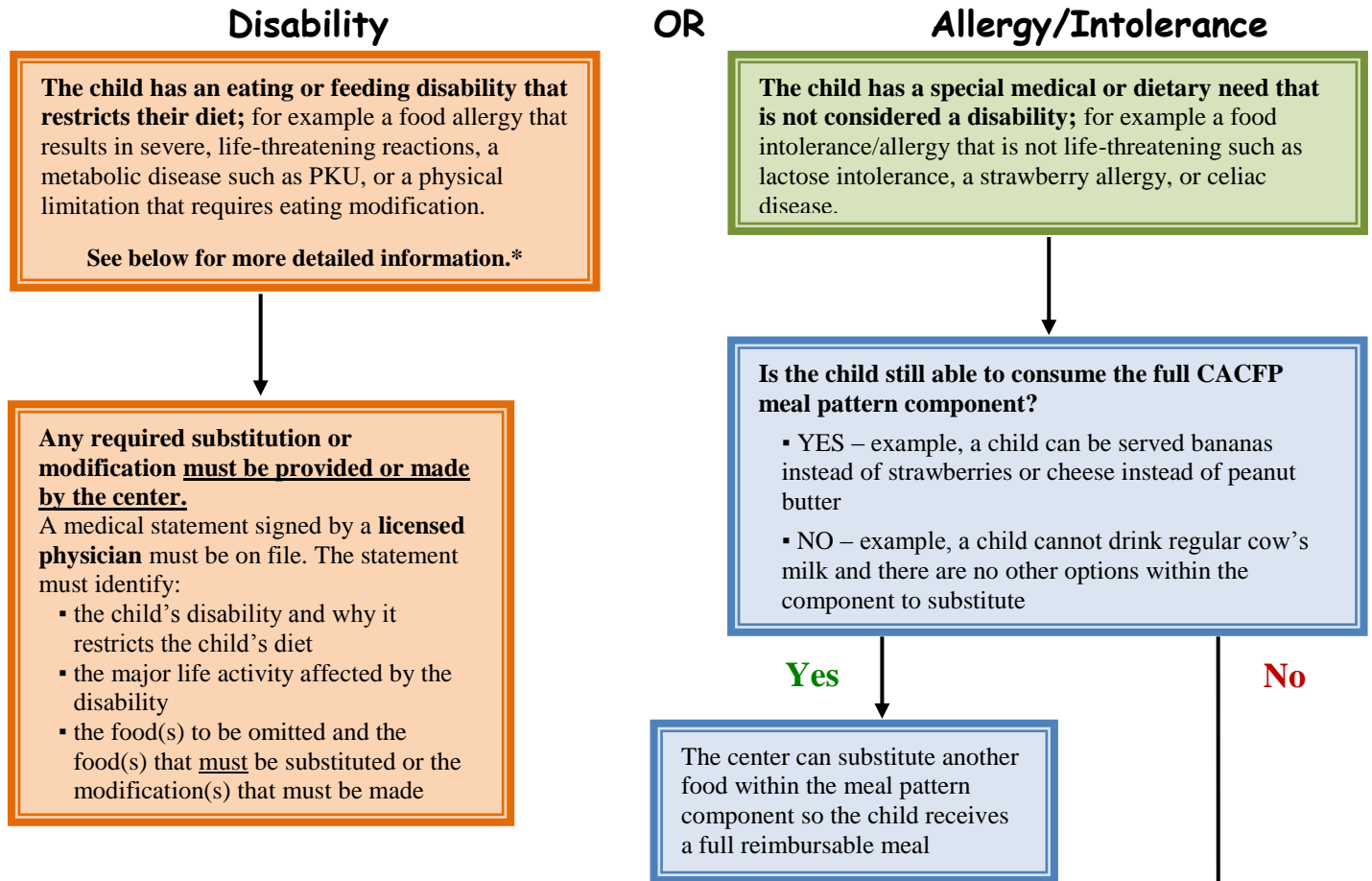


CACFP Meal Requirements for an Eating/Feeding Disability or Food Allergy/Intolerance

Child care programs on the CACFP are responsible for serving meals and snacks to all children and, in order to claim reimbursement for meal and snacks served, are required to supply all components of the CACFP meal pattern. Sometimes a child is not able to consume one or more meal pattern components, or requires food or eating modification, because of a disability or special dietary need. Depending on the type of disability or special dietary need, your center may be required to supply the food substitution or meal modification. To determine what your center is required to do, work through the following flow chart:



*Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a person with a disability means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (caring for one’s self, eating, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working).

- Food related diseases and conditions include metabolic diseases such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU); food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy); cancer; heart disease; muscular dystrophy; etc.

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA, and the facility may, but is not required to, provide food substitutions for them. However, when in a licensed physician’s assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening reactions, the child’s condition would meet the definition of “disability”, and the substitutions prescribed by the licensed physician must be provided by the center.

CACFP Meal Requirements for Lifestyle Choices

Special dietary practices such as eating vegetarian, organic, or eliminating certain foods for religious reasons are not exempt from the CACFP meal pattern. This means the full meal pattern must be supplied by the center in order to claim the meal for reimbursement. If a meal component is eliminated because of dietary practices, or if the parent/guardian supplies any component of the meal, the center cannot claim the meal for reimbursement. The only exception to this is with serving a non-dairy milk substitute.

