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## **Special diets in early childhood education and schools – information for guardians**

In the South Karelia region, a notification form for special diets in accordance with the National Allergy Programme is used. It is the task of the guardians to complete the special diet form and return it to the food services.

In early childhood education and at school, the child/pupil is offered the special diet required for the treatment of a disease. The first time, a statement/certificate from a health care professional or a treatment provider is required for diabetes, coeliac disease, grain and milk allergy, food that causes a life-threatening reaction or food that causes severe symptoms.

In early childhood education and school, the child/pupil is offered a special diet on an ethical or religious basis, which is reported in writing on the special diet form by the guardian.

### **Tasks/responsibilities of different actors**

#### **Guardians**

- For a special diet required for health reasons, the guardian must fill in the special diet form and obtain a statement/certificate from a health care professional or a treatment provider for that purpose.
- The guardians fill in the special diet form every year or whenever the diet or the daycare place/school changes.
- The guardians take care of the exposure to and testing of allergy-causing foods at home and determine the allergy diet in cooperation with health care providers.
- The guardians take care of an age-appropriate and varied diet.

#### **Food services**

- If necessary, a representative of the food service is involved in the negotiations concerning the child's/pupil's diet and meal arrangements.
- The food services prepare meals according to special dietary needs.
- The person in charge of the food service ensures that the child/pupil has been reserved meals according to the special diet during the daycare/school day.
- The person in charge of the food services ensures that the special diets are carefully marked and agrees with the early childhood education/school staff on where the special diets are served.

#### **Early childhood education and school staff and the pupil**

- In early childhood education/school, the staff determines the special diet required by the child/pupil.

- The staff must supervise and ensure that the child/pupil receives the correct special diet portion and side dishes.
- The staff should be prepared to provide first aid (e. g. inject an EpiPen) in the event of an anaphylactic reaction.

**Health care professional/care provider**

- Milk and grain allergy and food allergy that can cause a life-threatening (anaphylactic) reaction must be confirmed by a doctor.
- A health care professional/care provider can write a statement/certificate of food allergies and special dietary needs on the basis of patient record entries.
- The health care professional/care provider guides guardians, if necessary, in the arrangement of special diets and in exposure situations.

**Further information**

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