

December 10, 2003

Patricia Daniels
Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 520
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

Re: Revisions to the WIC Food Packages

Dear Ms. Daniels,

The dietitians and nurses at the Child Development and Rehabilitation Center would like to share our suggestions regarding the WIC Food package changes that would optimize the health status of Children with Special Health Needs.

WIC food packages should allow substitution of fortified soy milk, fortified rice milk, and/or fortified yogurt for part or all of the milk and or cheese currently provided in the packages for all categories. It is critical that alternatives to milk and cheese be provided to address the concern of food allergies and lactose-intolerance seen in this population. Fortification should include nutrients such as protein, calcium, vitamin D and riboflavin.

2. There should be an increase in the maximum infant formula allowed to the amount needed to sustain the participant for the entire month and allow averaging of infant formula across months, to provide maximum amount of formula allowed on the program. This is especially critical for infants born premature who have increased calorie and protein needs through the first year and beyond. Many low-income mothers cannot afford the cost of infant formula and infant formula is rarely provided through other food programs, such as CSFP or food banks. Families who cannot afford to buy an adequate amount of infant formula for their babies often resort to thinning formula with water, thus jeopardizing the infants growth and development.

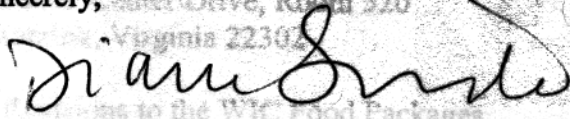
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CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTER

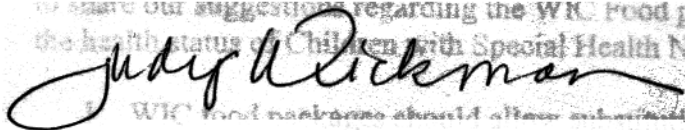
3. We encourage the inclusion of other WIC foods on the food packages of children who receive special formula. Children with special needs are often prescribed special formulas to address calorie intake and growth concerns. However, they are still in need of other supplemental foods to assure adequate nutrition, particularly when only small amounts of special formula are prescribed. Many families are faced with the choice of food or formula, which can result in compromised nutrition intake and poor growth gains.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments and are confident that the revised WIC food package will better meet the nutrition needs of the children we serve. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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