The term *children with special health care needs* (CSHCN) refers to children with a broad range of chronic illnesses and conditions who require health and related services beyond basic, routine care. Intervention generally includes a range of medical, therapy, educational, financial, and family support services. CSHCN includes children with birth defects, neurological consequences of premature birth, genetic syndromes, sequelae of infection such as meningitis, and consequences of perinatal drug exposure. Also included in the definition of CSHCN are those “at risk” for chronic physical, developmental, and behavior conditions, such as children with very low birth weight, metabolic disorders, extreme poverty, or environmental exposures, such as exposure to secondhand smoke or lead.

In many ways, children with special health care needs are similar to children without special health care needs. All children require good nutrition to grow and develop. As a group, however, CSHCN have more frequent problems that may alter their growth, diet, feeding and eating behaviors, and bowel and fluid management. When these problems are not adequately addressed, a child may experience more infections and illness and spend fewer days in school or therapy, while health care costs for the family increase. These feeding and nutrition-related problems are also more likely to be chronic over time. The following are the most common challenges:
Introduction

• Altered growth (eg, underweight, overweight, or short stature)
• Inadequate energy and nutrient intake to support growth and health
• Feeding problems related to oral-motor and/or behavioral difficulties
• Medication-nutrient interactions
• Need for enteral (tube) feeding
• Chronic constipation or diarrhea
• Use of alternative or complementary therapies or products

This new pocket guide provides up-to-date and state-of-the-art information on the tools and techniques for all aspects of nutrition care for CSHCN, while also incorporating the Nutrition Care Process. The reader may recognize that the content expands upon *Children with Special Health Care Needs: Nutrition Care Handbook* (2004) by including more information on the registered dietitian’s role in early childhood intervention programs as well as in interdisciplinary team leadership during treatment of children with special health care needs. Updated references, additional case studies, and more distinctive tables for commonly used formulas in the nutrition care of children with special health care needs have also been provided in this new pocket guide.

Of course, not all topics can be condensed into a single pocket guide. For example, food-medication and herb-medication interactions are discussed in the pocket guide, but a comprehensive listing of interactions is not included because many other publications with extensive lists of all known food-medication and herb-medication interactions are available. Also, because manufacturers may alter and update formulary information, we have not attempted to
include a comprehensive review of formula and supplemental products.

The *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Pocket Guide to Children with Special Health Care and Nutritional Needs* is a valuable tool for any health care professional working with this population, whether in clinical settings, management, or community dietetics. The goal of the editors and authors is to provide a quick-reference guide that covers the essential information needed for nutrition management of children with special health care needs. The guide will inspire a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to medical management of CSHCN. Up-to-date scientific evidence has been translated by the authors and editors into tables and easy-to-read guidelines for registered dietitians and other health care professionals to use in their daily practice.