

Healthy Living

Food allergies and intolerances



Early years food allergies and intolerances are a significant concern in nurseries and preschools, requiring careful management to ensure children's safety and well-being. Common allergens include milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish. Early years settings must have robust policies and procedures in place to identify, manage, and respond to allergies, including staff training on anaphylaxis and emergency procedures.

TASK 1

The subject matter is so large that it is important to break it down into key areas to ensure robust reflection. Below are some key headings and reflective questions to consider when managing food allergies in early years.

Information Gathering and Sharing:

- How do you collect information regarding allergies and dietary needs?
- Is this information detailed and how do you keep it up to date?
- How do you keep this information readily accessible to all staff in food preparation and handling?

Allergen Awareness:

- Do all staff recognise the symptoms of an allergic reaction, both mild and severe (anaphylaxis)?
- What training do staff receive on this?

Food Preparation and Serving:

- Do you have procedure to avoid cross-contamination during food preparation?
- How do you ensure children receive the correct meals and snacks?
- What procedures do you implement to support this?
- Do you display photos and allergy information for staff to refer to in these areas?

Emergency Procedures:

- Do you have a clear emergency plan?
- How is it circulated or displayed?
- Does it include how to administer auto injectors, if required?
- If an incident occurs how is this managed and recorded?

Staff Training:

- Is allergy management included in your staff induction?
- Do staff receive regular training on allergy management?
- Do staff know the difference between allergies and intolerances?
- Are staff confident and competent to administer first aid in this area? How do you know this?
- Do you have a written allergy and anaphylaxis management policy?

Parental Involvement:

- How do you engage with parents in this area to gain an understanding of specific needs?
- How do you ensure consistent allergy management practices at home and in the setting?
- How do you know parents feel confident in your practices and are happy with the measures you follow to manage their child's needs?

Menu Planning:

- How do you plan your menus and reflect the allergy/intolerance needs in your setting?
- Do you collaborate with children and parents in your menu design?
- Do you maintain nutritional value and provide safe options?

TASK 2

The previous task may have given you more questions and actions and identified this being an area to develop.

There are some very useful resources out there to support you in your practice. Here are some that you could use to improve practice and help in your reflections.

- [Welcome to Allergy School — The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation](#)
- [Home | FSA Food Allergy Training](#)
- [Food allergies in babies and young children - NHS](#)
- [Help for early years providers : Food allergies and intolerances](#)
- [Managing Allergies in Early Years Settings | Policies & Procedures | Anaphylaxis UK](#)
- [Guidance for Early Years Settings | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)