

It's Playdate Time!



When young children with food allergies are ready to have playdates, we can often feel overwhelmed. Hosting playdates in our own homes is one way to have more control over the situation. It won't be long before your child wants to play at someone else's house. How will this happen? Talking about this beforehand can help both parents and kids feel more prepared. Your child might even like to use imaginary play and have a playdate with you and their favorite stuffed animal or toy.

Activity:

My First Playdate!

Need:

Stuffed animal or toy
Trainer for your child's epinephrine auto-injector
Two (2) safe snacks with ingredient labels
Wet wipes

Play with your child as if you are organizing their very first playdate. As the parent, model a conversation you will have with the other parent. This helps build a foundation for self-advocacy in the future.

First, pretend to have a phone call, "Hi, I'm Nina's mom, Christine. Thanks for having Nina over on Wednesday. I wanted to talk with you about Nina's food allergies."

Take it from there, in a friendly and confident tone. Ask if the parent is comfortable with you staying for the first playdate, if the child is young. Also, while you are on your pretend call, ask if the parent is comfortable managing your child's food allergies. Explain what your child is allergic to, and what he/she must avoid. Ask the parent if it is okay for you to send two (2) individual safe snacks for the kids, and wet wipes for hand and surface cleaning. Tell the parent you will teach him/her

how to use your child's epinephrine auto-injector, in the rare event of an emergency.

Next, use your imagination to have a playdate. Be as creative as you would like. Take this time to teach the make-believe parent how to use an epinephrine auto-injector. Kids often enjoy practicing this with their toys. It is a wonderful opportunity to teach your child all about their important medicine, in a calm, controlled and safe way. **Be sure to use the trainer and not the actual device!**

Together, practice reading the ingredient label on the snacks with your child and make-believe friend before enjoying them. But first, make sure to wipe your hands and eating surface with the wipes to remove any potential allergens! Have fun exploring what a playdate might be like. Take turns with you being the child, and your child being the parent in charge! Imaginary play is a great way to explore different scenarios and build the skills needed to live life safely and to the fullest with food allergies.

FAACT also recommends [Mighty Jax and the Cookie Surprise](#) and the Mighty Jax doll as another creative way for caregivers



and children to learn more about food allergies. Mighty Jax is a super-hero with multiple food allergies! He even comes wearing his emergency medicine pouch that contains his two epinephrine auto-injectors.

What's most important is that we teach our children they can do so many fun things in life, such as playing with friends. We simply need to prepare with a plan, carry our emergency medicine, and communicate our needs clearly with others.