



Planning for School: A Parent's Guide

Planning is essential when preparing your food-allergic child for school, so we have compiled tips and resources to support you in creating a safe and healthy environment for your child while he or she is in the care of others. Work with your doctor to provide accurate and specific medical instructions to be shared with your child's school as well.

Educate To Empower!

Study up on food allergies and share this information with your child's school. When discussing food allergies, use documented facts, research studies, and proven cases to advocate on behalf of your child. Parents need to know how to communicate information about food allergies and their child's needs effectively, and it's important to develop the confidence and knowledge needed to be an influential advocate for yourself and for your child. Your advocacy efforts will also teach your child to become his or her own best advocate!

Visit the [FAACT Education Resource Center](#) to access the most current food allergy resources and tools.

- [FAACT Basic Food Allergy Facts](#)

FAACT School Tips

- Empower school administrators, teachers, your child's classmates, and your child by praising efforts continuously.
- Plan well in advance. Some private and public schools require a family to be placed on a wait list.
- Prior to the start of the school year, call the school and request forms needed to have medications available for your child, Ask for any other medical forms your child may need, including:
 - [AAAAI Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan](#)
- Have your allergist fill out and sign your child's emergency action care plan. We suggest printing the plan on brightly colored paper so it stands out. Be sure to give all caregivers a copy of the plan and attach a photo of your child to each copy.

- Provide your school with two (2) non-expired, prescribed epinephrine auto-injector devices and other necessary medications as required. Return all required paperwork to the school in a timely manner.
- Educate yourself on 504s and other healthcare plans that may be available for your child. Schedule a meeting with your child's school nurse to discuss these options, and be sure to visit [FAACT's Civil Rights Page](#) for additional information.

Communicating with School Staff

Your goal is to create an effective team. A positive attitude and an open mind will demonstrate your willingness to assist teachers and others who care for your child in a non-conflicting manner. In turn, educators will find comfort in knowing they can turn to you with questions and concerns they may have about the well-being of your child.

- Document discussions with school staff and decisions made about your child's management plan. People present during these discussions should include the principal and all individuals who have contact with your child during the day (e.g., the school nurse; physical education, music, and art teachers; bus drivers; lunchroom personnel; etc.). This allows everyone the opportunity to learn about food allergies, practice with prescribed auto-injectable devices, and ask questions.
- If you are planning to hand out material in meetings with school staff, keep it short and informative. Refer school personnel to [FAACT's For School Personnel](#) Web page for support, resources, and FREE downloads.
- Include your contact information on all materials provided to school staff in case someone needs to contact you for additional information during the school year.
- Encourage school staff to practice emergency action plans, just as they would practice a fire drill. This will build confidence among staff and help ensure swift action takes place in the event of an emergency. Some schools may already have a food allergy policy in place. Be sure to review the policy with your medical provider and make suggestions for your child as necessary.
- Discuss "what ifs" and plan for unexpected situations to ensure everyone is confident in their ability to handle any type of emergency throughout the day.
 - What if a reaction happens during an after-school program?
 - What if a reaction occurs on the playground?
 - What if a reaction occurs when a substitute teacher is leading the class?
 - What happens if a reaction occurs on the school bus?
- During the meeting with school personnel, the nurse should demonstrate how to use your child's prescribed epinephrine auto-injector, or you can do this. Practicing use of your child's epinephrine trainer will build confidence among caregivers and will help ensure prompt action in emergency situations.



- Having an education advocate sometimes helps to open lines of communication and address areas of concern in discussing 504 and other health plans that may otherwise not have been addressed in initial meetings.
 - Find out the school's policy and plans for storage and accessibility to your child's epinephrine devices. Provide your school with information on the importance of epinephrine in food allergy emergencies. Topics to cover include:
 - Temperature control
 - Strategic placement
 - Training on use
 - Importance
 - Multiple doses available should a second dose be needed
 - Expiration dates
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FAACT's

- Delay in treatment with [epinephrine](#) increases the chance for fatality.
 - At the minimum, schools should have an [anaphylaxis emergency care plan](#) and two (2) epinephrine auto-injector devices readily accessible and in place for each student identified with a food allergy.
 - With the exception of New York, all 50 states now have laws in place protecting students' rights to carry and use asthma and anaphylaxis medications at school.
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- Review meal plans with the school's food service director if your child will be eating lunch at school. Schedule a meeting to discuss label reading, cross contact, etc.

➤ FAACT Food Services

- Review school policies involving food used in curriculums and other school activities..
 - How are snack times handled?
 - How are birthdays celebrated?
 - How far in advance will parents of food-allergic students be notified of any food celebrations, etc.?
 - Are teachers allowed to eat food in the classroom?

- Is your child’s classroom or school nut-free? If so, what policy is in place that permits the class or school to be titled “nut-free” or ”allergen-free”? How is the policy enforced?
- Request that each month the teacher's plans for activities that involve food are available for review.
- How are field trips handled?

➤ [FACCT Field Trips, for parents and schools](#)

- Discuss school bus policies.

➤ [FAACT Bus and Transportation, for parents and schools](#)

- Ensure your child has been informed of need-to-know information and his or her responsibilities. Be sure all parties are available to address any questions and concerns your child may have and to reassure him or her.
 - Will your child give a special signal to alert the teacher that he or she might be having a reaction?
 - What will your child do if it happens on the playground or in the cafeteria?
 - Practice drills with your child to build confidence.
 - Tell your child where medications will be stored at school and who will have access to them.
 - Explain snack time and role-play situations that could occur while in school.
 - Create a no-food-trading rule with your child.
 - Encourage and teach label reading.
 - Practice emergency procedures.
 - Practice administering epinephrine with your epinephrine-training device.
 - Encourage your child to wear his or her medical alert jewelry.
- Involve your child’s classmates and provide education as needed.
- Provide food allergy books, coloring pages, activities, and stickers for your child’s class to use (as appropriate based on your child’s age).

Information for Teachers and School Personnel

- Visit the [FAACT Education Resource Center](#) for additional information, resources, and downloads.
- Share information about FAACT and any local food allergy support groups in your area.
- Share the following guidelines with your school:
 - [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention \(CDC\) Voluntarily Food Allergy Guidelines](#)
 - [FAME Food Allergy Management and Education Program](#)



FAACT Thanks YOU!

Repetitive training, education, and awareness are vital in creating an allergy-aware facility! By educating yourself and others, not only are you becoming a better advocate for your child, you are also laying a foundation for students who will follow in your child's footsteps.

Thank you for taking the time to review our resources.

We wish you a successful school year!