



# A Checklist for Early Childhood Professionals When a Child has a Known Food Allergy

CFAAR

Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research

## Questions to Ask Food Allergy Families


### Ask About Allergies Before the Child's First Day

- What food(s) is your child allergic to?
- Is there anything specific you would like me to know about your child's food allergy before working with him/her?
- Can you tell me about your child's personality, interests, and favorite safe foods?

 **TIP: Have a favorite safe snack at the program in case of an unexpected pick-up delay or other circumstance.**

### Collect the Emergency Plan & Medications

- Has your child ever had a mild or severe allergic reaction? What did the reaction(s) look like?
- Do you have an Emergency Plan from the doctor in case he/she has an allergic reaction?
- Does your child have medications we need to have at our program (i.e., antihistamines, inhalers, or epinephrine auto-injectors)?

 **TIP: Programs and parents should review the Emergency Plan together and take note of when the child's epinephrine auto-injector expires.**


### Build Support for Everyday Readiness

- Is all contact information correct and current?
- Any tips for reading a food label?
- Would you be available to help our staff and families learn more about food allergies?

 **Tip: Programs and parents should communicate regularly to make sure all contact information is up to date.**

### Think About the Child's Age & Stage of Development

- How does your child ask for help? Does he/she use words or actions/gestures to get your attention?
- Do you use hand signals when you talk with him/her?
- Does your child understand the concepts "Stop" or "Go"?

 **TIP: Meet the child where he/she is. Start with hand signals and one word at a time. Sing songs & play games to teach the STOP, LOOK, ASK and GO concepts.**

## Information to Share with Food Allergy Families

**Children are curious and want to explore. Adults must always pay close attention to keep them safe.**

- Share how staff are trained on food allergies and anaphylaxis, where medication is kept for quick access, and all program-wide emergency procedures.

**Children need to feel capable and competent.**

- Share how your program cleans and prepares the environment so there are safe places for children to explore.

**Children need to feel safe and trust the adults who care for them.**

- Share what your staff does to make children with food allergies feel safe and feel included. Children need to know who to tell when they feel sick and who to ask for help.

**Children are learning how to get along with other children and peers.**

- Share how we use hand signals and simple action words at snack and mealtime to educate and create a caring community for ALL children. They all can benefit when they **STOP** before they eat, **LOOK** at the food, **ASK** an adult if it's ok to eat, **GO** only if the adult says so.

**Children are recognizing the thoughts and feelings of others during these early years.**

- Share how you help all children (those with and without food allergies) feel safe and included.

