



Dear School Leader,

Today, one in 13 children has food allergies, or roughly two in every classroom. Nearly 40 percent of these children have already experienced a severe or life-threatening allergic reaction.

In response to this emerging epidemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2013 published national guidelines for managing food allergies designed to help schools avoid, recognize and treat allergic reactions while ensuring that students with food allergies are safely included in school activities.

Important highlights from the guidelines include:

1. The *Recommended Practices for Reducing the Risk of Exposure* (pages 41-43) include specific recommendations for accommodating food allergic students in the classroom, cafeteria, field trips, extracurricular activities and beyond.

A few examples of accommodations for food allergic students include:

- Avoid the use of identified allergens in class projects, parties, holidays and celebrations, arts, crafts, science experiments, rewards, cooking and snacks.
 - Have immediate access to epinephrine auto-injectors (e.g., EpiPen, Auvi-Q).
 - Train teachers, bus drivers, and other school staff to recognize and treat allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction.
2. Food allergies may constitute a *disability* under the law. This is important because schools cannot exclude children with food allergies from activities (e.g., birthday celebrations, classroom parties) *because* of their food allergies.
 3. Plans for managing food allergies are important at both the district/school level AND the daily student level.
 - Coordinate the planning and implementation of your school's Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan (FAMPP). This is a comprehensive school plan that includes all strategies and actions needed to manage food allergies in the school setting.
 - Arrange appropriate accommodations for students with 504 or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) eligible services.
 4. Communication both within the district/school and to the greater community is critical for creating a positive environment.
 - Communicate school district policies and the school's plan for managing food allergies to all school staff, substitute teachers, classroom volunteers, and families.
 5. The emotional toll of exclusion, bullying, stigma and fear can cause significant emotional distress. It is important to consider the physical *and* emotional toll on children with food allergies.

Students with food allergies develop a sense of security when a positive school environment is created and accommodations such as these are put into place to ensure their physical *and* emotional well-being. For more information, please visit www.foodallergy.org/CDC.

Sincerely,

Scott Riccio
Senior Vice-President
Education & Advocacy