

Create safe and inclusive eating environments

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Create an inclusive learning environment'
from the Guide: [Allergies and learning](#)

-
- Includes:**
- Prevent accidental exposure
 - School settings
 - Early learning settings
 - Involve learners
 - Safe eating environments
 - Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Allergies and learning](#)

Strategy: [Create an inclusive learning environment](#)

Suggestion: [Create safe and inclusive eating environments](#)

Date

07 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/allergies-and-learning/create-and-safe-and-inclusive-eating-environments

Prevent accidental exposure

Food allergies can be life threatening and even small amounts of a food allergen can cause anaphylaxis.

Use this checklist when planning activities involving food.

- ✓ I know which learners have been diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis.
- ✓ I know which learners have a food allergy and I know their food triggers.
- ✓ I have communicated with the learners who are diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis and their parents/carers, to ensure I am well informed about their condition.
- ✓ I have immediate access to and have read a child or young person's anaphylaxis/allergy action plan.
- ✓ I know where individual and general use adrenaline auto-injectors are stored.
- ✓ I know the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and I can access and provide appropriate first aid.
- ✓ Curriculum and extracurricular materials have been reviewed to make sure that they are allergy-free and avoid allergy triggers.
- ✓ Procedures are in place for checking ingredient labels.
- ✓ Specific work practices, such as separate equipment, are in place for students at high risk of anaphylaxis.
- ✓ I have reminded learners about the risks associated with food sharing.
- ✓ Efficient cleaning strategies are used to eliminate cross-contamination during food handling, preparation, and serving.

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School settings

Ensure students avoid ingesting even a small amount of the food they are allergic to.

- ✓ The use of food in classroom activities (cooking, celebrations, science, art, and craft activities) may need to be restricted depending on the allergies of particular students.
- ✓ Use non-food rewards.
- ✓ Label food to avoid hidden ingredients in shared lunches, school canteens, and food stalls.
- ✓ Ensure food, utensils, or food containers are not shared or traded.
- ✓ Label bottles, drinks, and lunch boxes provided by parents for their children with the name of the child for whom they are intended.
- ✓ Wash toys regularly.
- ✓ Keep eating areas separate from learning and playing areas. Wipe tables after eating inside.
- ✓ Ensure hand washing before and after consuming or handling food.
- ✓ Ensure areas where food and drink is consumed are cleaned and rubbish items, such as milk cartons, are disposed of.

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Early learning settings

Identify where and how contact with food allergens may occur throughout the day in your centre.

Potential challenges include:

- the exploration of surroundings and objects through all senses, particularly the mouth – wipe surfaces immediately after food preparation and serving
- surface contact with allergens, for example, when crawling on the floor – decide on and use designated spaces for eating so that food isn't dropped on floors
- accidental exposure to food as children are still learning the concept of sharing – name children's lunchboxes and drink bottles, monitor children eating, and ensure all staff know those children with allergies.

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Involve learners



Source:

Balestier Hill Primary

<https://flic.kr/p/NU9mMg>

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Safe eating environments



Source:

Ministry of Education

<https://parents.education.govt.nz/secondary-school/wellbeing/bullying/>

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Useful resources



Thriving with allergies

This series of downloadable classroom posters promotes awareness of food allergens.

Publisher: Elizabeth Bostic

[Visit website](#)

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