

Design for full participation from the outset

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

Includes:

- Plan safe learning activities
- Ask learners
- Review your activities
- Absences
- Reduce anxiety

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Allergies and learning](#)

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

Suggestion: [Design for full participation from the outset](#)

Date

01 September 2025

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/allergies-and-learning/design-for-full-participation

Plan safe learning activities

Consider physical spaces, learning activities, materials, and outdoor activities.

Think about how you will plan safe experiences for:

- use of outdoor environments – be aware of areas with a high pollen count, grasses, and trees
- play and activities – consider regular cleaning routines for toys, dress-ups, carpets, and areas where dust might gather
- using learning materials, such as playdough, bubbles, balloons, egg and milk cartons, yogurt pottles, and lids, that may contain allergens
- the use of food in science, craft, and cooking classes – ensure learners wear gloves, use baking paper, and have systems for wiping surfaces and washing hands to eliminate cross-contamination
- shared lunches or fundraising activities – use labels to identify food with gluten, nuts, and so on.

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Ask learners

Seek and include student voice to reduce feelings of anxiety and minimise barriers to participation.

Talk with learners about:

- their allergy action plans and ways to develop self-management strategies
- how they would like to communicate their health needs
- activities or learning situations that increase their levels of stress or uncertainty
- ways to support their access to medication
- the information they would like to share about their allergies and the best ways to share it
- opportunities for private feedback, such as suggestion boxes, email, or teacher check-in conversations.

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Review your activities

Observe where exclusion may occur.

Stokes Valley Playcentre reviewed baking activities and shared kai routines to ensure they were inclusive of whānau with allergies. Proactive actions developed included:

- clear liaison with tamariki and whānau to ensure baking is allergy-free
- an acceptable kai list, updated regularly when whānau enrolled or moved away
- shared morning kai consisting of allergy-free foods
- allergy-free baking is done before morning tea so that it can be shared
- follow-up to ensure centre policy forms are completed for tamariki needing allergy medication during a session.

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Absences



Create a supportive environment

- Provide a quiet space for a child who is not feeling well.
- Know which children have allergies, what the triggers are, and plan to reduce these.
- Support transition back to learning from absence – connect with parents, keep your website or class blog up-to-date with learning activities and links. Provide access to reading materials and other resources as needed.

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Reduce anxiety



Social and emotional wellbeing

Strategies supporting children and young people

- Asthma management plans need to be sensitive to psychosocial factors.
- Help young people acknowledge and accept the feelings they're having.
- Encourage young people to take an active role in managing their asthma.
- Teach relaxation exercises, mindfulness or meditation.

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