

# Safe Environments for Children with Food Allergies

## Classroom

**Birthdays & Holidays** - Do not allow outside treats. If allowed, limit to pre-packaged foods with complete ingredient lists.

**Safe Treat Box** - Consider allowing parents of children with food allergies to bring in treats that are okay for the child in case there is a treat brought in that is not okay.

**Science experiments & art projects** - use materials that are allergen free.

## Eating Area

Ask parents of children with food allergies to **review menus** and identify foods that are not safe.

**Do not allow children to share** utensils, dishes, cups, water bottles or food.

Be aware of **other sources of exposure** including sponges, dishrags, sanitizing buckets, aprons, food that touches the allergen, etc.

## Environments

## Kitchen

Read **food labels** for common allergens.

Use colored stickers on foods to indicate an adult has read the ingredient label and determined whether the food is safe or contains allergens.

Avoid **cross-contact** with allergens.

**Modify recipes** with ingredient substitutions for common allergens.

## General

Create **allergen-free zones** or do not allow foods containing the allergen to be brought into the center.

**Make outside groups aware of food allergy policies and rules** when they use facilities before/after operating hours.

Maintain private **lists of all children with food allergies** in a designated area in each classroom, eating area and in the kitchen.

## Training / Education

### Staff Training

- **How to CARE for Kids** handout (binder)
- **Learning All About Food Allergies** training module and certificate  
[http://www.bluekids.org/swf/foodallergy/food\\_allergy.html](http://www.bluekids.org/swf/foodallergy/food_allergy.html)

### Child Education

- **PAL Program** <http://www.foodallergy.org/be-a-pal>
- Print small poster or order larger poster
- Be a PAL handout in (binder)
- Be a PAL certificate
- **The No Biggie Bunch**  
<http://nobiggiebunch.com/launch.php>
- **Binky Goes Nuts**  
<http://pbskids.org/arthur/health/allergy/>

## Children's Books about Food Allergies

- **Allie the Allergic Elephant: A Children's Story of Peanut Allergies** by Nicole Smith
- **Chad the Allergic Chipmunk: A Children's Story of Nut Allergies** by Nicole Smith
- **Cody the Allergic Cow: A Children's Story of Milk Allergies** by Nicole Smith
- **The BugaBees: Friends with Food Allergies** by Amy Recob
- **The Princess and the Peanut Allergy** by Wendy McClure
- **The Princess and the Peanut: A Royally Allergic Tale** by Sue Ganz-Schmitt
- **Food Allergies & Me: A Children's Book** by Juniper Skinner
- **Mangos for Max** by Jessica St. Louis
- **Nutley, the Nut Free Squirrel** by Stephanie Sorkin

## Ingredient Substitutions

### Substitutions for Common Allergens

Milk	Equal amounts water or fruit juice (ex. substitute 1 cup milk with 1 cup water)
Eggs	For each egg, substitute one of the following in recipes. These substitutes work well when baking from scratch and substituting 1 to 3 eggs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 tsp. baking powder, 1 T. liquid, 1 T. vinegar</li> <li>• 1 tsp. yeast dissolved in 1/4 cup warm water</li> <li>• 1 1/2 T. water, 1 1/2 T. oil, 1 tsp. baking powder</li> <li>• 1 packet gelatin, 2 T. warm water. Do not mix until ready to use</li> <li>• 1 T. ground flax seed mixed with 3 T. warm water; let stand 1 minute before using</li> </ul>
Wheat	Substitute 1 cup wheat flour with one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7/8 cup rice flour</li> <li>• 5/8 cup potato starch flour</li> <li>• 1 cup soy flour plus 1/4 cup potato starch flour</li> <li>• 1 cup corn flour</li> </ul>

### TIPS FOR WHEAT-FREE COOKING

Wheat-free flours often work best if the recipe is cooked for a longer period of time at a lower temperature than usual. Reduce your oven temperature by about 25 degrees, and you will find the finished product will be a little less flat.

If you are not avoiding eggs, adding an extra egg to a gluten-free recipe will help the product rise a little more.

Refrigerating dough for half an hour before baking may help improve the texture and flavor.

Since many wheat-free foods will crumble, you may want to experiment with making foods with smaller surface areas, such as cupcakes instead of cakes.

## Reading Food Labels

### Ingredient List

- The common or usual name of the major food allergen must be followed by the food source in parentheses in the list of the ingredients. This will occur the first time the major food allergen is listed and does not have to be repeated each time the name of the specific food allergen appears.

**Examples:** "lecithin (soy)," "flour (wheat)," and "whey (milk)"

### Contains Statement

- There may be a section after or near the ingredient list called "Contains". After the word "Contains", there must be listed the name of the food source from which the major food allergen is derived.

**Example:** "Contains Wheat, Milk, and Soy."

- Warnings / advisory statements (e.g., "May contain...", "Processed in a facility with...") are voluntary. A manufacturer does not have to warn you of unintentional traces of an allergen due to cross-contact during processing.

May Contain...  
Processed in a  
Facility With...

### What is Covered?

- Packaged & conventional foods
- Infant formula and foods
- Medical foods
- Flavoring, spice, coloring or processing aid
- Retail/food establishments that package, label & offer products for human consumption
- Foods labeled "for individual sale"