

Food Allergy Empowerment Skills: Infancy - Young Adult

This resource was prepared as a summary handout for attendees at the FARE Summit 2022 panel discussion on:

EMPOWERING YOUR KIDS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES —FROM PRESCHOOL TO COLLEGE

It reflects the collective input and expertise from the following members of the panel:

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6 Stages of Allergy Parenting

Adapted from researcher Ellen Galinsky's "Six Stages of Parenthood" work, this chart offers a framework to help allergy parents understand the parenting and emotional tasks associated with each stage of their child's development. Allergy-specific adapted concept developed by licensed therapist and Food Allergy Counselor Directory founder, Tamara Hubbard, LCPC.

STAGES	ACTS AS THE...	CHILD'S AGE	PARENTS' GOALS	ALLERGY TASKS
IMAGE-MAKING STAGE	Learner	Pre-birth	Prepare for changes	Gather information
NURTURING STAGE	Protector	Infancy	Develop attachment & adapt to changes	Responsible for allergy safety
AUTHORITY STAGE	Boss	Toddler & Preschool	Create rules & guide child's behavior	Teach basic safety skills
INTERPRETIVE STAGE	Guide	Middle Childhood	Help child interpret experiences	Allow skill practice opportunities
INTERDEPENDENT STAGE	Coach	Adolescence	Allow for shared decision-making	Guided transition of responsibilities
DEPARTURE STAGE	Spectator	Early Adulthood	Evaluation & Reflection	Support & celebrate

Food Allergy Empowerment Skills: (Preschool - Elementary)



STAGES	ACTS AS THE...	CHILD'S AGE	PARENTS' GOALS	ALLERGY TASKS
AUTHORITY STAGE	Boss	Toddler & Preschool	Create rules & guide child's behavior	Teach basic safety skills

**Ages
2-4**

- Establish values for home - allergens in home? who feeds child?
- Role play and read children's books to model safe behavior.
- Normalize auto-injector trainer for playroom to reduce fear of needle.
- Educate secondary caregivers ("the village") on FA and care plan.
- Create rules for eating snacks (i.e. color-code food with stickers).
- Wallet card, medical ID bracelet, fun bag with their medicines.
- Refer to foods as 'safe' versus 'unsafe'. "Here is a safe snack for you". "This is a [child's name]-safe snack".
- Reinforce sharing toys is good, while sharing food is not safe.
- Create positive associations with food (baking together, gardening, reading books about safe foods).
- Grocery shop together and play 'I Spy' for unsafe foods.
- Instill hand-washing habit before & after meals.

STAGES	ACTS AS THE...	CHILD'S AGE	PARENTS' GOALS	ALLERGY TASKS
INTERPRETIVE STAGE	Guide	Middle Childhood	Help child interpret experiences	Allow skill practice opportunities

**Ages
5-10**

- Seek and find word game on ingredient labels (pantry & grocery store).
- Talk about 'safe' food options. Learn how and practice preparing safe snacks.
- Know phone number, address, and how/when to call 9-1-1.
- Review FAAP details for epi storage, symptoms of reaction and response.
- Normalize auto-injector as a tool through hands-on trainer practice.
- Offer choices for everything - food and non-food tasks.
- Practice growth mindset phrases: I'm learning, I can do this, I'm trying.
- Consider self-carrying epinephrine by late elementary years.
- Practice role-playing for peer-related, problem-solving and restaurant skills.
- Caregiver demonstrates how to order food safely, declaring allergens and asking ingredient and cross-contact questions to keep child safe.
- Participate in meal planning / brainstorming safe foods, packing lunches, and hands-on food prep in kitchen.

Food Allergy Empowerment Skills: (Middle School)



STAGES	ACTS AS THE...	CHILD'S AGE	PARENTS' GOALS	ALLERGY TASKS
INTERPRETIVE STAGE	Guide	Middle Childhood	Help child interpret experiences	Allow skill practice opportunities

Self-Care:

- Establish daily practice of self-carrying epi. Visual cues on door hooks? Habit stacking (put backpack away and put epi next to phone or glasses).
- No epi, no eating outside of home. Establish boundary early and experience natural consequence even if it means returning home for meds and being late.
- Encourage sleepaway experiences to gain confidence and self-reliance.
- Continue modeling 'growth mindset' skills. *"We can learn and grow through hard times. Everything is hard before it's easier to manage. Mistakes are how we learn, etc"*

Peer Support:

- Child educates their close friends about food allergies, including severe symptoms and hands-on experience with epi trainer
- Find support buddy who can relate to chronic health condition. FARE, local connections, FAACT, or even similar conditions (such as Type 1 Diabetes)

School Support:

- Involve in beginning of school school administrator meetings (504, teacher, nurse, principal prep), non-food reward classroom experiences, field trip plans, medication forms.
- Drop off medicine with forms and pickup at end of school year.
- Educate and empower after-school extracurricular groups (coaches, teammates, classmates)

Practice Skills:

- Model research calls for food manufacturers, calling restaurants.
- Have child grocery-shop with you, choosing safe foods along the way.
- Involve in pharmacy experience (expiration date, picking up refills, asking for medicine that expires in 12+ months)

Ages
11 - 13

Food Allergy Empowerment Skills: (High School)



STAGES	ACTS AS THE...	CHILD'S AGE	PARENTS' GOALS	ALLERGY TASKS
INTERDEPENDENT STAGE	Coach	Adolescence	Allow for shared decision-making	Guided transition of responsibilities

Self-Care:

- Establish daily practice of self-carrying epi, always having 2 with them.
- Family rules are clearly understood. No epi, no eating outside of home.
- Comfortable with overnight experiences outside the home.
- Practice 'growth mindset' skills. *"We can learn and grow through hard times. Everything is hard before it's easier to manage. Mistakes are how we learn, etc"*

Peer Support:

- Friends understand severity and become allies / advocates for person with food allergies.
- Connect with support buddy / buddies for mentorship throughout high school. Mentees may even transition over to become a mentor for new mentees.
- Role play and discuss ground rules for dating (i.e. transparency about food allergies, partner ingesting allergen / kissing) and parties (i.e. drinks without allergens, avoiding cross-contact)

**Ages
14 - 18**

School Support:

- Take lead in filling out medication forms for school, brief teachers, administrators and attend 504 meetings.
- Drop off medicine with forms and pickup at end of school year.
- Educate and empower after-school extracurricular groups (coaches, teammates, classmates).
- Research dining services at universities for familiarity with accommodations.

Self-Management:

- Practice calling food manufacturers, restaurants and ordering meals after disclaiming allergies. Try on own several times with parent gradually stepping back.
- Shop for safe foods, pack safe meals / snacks, and learn how to cook a few meals on own.
- Kitchen skills for meals include safe food prep, knife skills, oven/stove, cross-contact safety.
- Take lead in pharmacy experience (knowing expiration date, picking up refills, asking for medicine that expires in 12+ months)