



Food Allergies

[KidsHealth.org/classroom](https://www.kidshealth.org/classroom)

Teacher's Guide

This guide includes:

- Standards
- Related Links
- Activities for Students
- Reproducible Materials

Standards

This guide correlates with the following National Health Education Standards:

Children will:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

National Health Education Standards:

www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm

Activities in this guide also correlate with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes.

These outcomes are denoted on each individual activity.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/elof-ohs-framework.pdf>

The following unit includes five early literacy-based health activities focused on food allergies. Choose one daily to help your children explore food allergies over the course of a week.

KidsHealth Links to Share:

Food Allergies

[KidsHealth.org/en/kids/food-allergies.html](https://www.kidshealth.org/en/kids/food-allergies.html)

Nut and Peanut Allergy

[KidsHealth.org/en/kids/nut-allergy.html](https://www.kidshealth.org/en/kids/nut-allergy.html)

Egg Allergy

[KidsHealth.org/en/kids/egg-allergy.html](https://www.kidshealth.org/en/kids/egg-allergy.html)

Help With Hives

[KidsHealth.org/en/kids/hives.html](https://www.kidshealth.org/en/kids/hives.html)

Resources for Teachers:

Food Allergies Special Needs Factsheet

[KidsHealth.org/en/parents/food-allergies-factsheet.html](https://www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/food-allergies-factsheet.html)

Reproducible Materials:

Activity Cards: Food Allergy Clip Cards

Activity Cards: Food Allergy Picture Cards

Writing Page: Food Safety

Assessment: Print Awareness Checklist



Food Allergies

Large Group Book Experience: Oral Language

Food Allergies, Friends and Me!

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LC2: Understand and respond to increasingly complex communication and language from others.
- P-LC6: Understand and use a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Identify what food allergies are and learn some symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Learn how to keep a friend with food allergies safe.

Materials:

- Suggested Book – Food Allergies and Me – Juniper Skinner (or any age-appropriate book about Food Allergies)
- Chart paper
- Chart markers

Class Time:

15 - 20 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about food allergies and what it means to have food allergies. Today, I brought in a book for us to read together and learn about food allergies. I also brought chart paper and colorful markers, so we can write down the important rules to follow to keep ourselves and our friends with food allergies safe while we are here at school. Keep your ears open so we can write down rules as we read. Who's ready to learn about food allergies?

Introduce the Book

- **Demonstrate proper book handling and point to each word of the title as you read:**

Today, I brought a new book with me to read. Look closely at the front cover of the book and touch your nose if you see the title. It looks like (child's name) sees the title. (Child's name), can you point to the title on the front cover of our book? Yes, this book is called Food Allergies and Me and it is written by Juniper Skinner. Watch how I open the cover and find the title page of our book. Touch your nose if you see the title on the title page. You've found it again! The title and author's names are also on the title page.

- **Allow children to see the front and/or back cover of the book to make predictions:**

Do you see the two boys on the cover of our book? Look at those friends enjoying a snack together! What do you think this book will be about? Yes, you are correct! This book is about one of the little boys on the cover. He is allergic to a certain food and we are going to learn all about what that means.

Why do you think the author wrote this book? What does she want us to learn? Let's take a quick flip through the pictures inside to see if it helps us answer those questions. Those are all great answers! It looks like the author wrote this book to help us learn about food allergies and find out what happens when someone is allergic to a food. We'll also learn how to help keep our friends with food allergies safe. Let's read together to find out more.

**Read and Introduce Vocabulary**

- **As you read, include opportunities for discussion and introduce vocabulary:**

The boy in the book says, “I have food allergies.” Does anyone know what it means to have food allergies? It sounds like some of you have ideas about what having food allergies means! When you have a food allergy, your body thinks that something in a food is bad for you. Then, your body reacts by having an “allergic reaction.” Not all kids have food allergies just some kids. Allergic reactions cause symptoms. Can you say “symptoms” with me? (Say: “sim-TUMS”)! A symptom is a change in your body to let you know that something is not right. Think of a symptom like the clues you need to solve a mystery. What kind of symptoms do you think someone with food allergies might have? Yes, symptoms like a runny nose, an itchy rash, a tingling tongue, a tummy ache, or having a hard time breathing are all signs that a person may be allergic to what they ate. Let’s read on to find out more about the boy in our book and his food allergies.

Oh, listen! I think I heard our first rule. The boy told us that he can’t always tell if a food is safe. So what does he do? Yes, he asks his mom or dad before eating a new food to make sure it is safe. Let’s add ask a parent before eating as the first rule on our chart. Now, let’s keep listening to see if we hear more rules.

- **Explore the image of the young boy sitting in his mom’s lap and introduce vocabulary:**

In this picture, I see the little boy holding his tummy and not feeling so good. He said, eating food that he’s allergic to can give him itchy spots called hives and make his tummy hurt. He gets an itchy throat and has trouble breathing. Those sound like ____? Yes, we can call them allergy symptoms or an allergic reaction! What do you think he should do if he is having an allergic reaction? Ah-ha, it says on the next page, “I need to tell a grown-up right away!” It’s important to tell a grown-up if someone is having an allergic reaction. This way, that person can get medicine or go to the hospital. Telling a grown-up also sounds like a very important rule too! Let’s add that to our list.

Read and Expand Learning Concepts with Children

- **Integrate concepts with previous knowledge:**

Now that we know what a food allergy is, how it makes people feel, and what to do about an allergic reaction, let’s finish our list of rules to help keep our classroom friends safe here at school. I will add the rules to the ones we already have listed here on my chart!

What other rules did you hear as we read our book? Yes, we can share toys and games but we should never share food. Great listening! Can you think of any other rules we heard? Yes! We need to wash our hands to get dirt and germs off of them before we eat. We also need to wash our hands after we eat, so that we don’t touch a friend with a food they are allergic to. These are four great rules to keep us all safe!

- **Make real-world connections to events in children’s lives:**

So, now that we know about food allergies, what do you think we should do if we see a friend having an allergic reaction? Yes, first, ask if your friend is okay. Next, if your friend is not feeling well, quickly get help! Tell the closest teacher or adult and take that person to your friend. Now, we know just what to do to help a friend in need with food allergies!

Summary Statement

Today we learned what food allergies are, what an allergic reaction is, and how to help a friend who is having an allergic reaction. Thanks for reading with me today. Great learning!



Food Allergies

Small Group Literacy Activity: Letter Knowledge

Clothespin Words

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT3: Identify letters of the alphabet and produce the correct sounds associated with letters.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Name some letters of the alphabet.
- Recognize that words are made up of letters.
- Recognize food allergy-related words they have seen in print.

Materials:

- Activity Cards: Food Allergy Clip Cards
- Alphabet Clothespins (using the letters from the Food Allergy Clip Cards, write one letter in permanent marker on each clothespin)

Class Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about food allergies. Our book, [Food Allergies and Me](#), is filled with words that tell us all about food allergies. We see words on the front cover, the back cover, and the pages of the book. Did you know those words are made up of letters? Today, we are going to learn some of the special letters in our book. Who's ready to explore with me?

Introduce the Materials

- **Gather food allergy clip cards and alphabet clothespins. Place them within reach of the children and allow them to explore:**
Look at these clip cards and clothespins! What do you see on them? Yes, you see different letters! Do you recognize these letters? Some letters will be familiar, and others might be new. What do you think we can do with the clip cards and clothespins? (Pause). That sounds like a fun idea!
- **Explain the purpose of the activity and clarify the instructions:**
Let's play a game! Each of you will choose one food allergy clip card. We will work together to identify the letter names, and the sounds we see and hear. Then we will look for the matching alphabet clothespin and clip the pin below the letter on your clip card. Once we find all the letters in the word, we can work together to sound out the word we see!

Incorporate Multisensory Learning as You Engage With Children and Offer Encouragement

- **Encourage children to search for and identify letters they know within the clip card:**
(Child's name), go ahead and pick one clip card from the pile. Let's look at the clip card together. Do you see any letters that you know? Great job! You pointed to and said the letter (letter name).
- **Sing a letter chant with the children, allowing them to review the name and sound of the letter:**
(Sing to the tune of: "If You're Happy and You Know It!")
If you think you know this letter say its name! (Pause)
If you think you know this letter say its name! (Pause)
If you think you know this letter then tell it to a friend! (Pause)
If you think you know this letter make its sound! (Pause)

Great work! You knew the letter name and its sound! The letter (letter name) makes the (letter sound) sound.



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- **Assist the child in searching for the alphabet clothespin that matches the letter they have named:**
Now, let's match the letter that we have named from our clip card with an alphabet clothespin. We will search for the letter, when you find it, clip the letter to your clip card below the matching letter. What letter are we looking for again? Yes! You are looking for (letter name) from your clip card. Can you find the matching alphabet letter clothespin? (Pause). Yes! You found the letter (letter name) and clipped it on your clip card! You made a match!
- **Continue until the children have named (with your help) and matched each letter on their clip card. Be sure each child has successful opportunities to participate before moving on.**
- **Encourage children to move their entire bodies as they air write the word they have spelled:**
Wow! You've found all of the letters from your clip card! Great matching. Now, let's work together to sound out the word you have spelled. Are you ready? /f/.../oo/.../d/. Yes, the word you spelled was "food!" This is one of the words we have been talking about this week as we talk about food allergies!
Now, let's stand up and get our writing fingers ready so we can air write the word (clip card word)! Are you ready? (Use language to describe each letter in the word as you write it in the air). Great writing!
- **Repeat the activity several times as long as children are engaged:**
We found the word (clip card word)! What other words do you think we will find? Yes, "allergy," "wash," and "itch" are all words we have used this week. Now, let's see if we can find a card with one of those words and start all over again! Are you ready?

Summary Statement

Today we made words together with letters. We named letters, reviewed their sounds, and put the letters together to make some of the food allergy words we have been using this week. Great job searching and using your letters today! Thanks for playing with me!



Food Allergies

Small Group Literacy Activity: Phonological Awareness

Tapping Straws

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT1: Demonstrate awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Segment and count syllables in words.
- Use words related to food allergies with understanding and confidence.

Materials:

- Paper straws (2 per child)
- Activity Cards: Food Allergy Picture Cards

Class Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about food allergies and how to keep ourselves and our friends safe. Today, we are going to use our word cards and play a fun listening game! Get your listening ears ready!

Promote Phonological Awareness by Singing a Song

- **Introduce a new song:**

Listen to the fun, new song I have for us today. See if you can hear any of the words we have been talking about.

(Sing to the tune of: "Santa Claus is coming to Town")

*We always wash hands,
and never share food.*

We ask an adult before we try something new.

We know how to eat safe at school.

Did you hear some of the words that we have been talking about? Yes, wash hands! You are great listeners.

- **Encourage the children to sing or chant the new tune with you:**

Let's sing the song again, but this time I would like for you to sing our song with me. Are you ready?

*We always wash hands,
and never share food.*

We ask an adult before we try something new.

We know how to eat safe at school.

Now that we warmed up our listening ears, let's play a sound game together with some of the words we've been learning.



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Introduce the Materials

- **Place the paper straws and word cards within reach of the children and allow them to explore:**
Look, I see two paper straws for each of you and our word cards. Go ahead, you can pick them up and look at them. What do you think we will do with paper straws and word cards? (Pause). Those are some great guesses! Today we are going to play a sound game and use our straws to count the sounds we make! Can you help me to put the picture-word cards in my basket?
- **Explain the purpose of the game and clarify the instructions:**
All words are broken down into parts. The parts are called syllables. We are going to count the syllables in the words from our word cards. First, I will pick a picture-word card from my basket, show you the picture, and then say the word. Then, we will say the word together and use our straws to tap the parts of the word. Last, we will count out the parts of the word to identify how many syllables the word has. Are you ready to tap out our food allergy words?

Practice the Phonological Awareness Skill of Counting Syllables Together

- **Demonstrate how to tap and count syllables of words:**
I will tap out a word first to show you how!
Reaching, feeling all around! What's on the picture card that I found?
I found a picture with the word "medicine" underneath it! This must be one of the medicines to use if you have an allergic reaction to food.
Watch how I use my paper straws and tap the word medicine. Med(tap)...i(tap)...cine(tap).
How many times did I tap? Yes! I tapped three times! The word medicine has three syllables. Great listening!
- **Encourage each child to tap and count syllables of words:**
Now let's try tapping out another word. (Child's name), it's your turn to pick out a word card and tap the syllables. Reaching, feeling all around! What's on the picture card that you found?
You found a picture with the word "itchy." We learned that some people can get itchy spots called hives if they eat a food they are allergic to. Let's tap out the word itchy together. Itch(tap)...y(tap). How many times did we tap? Yes, we tapped two times! The word itchy has two syllables. What a wonderful job you are doing, counting the syllables!
- **Continue picking new words from the basket until every child has had successful opportunities participating in the activity.**

Summary Statement

Today, we learned a new song about food allergies and played a fun listening game with our tapping straws. We learned how to tap and count the syllables in words together. Thanks for playing and learning with me!



Food Allergies

Small Group Literacy Activity: Beginning Writing

Food Safety

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:
Children will:

- P-LIT6: Write with a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated marks.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Use their knowledge to identify the rules of food safety.
- Demonstrate increasing strength, control, and coordination of the small muscles used for writing and drawing.

Materials:

- Chart paper
- Chart marker
- Writing Page: Food Safety
- Writing materials: colored pencils, markers, crayons

Class Time:

15 - 20 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning all about food allergies. Today we are going to talk more about the rules of food safety. Together we will play a game to see if you remember the rules and then you will have a chance to play a matching game and draw a picture.

Introduce the Activity

- **Familiarize children with food allergies and safety:**

Does anyone remember how many food safety rules we talked about? Yes! We have four food safety rules to help keep ourselves and our friends safe. Let's talk about the rules and then we can play a drawing game. Who can remember one of the rules we talked about? Raise your hand if you remember a rule. Yes, we talked about not sharing food and always washing our hands before and after we eat. Who can tell me more of our rules? Yes, always ask before eating something new and tell an adult if you or a friend ever feel bad after eating. Great job remembering the rules!

- **Discuss the materials and how you will use them:**

I brought my marker and chart paper today so we can play a guessing game together. I am going to use my marker and draw a picture on my chart paper and then you have to look at the picture and try to guess which rule I am drawing! Are you ready? Watch as I draw (*draw a person washing hands*). These are hands. What does it look like they are doing? Yes, they are rubbing together under the water. Which rule could this be? Great thinking (child's name), always wash your hands before and after we eat. Get ready for the next picture.

(Note: If you don't feel comfortable drawing the food safety rules, you may use the pictures from the writing page to play the guessing game!)

- **Continue until you have drawn an image for each rule, encouraging children to match the rule to the picture.**



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Introduce Writing Activity

- **Discuss the materials and how to use them:**

Now that we have talked about the rules of food safety, it's time for us to get our hands moving! Each of you has a writing page in front of you. You can use any of these crayons and markers to match the printed words on your paper with a picture on your paper. I will read the sentence to you and then I would like for you to draw a line from the words to the match picture. When you are finished, we will draw a picture at the bottom of our page of a food that might be unsafe to eat.

- **Model an example of drawing a line as you talk with the children about the writing process:**

The first rule says, wash your hands before and after you eat. I am going to look here in the column of pictures to the right and see if I can find a picture to match. Ah ha! Here it is. Watch how I use my crayon to draw a line from the words to the picture. Now you try! Great matching, let's see if you can continue to match as I read.

Assess Learning Through Practice

- **Encourage children to identify foods that may be unsafe and cause an allergic reaction in some people:**

Let's think about some of the foods we have talked about this week that might not be safe for someone with a food allergy. Shout out the ones you can think of. Yes, peanuts and eggs are two of the foods we talked about! Can you think of more? Oh yes, seafood can be another one! Great work remembering those!

Offer Encouragement

- **Encourage children to independently draw an unsafe food:**

Which food did you want to draw about today? Yes! A fish sounds like a fun idea to draw! When you draw your picture, write the name of the picture at the top of the page. Or you can just write the first letter of the word, like "F" for fish.

- **Compliment and praise the children on their attempts at writing:**

Wow! Look at all the details in your picture. Keep it up! You are going to have a wonderful drawing when you are finished. I see you are taking your time. Your fish looks fantastic! Great job writing "F" at the top!

Share and Discuss Drawings

- **Encourage each child to share his drawing and writing:**

Who would like to tell us about their drawing? Look at that picture of peanuts! Tell us about your picture, (child's name). I see, so because you are allergic to peanuts you chose peanuts as your unsafe food, that's a fantastic reason! You have a wonderful drawing. Thank you, (child's name), for sharing!

- **Continue until each child has had a chance to share**

Summary Statement

Today we talked about food safety rules, played some matching games and even drew pictures of some unsafe foods together. We really worked our brains and hands today! Thank you for drawing and writing with me!



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Small Group Literacy Activity: Print Awareness

Food Allergies Point and Read

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT2: Demonstrate an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).

Objectives:

Children will:

- Identify the features (parts) of a book (author, illustrator, front cover, back cover, title page, and table of contents).
- Explore the conventions (rules) of print (tracking left to right and how to hold a book).
- Identify what a friend with a food allergy can do just like any other child.

Materials:

- Assessment: Print Awareness Checklist
- Suggested Book - Food Allergies and Me - Juniper Skinner (or any age-appropriate book about food allergies)

Class Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning all about food allergies. Today, we will use a new book to learn how a friend with food allergies can do most everything any other child can. We will also identify the different ways printed words are organized. Are you ready to read with me?

- (Optional) Use the Print Awareness Checklist, as you engage, to record each child's progress.

Introduce the Features of the Book

- Place the book, Food Allergies and Me, within reach of the children.
- Allow children to explore the parts of the book:
Look at this book! What do you see? Yes! You see words on the front cover. The front cover tells us the title of the book and the name of the author. Can you touch the title of this book? You found the title, it says Food Allergies and Me. Now, can you touch the name of the author? Yes, you found the author's name right here on the cover! I wonder what you would see if you flip this book on its side. That's right! You'll see the spine of the book. The spine of this book has no words on it. Sometimes the spine tells us the title of the book and the author's name, but not today.
- Direct children to the title page:
When I open the book to the first page, I see a title page. Can someone tell me what we see on the title page? Yes, a title page tells us when and where the book was published or printed. This title page tells us that this book was first published in 2010 by JJJH Publishing.



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Introduce the Conventions of Print

- **Allow children to explore the rules of print as you assess knowledge of where to begin reading a book:** (Child's name), use your hands to hold this book the correct way. Now, turn to the page where we begin reading. Great job! Can you touch the picture on this page? It's a picture of a boy with his soccer ball standing next to his little brother. Can you touch the words on this page? Yes, it says, "Hi! I'm Jack!" Thank you, (child's name)! You found the picture and the words. We look at the pictures and we read the words. Can you say that with me? (Encourage children to repeat the phrase).
- **Assess knowledge of directionality:** (Child's name), can you find the next page? Thank you! I like the way you gently turned the page in the book. I see more words on this page. Can you show me how to read these words? Yes! We read these words from top to bottom and left to right. Watch me track the words as I read!
- **Use your finger to track words in a sweeping motion as you sing the following chant. Encourage children to sing and track print with you:**

(Sing to the tune of: "Oh My Darling")

Top to bottom.

Top to bottom.

Top to bottom, left to right.

That's the way the words are written.

Top to bottom, left to right.

- **Assess knowledge of one-to-one correspondence and concept of word:** The first words I read are at the top of this page. It says, "Hi! I'm Jack!" How many words are written? Clap and count with me. Hi (clap) ... I'm (clap) ... Jack (clap). How many times did you clap? That's right! You clapped three times because there are three words written. One ... two ... three. On this page it says, "I have food allergies." Can you touch the word "food?" This is one word, but it is made up of many letters. How many letters do you see in the word "food?" Tap and count them with me. F (tap) ... O (tap) ... O (tap) ... D (tap). How many times did you tap? That's right! You tapped 4 times because there are 4 letters in this word. One ... two ... three ... four.
- **Continue to review these important skills as you move through the remaining pages of the book.**
- **Assess knowledge of reading comprehension:** Let's continue to read in this book again, but this time let's look for all of the fun things that Jack can do even with food allergies! Wow! What a great book! Did you notice what this little boy liked to do? (Pause). That's right, he liked to play soccer and he liked to collect dragons! What other fun things did you see him do in the book? (Pause). Yes, he did go to a birthday party and played at the park too! Did the little boy in this book have to stop having fun or doing the things he liked to do? No! He just needs to be careful about the food he eats. What does the little boy need to do to care for his food allergies? You are right! He needs to follow the food rules we have been talking about. Ask an adult before trying something new, wash hands before and after eating, and never share food. Remember, if you or a friend feels bad or different after eating it's important to tell an adult quickly and get help. Great job remembering what we read about today! I am glad that you now know that having a food allergy doesn't change our friends!

Summary Statement

Today, we explored the parts of a book, read a story about food allergies, counted words and letters, and learned how our friends with food allergies take care of themselves. Thanks for reading and listening with me!