

Tips for children at school with allergies

Before school starts, tour the school to identify potential asthma/allergy triggers in the classrooms. Ask staff about school policies regarding foods brought into the classroom and animals in the school.

Sometimes children are not able to express in words that their allergies are acting up. Monitor bouts of irritability, temper tantrums, or decreased ability to concentrate in school -- symptoms of allergic irritability syndrome are often caused by nose, ear and sinus congestion in allergic children.

Inform staff of the child's allergies. If symptoms flare up at school, it may be the result of exposure to environmental allergens such as animal dander brought in on the clothing of pet-owning classmates or mold growth in the school building. Try to understand when and where symptoms worsen and work with the school to implement control measures.

Food allergic children who have been prescribed epinephrine should provide the school with an identification sheet with the child's name, photo, and specific allergy for distribution to appropriate personnel. Staff should be taught how to administer an epinephrine shot in the event of an emergency.

Parents of food allergic children should work with the school to establish a no food-trading policy.