

STRONGER PROTECTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES

New government statutory guidance, expected in **September 2026**, aims to standardise allergy safety across all education settings. While schools will be required to stock spare adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs), Early Years settings are recognised as critical for early identification and daily management of allergic conditions.

Key Requirements & Proposals

- **Emergency Medication & Training:** Settings must ensure all staff can recognise symptoms and use AAIs correctly through regular training and drills.
- **Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs):** Every child with a diagnosed allergy must have a specific IHP detailing known allergens, reaction signs, and emergency steps.
- **Clear Policies:** Providers should maintain comprehensive medical conditions policies that outline storage, record-keeping, and emergency procedures.



The Role of Early Years Practitioners

- **Early Identification:** Practitioners are often the first to notice patterns like rashes, swelling, or digestive issues after meals. Observing and recording these helps families seek medical advice sooner.
- **Safe Eating Environments:** Safety relies on strict routines, including checking labels every time, preventing cross-contamination with separate utensils, and close supervision during all food-related activities.
- **Family Partnerships:** Strong communication is essential. Gathering detailed dietary information at registration and providing daily handovers ensures records remain accurate and families feel supported.

Immediate Actions for Settings

- **Medication:** Hold child-supplied devices, check expiry dates, and ensure they are reachable in ten seconds or less.
- **Environment:** Review food prep and labelling checks for all activities, including baking and snacks.
- **Preparation:** Conduct emergency role-plays at different times of the day to test staff response and phone access.

Strong systems do more than just prevent emergencies; they reduce anxiety for staff and families, allowing all children to focus on learning and play without fear.

