A letter from an allergy parent

Some parents/carers will feel confident and able to effectively communicate their child’s allergies to others and will be able to express exactly how important it is that the people around their child take allergy seriously. However, some parents will not feel as though they can articulate this as well as they would like to, or may feel overwhelmed by the thought.

Author and mum of two allergic adventures, Emma Amoscato, has shared a letter so that you can positively and powerfully communicate the importance for taking your child’s allergy seriously to whoever you feel need to read it. Feel free to use it as it is, or use it to guide what you would like to say to anyone who you feels needs some extra encouragement to take allergy seriously and understand what you are going through.

Dear (INSERT NAME)

I know it’s hard for you to understand what raising a child with food allergies is like, and I am grateful every time you try.

It’s been the most overwhelming, worrying and tiring experience and changed my perspective on so many things. Things I used to enjoy and milestones I had looked forward to, have been replaced with dread, doubt and guilt.

Watching my child have an allergic reaction, and worrying about how to prevent another one, has filled me with anxiety and fear.

I don’t have all the answers. I wish I did. However, one thing I do know is that I could not do it without a support network who pick me up, look out for my child and learn how to keep them safe and included.

Thank you for being part of that.

The reality is, it takes more than just me to keep my child safe. As much as I would like to wrap them up in cotton wool some days, I can’t. It wouldn’t be good for either of us. I want them to learn that they can face the world with food allergies and focus on the things they can do, rather than the things they can’t.

To do that, it’s important that people like you can help.

There are lots of simple steps you can take to minimise the risks - always double checking ingredients, and washing hands and surfaces to avoid cross contamination make a big difference.

It would also mean a lot if I can sit down with you and go through our care plan and medication, so you understand what allergic reactions look like and how to treat them.

I don’t expect you to know everything, or remember it all, and I’m happy to answer any questions as many times as you want. I would much rather you asked!

Please don’t be offended if I ever repeat myself, ask for more information or turn down home cooked food. I am just trying to keep my child safe, like any parent would do.

As well as keeping my child safe, I also want them to lead a full and fun life, so keeping them included in activities is really important to me too.

The best way to do this is to focus on food free activities but I understand that’s not always possible. I am always happy to work with you to find alternative suggestions or ways we can adapt an activity or ingredients to make something safe.

It means the world to me when you take steps to include and protect my child.

Thank you for making this all a little bit easier for both of us.