

Advocating for your Heart Child: The Impact on Education

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Children'sSM
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Chronic Illness: The Impact on Education

Medical advances have created *an emerging population of children and adolescents* with chronic health conditions.

It's estimated that 80% of children with long-term, severe chronic illness will survive into young adulthood.

The numbers of this diverse group are increasing in the classroom and their educational needs often go unnoticed or misdiagnosed and therefore never addressed.



The Importance of School

- Learning doesn't stop at diagnosis.
- Expectations of school participation communicate a clear and reassuring message that there is a future.
- Research over the past 20 years has consistently pointed to the importance of school related issues for children's quality of life.
- Promotes normalcy.



Getting help

The needs of children with chronic illness pose a challenge to schools.

- They intersect health and education systems.
- Confusing array of terms are used to refer to children with health conditions.
- Educators, physicians, and school nurses often do not discuss the impact of the health conditions on the child's ability to learn.



School Communication

Communicate with school

Get contact information for the counselor and your child's teachers and let them know about any concerns

Keep them informed about doctor's appointments, hospitalizations (planned and unplanned), and any absences so they can send assignments and help your child catch up when they return to school

Keep copies of your child's 504 Plan/IEP, and notes about what was discussed at each school meeting

Talk with your child to prepare them for the transition back to school post-hospitalization or lengthy absence



School Re-Entry

Return to school brings normalcy in the daily life of the child/teen.

Most of the child's social and emotional development is fostered within the school setting (Weitzman, 1984)

School setting provides opportunities to learn, socialize with peers, experience success and develop increased independence (Davis, 1989)



My school wants a plan. What kind of plan?

- Meeting held at school that includes:
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Administration
 - Other school personnel (nurse, nutritionist, etc)
- Discuss medical and academic needs/limitations
- Plan should be a mutual decision



School Plans

Individual Health Plan (IHP)

- Developed individually for each child
- Written and shared with faculty/staff
- Incorporates suggestions for accommodations from physician and school team
- Acts as “paper trail” for middle and high school students to access more extensive plans in the future
- If needs are not met, reconvene and reevaluate how to meet those needs (possibly progress to 504 or IEP)



School Plans

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

- Civil Rights Law
- Students are eligible for assistance if disability (medical diagnosis) substantially limits education
- Parent or teachers can request
- Meetings can include 504 coordinator, regular education teacher(s), psychologist, administrators, school nurse and parents must be invited.
- Sets accommodations in the regular classroom to provide equal access to education
- Must meet at least annually to evaluate effectiveness



School Plans

Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA)

- Medically fragile children qualify through Other Health Impaired (OHI) when their illness impacts education.
- Sets specific goals for the student
- Explains how goals will be met and evaluated
- Set accommodations and modifications as needed for the student to be successful. Can include time in regular or special education setting.
- Meetings can include special education teacher, regular education teacher, psychologist, administrators, school nurse and parents.
- Team meets at least annually to review the plan



Things to consider

- Absences due to hospital or clinic visits
- Fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting due to treatment
- Irritability and mood swings due to medication(s)
- Pain and anxiety and fear(emotional impact)



Accommodate or Modify?

- **Accommodations** are provisions in how a student accesses and demonstrates learning.
 - do not substantially change instructional level or content
 - should be based on the individual's strengths and needs
 - Typically applied to a 504
- **Modifications** are changes in what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate.
 - involve change in content (may be limited to some of the general ed. objectives)
 - involve changes in instructional level (may be significantly below grade level)
 - Typically applied to an IEP



Hospital-Homebound Instruction

A student is eligible if he or she is:

- Enrolled in a public school system.
- Has anticipated absences of 10 or more days, OR
- Has a chronic health condition which will cause absences for intermittent periods of time during the school year.

Each school system has a specific (and unique) process

-Contact the school counselor/your hospital teacher to pursue a referral



IEP's

- If your child's goals are aligned to the Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) they will be ineligible to receive a college prep diploma
- Student's are issued a certificate of attendance
- This is not applicable to all IEP's



Hospital Tips and Hospital School Program

If your child is hospitalized, contact your child's school to let them know that your child will be absent.

If it is a planned hospitalization, let your child's teachers know so they can provide make-up work in advance.

When you arrive at the hospital, call the school program to schedule your child for time in the classroom.

Please call if you have any school-related questions.

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Q & A

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