

Managing chronic health issues at school: for educators



Chronic health issues like asthma, diabetes or allergies, and developmental disabilities such as ADHD or autism, are leading contributors to missed school days. It's important that schools and districts partner with families and health-care providers to help children with chronic health conditions stay healthy and in school.



FOR DISTRICTS

- Ensure **district protocols support a healthy environment** for all students. Download [Keep Students Healthy and in School!](#) for examples of interventions.
- **Establish a health team** (social workers, school nurses, administrators).
- **Provide professional learning opportunities** to district and school staff about how best to support students with chronic health issues.
- **Raise awareness** among all students, families and staff about existing health-related supports and resources.
- Ensure **adequate numbers of school health staff** across buildings.
- **Develop partnerships** with health-care providers to improve access to care including telemedicine, in-district clinic and dental care.
- **Share attendance data** with school health staff and with local health-care providers.
- Explore opportunities to **provide school health staff with read only access** to outside student health records, allowing for improved coordination of care.



FOR SCHOOLS

- Support families in **completing health-related forms**, including forms allowing students to receive medications.
- Offer **guidance on when a child should or shouldn't stay home** for health-related reasons.
- For prolonged absences, **co-create a Return to Learn plan** with families for during and after the absence with options for gradual return and completing work remotely.
- **Review with relevant staff all health-related information** for individual students.

- Share with families **resource maps of health-care providers** in your area.
- **Develop referral pathways** for supporting students demonstrating a health concern.
- Remind families to visit their health-care providers for **annual physical exams**, recommended immunizations and addressing chronic health issues.
- Advocate for a district **school physician and school nurses**.
- If families don't have **health and dental insurance**, connect them with available resources.
- Provide appropriate **forms to allow for health information sharing** between the school and health-care providers.
- Work closely with parents/caregivers, school health teams and health-care providers to ensure that **all children with a chronic health issue have an up-to-date health plan**, and for those who need it, a 504 Plan or individualized education program (IEP).

Resources

- The Attendance Works [School-Based Health Program Self-Assessment](#) can be adapted for districts.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has developed [trainings for school health](#) staff and related health professionals.
- Johns Hopkins University, Kaiser Permanente and Attendance Works developed a new [public health framework](#) for addressing chronic absence.
- The [CARE Playbook](#) from Johns Hopkins can help health-care systems and school districts to work together.
- Nemours Children's Health, [Sharing Student Health Records with School Nurses](#).
- National Association of School Nurses, [Chronic Health Condition Management resources](#)



For more information visit [attendance works.org/resources](https://attendanceworks.org/resources)