

Additional Resources

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, School Health Unit

Provides support and information about school health regulations.

Director of School Health Services
617-624-6060
or on the web at:

www.mass.gov/dph/fch/schoolhealth/shsresp.htm

Massachusetts Technology Assistance Resource Team (MASSTART)

A free, consultative service that helps families and schools plan for the healthcare and safety of students with complex special health care needs.

Masstart Coordinator
508-792-7880
or on the web at:

www.mass.gov/dph/fch/masstart.htm



Massachusetts Family Voices is a state chapter of Family Voices, a national grassroots network of families, friends and professional partners brought together by a common concern for children and youth with special health care needs.



The Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Care Information and Education Center is a project of Mass Family Voices @ Federation for Children with Special Needs. The Family-to-Family Center's activities include providing training opportunities and technical assistance to families of children and youth with special health care needs to help them advocate for quality health care for their children. This includes health care services and supports that their children need during the school day so they can access the general curriculum and participate in school activities as much like other students as possible.

Mass Family Voices can assist you in finding other helpful materials and resources for families of children and youth with special health care needs. Please contact us for more information:

MASSACHUSETTS
FAMILY VOICES

@ Federation for Children with Special Needs

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Federation for Children with Special Needs**

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THE INDIVIDUALIZED HEALTH CARE PLAN

*Keeping Children & Youth With
Special Health Care Needs Safe At
School*



A brochure for families of children and youth with special health care needs developed by the Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Care Information and Education Center.

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Students with Special Health Care Needs & School

Parents send their children to school with more than lunches, notebooks and pencils. Backpacks are also full of parents' hopes and worries. Will my child like the teachers? Will he have friends? Will she be able to follow the rules?

When a child has special health care needs, parents have even more concerns. Will my child get his medication on time? Will the nurse know the difference between 'normal sick' and my child's special health needs? Will anyone know what to do if my child has a medical emergency?



An Individualized Health Care Plan, or IHCP, can help ensure your child's medical needs will be met during his or her school day. The IHCP contains information about your child's health. It also lists the person(s) who will be responsible for monitoring any issues related to your child's special health needs at school, during extracurricular school activities, on field trips or while being transported to and from school.

Note: IHCP forms are not standardized and may vary from school district to school district.

Developing the IHCP

The most important part of developing an IHCP is good communication between parents and the school. Advance planning is important. Call the school nurse before school starts to set up a time to discuss your child's special health needs. This gives the nurse time to prepare paperwork and think about questions to ask or information to research. If your child's condition is newly diagnosed, or changes, set up an appointment as soon as possible.

The school nurse and your family will work together to develop a health plan for your child. Even if your child has an IEP (Individualized Education Program) or 504 Accommodation Plan, he or she will still need an Individualized Health Care Plan. It is also a good idea to have this same information at home. It will help first responders make important decisions about how to best care for your child during a medical emergency.

The nurse will also meet with your child's teachers to let them know about your child. Parents are welcome at, and encouraged to attend, these meetings. Your child may also want to attend. It can be reassuring for teachers to meet your child in person instead of just hearing about a medical diagnosis. If your child cannot attend the meeting, bring a photograph or tell a story that illustrates your child's personality and strengths.

Suggestions for Success

- Know the school's policies.
- Start transitions early – the more time everyone has to prepare, the better.
- Be an expert about your child's condition and be willing to share information and resources.
- Be available to answer questions. You are familiar with your child's issues, but it may be scary for the teachers. It is important to acknowledge their fears and address their concerns.
- Have a positive attitude. This makes it easier for school personnel to approach you and work out any problems.
- Be prepared to provide contact information for your child's primary health provider and any specialists.
- Supply as much documentation as possible. This may include consumer health information packets, written prescriptions or other doctor's orders.
- Include your child's transportation needs on the plan, including ambulance transport, if your child needs to go to an emergency room for treatment.
- Figure out the best way to communicate with the school: written notes, phone calls, e-mail, etc.