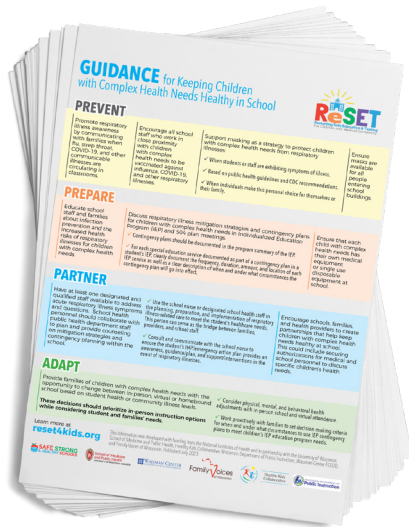


FAMILY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

How to Keep My Child with Complex Medical Needs Healthy in School?



The **Guidance for Keeping Children with Complex Health Care Needs Healthy in School** document can be found at reset4kids.org.

This document contains common questions and answers related to **Guidance for Keeping Children with Complex Health Care Needs Healthy in School** found at reset4kids.org.

Families of children with complex health care needs require support to make the best in-person attendance decision.

This decision should involve the family, the child’s health care providers, and school staff when the risks of respiratory illnesses, including influenza and COVID-19.

QUESTION From Families

? There is so much information out there, and I am having trouble understanding it. How can I know if I am making the best school attendance decision for my child?

Start by discussing the risks and benefits of in-person school attendance for your child. Talk with your child (as appropriate), your child’s health care team, and special education staff to determine the best option. The resources on our ReSET4kids website have everything you need to make an informed decision, as a team, to keep your child healthy at school.

Remember, what might be the right decision this month, may not be right next month. It is essential to stay in regular contact with your child’s special education teacher and/or school nurse to ensure you agree with your child’s attendance at school and the implementation of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 plan.



PREVENT

Who can I speak with at my child's school about the communication system in place for families regarding illnesses?

Contact your school's nurse or health services staff to learn more about the practices in place. Some school districts track absences related to illnesses, send e-mail communications to inform families when an elevated number of respiratory diseases is circulating in classrooms, or post notifications with data to their school district's website. Visit reset4kids.org/resources to see examples of documents used by some Wisconsin school districts.

How do I know if the school staff working with my child are vaccinated?

Your school district may not require staff to be vaccinated, and this might vary from building to building. You can ask the individual staff working with your child if they are vaccinated and encourage them to get vaccinated if they are not. However, staff do not have to share their vaccination status with families. Some staff cannot be vaccinated due to medical conditions or may have compromised immune systems.

What if the staff who work with my child choose not to wear a mask?

Talk about your concerns with your child's special education teacher or the school principal. School districts have the authority to set masking and other infection control policies and practices. While you can request that staff working with your child wear a mask, the school cannot require staff to wear one. If your child can tolerate a mask or face shield, it will provide some protection for them.

Who makes masks available to students, staff, and visitors in my child's school?

Many schools provide masks by simply placing boxes of masks (adult and youth sizes) on the counters of the main office, the nurse's office, or other school entrances.



PREPARE

Where can I find information on the impact of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses on my child with complex health needs?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has information on its [Caring for Children and Adolescents with Special Health Care Needs website](#). Health conditions of children with CHCN vary significantly from child to child, so your child's health care providers will be the best resource for identifying the potential impact of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses on your child.

The [ReSET website](#) has a sample letter for your child's health care provider to communicate with the school about your child's unique health care needs.

Who can help me make a plan for my child?

You can work with your child's special education teacher, school nurse, or case manager to develop a respiratory illness mitigation plan. This plan will need to be updated when the situation changes.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) also has guidance on holding IEP meetings on its [Virtual IEP Meeting website](#). Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support ([WI-FACETS](#)) also supports families and educators with the IEP process.

My child's IEP was updated, but we didn't include anything on respiratory illness safety. What should I do?

If the IEP or 504 plan team finds accommodations are needed to meet your child's disability-related needs, they must be written into the IEP. Remember, you can request an IEP or 504 plan meeting anytime. You can also dispute the decisions made if you disagree with the school or IEP/504 plan team. More information can be found on the [Wisconsin DPI Dispute Resolution Option website](#).

My child's CHCN causes them to have COVID-like symptoms, which makes it confusing for school staff to know if my child has COVID-19. What can be done to keep staff from regularly sending my child home?

Work with your child's health care provider to give the school information about your child's health condition that outlines what is typical for your child and which symptoms may cause concern. We have a sample letter for your child's health care provider to communicate with the school about your child's unique health care needs on our [ReSET4kids website](#).

How can I supply the equipment and supplies that my child needs at school?

Discuss your concerns with your child's special education teacher or case manager. Together, you can decide on the appropriate number of supplies for school, where to store them, and how to communicate when supplies run low.



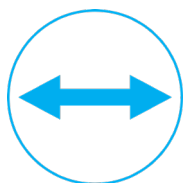
PARTNER

How can I make sure my child's school follows our doctor's recommendations?

There is no guarantee that the school will follow these recommendations. Health care providers can suggest conditions to help keep children healthy and when they might choose to stay home from school. We have a sample letter for your child's health care provider to communicate with the school about your child's unique health care needs on our [ReSET4kids website](#).

My child's school only has a nurse in the building once a week. Who deals with these issues when the nurse is not there?

Ask the school principal who provides medical services when the nurse is not in the building. The [Wisconsin DPI website](#) offers guidance on infectious diseases, including COVID-19 for school health services.



ADAPT

How can I ensure my child's IEP is followed when moving between in-person and online environments?

The Wisconsin DPI offers training and information for families and teachers on its [Moving From In-Person to Virtual and Hybrid Learning Environments webpage](#).

In brief, schools must provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

A child with a disability who requires in-person, specially designed instruction and related services in the home to progress toward their IEP goals and the general education curriculum must receive in-person homebound services as part of a "Free and Appropriate Public Education."

A district may not make a policy that prevents a student requiring in-person services from receiving this education. For example, all homebound students receive only virtual instruction (or packets).

More information about homebound school instruction can be found [here](#) and [here](#).



RESOURCES

Additional resources can be found on our websites:

ReSET for Kids - Resource Library reset4kids.org/resources

Our library includes resources in English and Spanish, including a provider letter, research briefs, ReSET Reader monthly newsletters, and respiratory illness communication tools for schools, such as:

- ✓ Parent Respiratory Illness Notification Letter
- ✓ Recommendation to Send Notification to Families
- ✓ School Absence Tracking Sheet 2023-24

Family Voices of Wisconsin - Resource Library familyvoiceswi.org/resource-library

This resource library has written and video fact sheets, newsletters, and resources. Topics include Medicaid and Children's Long-Term Support Services and the Transition to Adulthood.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control (CDC) - Know the Symptoms
cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

Finding COVID-19 Tests
hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites/index.html

Disability Rights Wisconsin - Protection & Advocacy Services
disabilityrightswi.org/program/protection-and-advocacy/

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) - COVID-19 Vaccination Information
dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine.htm

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) - Getting Tested for COVID-19
dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/testing.htm

Wisconsin Department of Instruction (DPI) - Video Series: Working with Children with Medical Fragility and COVID-19
youtube.com/playlist?list=PLambIxavELhZDBRcSZq-6gYNUlLzeLqBH

A series of five videos (10 -15 minutes each) that guide school staff when working with children with medical fragility during COVID-19. **While these videos were developed specifically for the COVID-19 outbreak, the information is valuable and can be relevant to other illnesses.**

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI-FACETS)
wifacets.org/about-us/services/

If there is a conflict between school staff and your child's needs, contact the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI-FACETS) for support with the IEP process.

Disability Rights Wisconsin
disabilityrightswi.org/program/protection-and-advocacy

If a conflict escalates, Disability Rights Wisconsin has protection and advocacy services you can learn more about on their website [here](#).

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Healthy Kids
Collaborative

