

GUIDANCE for Keeping Children with Complex Health Needs Healthy in School



PREVENT

- ✓ Promote respiratory illness awareness by communicating with families when illnesses are circulating in classrooms.
- ✓ Encourage all school staff who work in close proximity with children with complex health needs to be vaccinated.
- ✓ Support masking as a strategy to protect from respiratory illnesses:
 - When students or staff are exhibiting symptoms of illness.
 - Based on public health guidelines and CDC recommendations.
 - When individuals make this personal choice for themselves or their family.
 - Ensure masks are available for all people entering school buildings.

PREPARE

- ✓ Educate school staff and families about infection prevention and the increased health risks of respiratory illnesses.
- ✓ Ensure that each child has their own medical equipment or single use disposable equipment at school.
- ✓ Discuss respiratory illness mitigation strategies and contingency plans for children with complex health needs in Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 plan meetings.
 - Plans should be documented in the program summary of the IEP.
 - Document the frequency, duration, amount, and location of each IEP service.
 - Provide a clear description of when and under what circumstances the contingency plan will go into effect.

PARTNER

- ✓ Encourage schools, families, and health providers to create partnerships. This could include securing authorizations for medical and school personnel to discuss specific children's health needs.
- ✓ School health personnel should collaborate with public health department staff to plan and provide counseling on mitigation strategies and contingency planning within the school. Have at least one designated and qualified staff available to address acute respiratory illness symptoms and questions.
- Use the school nurse or designated school health staff in the planning, preparation, and implementation of respiratory illness-related care to meet the student's healthcare needs and serve as a bridge between families, providers and school staff.
- Consult and communicate with the school nurse to ensure the student's IEP or emergency action plan provides an awareness, guidance, and interventions in the event of respiratory illnesses.

ADAPT

- ✓ Provide families with the opportunity to change between in-person, virtual or homebound school based on student health or community illness levels. **These decisions should prioritize in-person instruction options while considering student and families' needs.**
- Consider physical, mental, and behavioral health adjustments with in-person school and virtual attendance.
- Work proactively with families to set decision-making criteria for when and under what circumstances to use IEP contingency plans.

Learn more at reset4kids.org

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