

## School Nurse Services

School nurse services are an important support for many students with special medical or health needs. The need for school nurse services is sometimes documented in Individual Health Plans (IHP) for students with and without disabilities, and may also be noted on Section 504 Accommodation Plans for students who have disabilities, but do not have a need for specially-designed instruction. However, IDEA also provides several opportunities for the involvement of school nurses in the education of students who are or may be students who qualify for special education services.

School nurses should be invited to participate in meetings to determine special education eligibility for students who have significant medical/health needs. They can help the team understand written medical reports and the possible educational impacts of the student's health condition.

The school nurse may also conduct his/her own assessment of the student's needs and the results would be included in the Summary of Evaluation Results. As appropriate, the school nurse can help the team consider and/or describe medical needs and concerns as they develop various sections of the IEP: Student profile; consideration of transitions; consideration of special factors; the student's present level of academic and functional performance; annual goals; benchmarks/short-term objectives and in other areas.

**School Nurse Services can be identified on the IEP either as a related service or as a supplementary aid/service** – If school nursing services are required for the student to benefit from the specially-designed instruction, designation as a **Related Service** is appropriate. In that role, the school nurse would help the IEP Team write academic or functional goals for the student that require school nurse services, such as developing self-care or health management skills. The school nurse may be responsible for addressing health-related goals themselves, or integrating school nursing services to address other student goals. The school nurse would monitor and report on the student's progress on the relevant IEP goals as specified on the student's IEP.

As a **Supplementary Aid/Service**, the school nurse can be called upon to provide training to school staff to ensure that the student can safely access all components of their educational program, including non-academic activities such as lunch, recess and field trips. They can help plan for potential health issues such as seizures, asthma attacks, allergic reactions, etc. so that school staff know who will do what, when and where, identifying both response and prevention activities when possible.

It is extremely important for significant medical and health needs be clearly and thoroughly documented on an IHP, IEP or 504 Plan and also communicated to those who will be working closely with the student. Updated information from the student's medical provider(s) is periodically needed to keep the records and plans current and appropriate. Parents, teachers, administrators and school nurses should work as a team to ensure that children with special medical or health needs can remain safe and ready to learn!

*From North Carolina Exceptional Children's Assistance Center Winter 2010-11 Newsletter*



The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, H328M120025 (PEN), H328M120026 (TEAM), & H328M120027 (PATH). However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Greg Knollman.



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