

Back-to-School Checklist for Parents on Student Health and Wellness

As our Nation's children go back to school, parents are no doubt wondering how to best prepare their child for a safe and prosperous school year. This is a particular concern for the child returning to school with a health care need. Your school nurse is a key resource in the back-to-school process. School nurses are often the only link to health care many students have. The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) has developed a checklist of topics for parents to consider ensuring children stay healthy, in school and ready to learn.

For Students with Health Concerns:

- ✓ Inquire if there is a full-time registered school nurse in the building all day, every day.
- ✓ Advise your school of your child's health concern.
- ✓ Bring current, signed health care provider orders for health care needed at school.
- ✓ Give permission for the school nurse to speak to the health care provider.
- ✓ Provide parent contact information, and update the school with changes.
- ✓ Ask if non-nurses will be providing care (for example, who administer medication) and how they will be supervised.
- ✓ Ask about the school's disaster/emergency plan (for examples what health care supplies are needed for their child).

For All Students:

- ✓ Review cough and sneeze etiquette.
- ✓ Make sure immunizations are up to date.
- ✓ Agree upon a bedtime and wake up time to ensure adequate sleep.
- ✓ Establish a routine for homework and afterschool activities.
- ✓ Establish screen time limits.
- ✓ Wear clothing appropriate for school (for example, are flip flops appropriate for the playground).

For Parents:

- ✓ Become involved! Sign up for the parent organization (PTA/PTO) or school Wellness Committee. Put back-to-school night and other parent/teacher meetings on the calendar. Parent involvement in school is an important predictor of student success.
- ✓ Become familiar with the provisions of the school or district's wellness policy (for example, nutrition and activity guidelines).
- ✓ Ask about the school's disaster/emergency plan (for example, what are parents to do in the event of a lock down).

"Parents should talk to their school nurse and be involved in their child's health care at school," says NASN President, Linda Davis-Alldritt. "Every child deserves a school nurse every day, all day. And every parent deserves to feel their child's safety and wellbeing are a school's top priority," stated Davis-Alldritt.