

# NC Family to Family Health Information Center

*"A beacon for families of children with special health care needs."*

NC Family to Family Health Information Center  
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Fact Sheet

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## Individual Health Plans (IHP)

If your child has a special health care need, it may be appropriate to have an Individualized Health Plan (IHP) on record at their school. An IHP outlines what type of action is needed for certain medical conditions. In some cases, such as diabetes, it is required by law to have an IHP on file. The school nurse will typically be the person who will help the family write this plan.

The IHP describes what types of medical or health-related challenges a child may face and what school personnel should do to ensure the child is safe and healthy. It also outlines what action should be taken in a medical emergency or crisis for that child.

Some situations for creating an IHP:

- Food Allergies
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Hypertension
- Medical fragility
- Medication needs
- Physical health needs
- Any other condition that interferes with a student's daily function or ability to receive a quality education.

### What is an Individual Health Plan (IHP)?

An IHP is a formal written agreement developed by the school staff in partnership with the student's family, the student, and the student's health care provider. An Individual Health Plan can help ensure your child's medical needs will be met during the school day. It contains information about your child's health. It also lists the person who will be responsible for monitoring any issues related to your child's special health needs at school, on field trips or while being transported to and from school.

## How is an IHP Developed?

The most important part of developing an IHP is good communication between you and your child's school. Call the school nurse to make an appointment to discuss your child's special health needs. Try to do this before school starts as this will give the nurse a chance to prepare paperwork and think about questions to ask or information to research. If your child's condition is newly diagnosed, set up the appointment as soon as possible.

The school nurse and your family will work together to develop a plan. The nurse will also meet with your child's teachers to let them know about your child. Parents are welcome at these meetings. Depending on your child's age and condition, your child may want to attend as well. It can help things work more smoothly if the teacher is able to meet your child in person instead of just hearing about a medical diagnosis. If your child is unable to attend, bring a photograph or tell them a story that illustrates your child's personality and strengths.

## How to Plan a Successful IHP:

- Be an expert on your child's condition.
- Be prepared to provide contact information for your child's primary health provider and any specialists.
- Sign waivers in advance so that the school nurse can contact your child's physician directly.
- Bring as much documentation to the meeting as possible. This may include written prescriptions or other doctor's orders.
- Provide a duplicate set of information that can go with your child to the hospital in case of an emergency. This will help the emergency room staff learn about your child, especially if the closest hospital to your child's school is not where your child usually receives care.
- Include your child's transportation in the plan.
- Decide on the best way to communicate with the school: written notes, phone calls, emails, etc.