

School Nurses advocate for all children to promote optimal health

The general impression of the school nurse is a nice lady that waits for a child to have a tummy ache or skinned knee at school. She is always there, waiting to take care of everything.

That was seldom the case in the past; it certainly isn't the present reality. Today's students come to school from diverse family, cultural and economic circumstances—all of which impact their educational experience. Today's children are less physically fit, experience more mental and physical health concerns, and take more medication for more conditions than ever before. Medication side-effects and harmful interactions are increasingly common. The number of children with chronic conditions—allergies, asthma, diabetes and seizure disorders—requiring ongoing care during the school day has increased. Progress in the care of sudden illness and injury has increased our expectations of acceptable, adequate response in emergency situations.

Federal laws have opened school doors to all children regardless of their handicapping conditions. Children with health concerns that were fatal early in life, less than a generation ago, are now growing up and attending school. These children often have specialized health needs during school hours, requiring highly skilled care, such as tube feedings, catheterization, respirator care, inhalation therapy, and injectable medication administration. School nursing services are becoming increasingly complex.

Ohio legislation known as the Nurse Practice Act (Chapter 4723 Ohio Revised Code adopted 12-1-95) defines the practice of professional nursing and the delegation of nursing care. These laws clarify the role of School Nurses who facilitate the early detection and correction of health problems which can affect learning.



School Nurses support student learning

The School Nurse is a liaison between education and health care, linking school, home and community.

Schools

- students
- teachers
- food service
- health educators
- physical education specialists
- building and grounds personnel
- special education providers
- support personnel
- school administrators
- attendance teams

Home

- parents
- other children in the home
- extended family members
- neighborhood groups
- before and after school care providers

Community

- health care providers
- physicians
- nurse practitioners
- ophthalmologists, optometrists
- dentists, oral care specialists
- hearing clinicians
- health departments
- public safety groups
- faith community
- social service agencies
- law enforcement
- law and policy makers
- child protection agencies
- job and family service departments
- mental health agencies



School Nurses provide health expertise to the school community

School Nurses have the professional training and skills to be the bridge between education and health, school and community, classroom and home. Their educational background and licensure preparation uniquely qualifies them to identify and provide for the myriad of health issues present in schools today.

A School Nurse hired by your local school district must:

- Be licensed in good standing with the State of Ohio Board of Nursing to practice as a registered nurse
- Possess a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or university
- Meet licensure standards as defined by the Ohio Department of Education

School boards may contract with their local health department for nursing services. Public Health Nurses are experienced in community health. The registered nurse in your school has the added focus on the school-age child's growth and development, health conditions common in children, screening programs and immunizations.

School Nurses are the only professionals in schools that are skilled and licensed to address students' total health. Educational outcomes for students are impacted by their physical, social and emotional health. By identifying, evaluating, and addressing health issues, School Nurses influence children in their ability to learn. School Nurses truly support student success. Find out how you can support the crucial role school nursing serves in your schools.



Did you know your School Nurse...

- conducts health assessments, develops and implements Individual Health Plans (IHP)
- maintains, evaluates and interprets health information to accommodate the needs of students
- participates as the health specialist on the team that evaluates and develops Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- formulates, recommends, implements and supervises school health policy and protocols, including medications and treatments at school
- plans and provides for emergency intervention for illness, injury and other urgent situations
- helps control communicable diseases by assuring immunization law compliance, providing surveillance and reporting contagious diseases

- works with other school personnel to assure a school environment that is safe and conducive to learning
- provides health education on a wide range of subjects to all ages, including parents and staff
- provides health counseling and wellness programs for school staff
- is the liaison between the home, school and community, doing whatever it takes to help assure that students are in school, ready and able to achieve at their highest level

(adapted from the National Association of School Nurses Position Statement: Professional School Nurse Roles and Responsibilities, 1996)

School Nurses are committed to caring for Ohio's children

For more information contact:



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Ohio's School Nurses

Supporting Student Success



School Nursing Services in Ohio's Schools

