

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF A STUDENT HEALTH ASSESSMENT FOR A STUDENT BEING CONSIDERED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

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The only health services that are specifically mandated to be included in assessments for students being considered for special education services are hearing and vision screening. However, *Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Act* (ECEA Rules) requires that the evaluation process includes an assessment by a person with expertise in the child's suspected area of disability, that the assessment process includes a review of all pertinent information, and that the assessment be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs. This means that school nurses should be involved in the assessment process and should either conduct an assessment or refer for medical evaluation that will be thorough enough to insure that the child's health and physical needs will be met. It is up to the team and the qualified personnel to determine what assessments should be done for a particular child.

What should and should not be included in the IEP?

Again, there are no mandates in Colorado that specify that certain health-related information must or must not be included in a child's IEP. The school nurse must use her professional judgment to determine whether health related information is relevant to the child's educational program and whether individuals who have access to the IEP have a legitimate need to know the information. Since the IEP is one of very few documents required to be forwarded when a child moves to a new school setting, care should be taken to include adequate information in the document to assure continuity of care in the new setting. School nurses often develop

health care plans that are complex and contain information that is not necessary or relevant for teaching and other staff. In those cases, a summary of pertinent health-related information that is inclusive enough to assure that all needs are addressed should be included in the IEP.

Where should information that is gathered but not included in the IEP be documented? How should it be stored? (Does it become the personal record of the nurse?)

Each student should have a file that is the Cumulative Health Record (CHR). This file **must** contain immunization information and **should** contain the student record card with health history, summary of relevant health office interactions including significant accidents and illnesses, and summary of medications given; individualized health care plan; results, recommendations, and follow-up related to all screening; and other information that is deemed relevant by the school nurse. These records are considered a part of the academic record and are therefore school district property.

There are times when a school nurse may determine that information does not have relevance to the child's academic achievement, is sensitive, and should be kept confidential. In those situations a nurse may establish a personal/confidential file which is used only by the nurse. Whenever that record is shared with any person other than a substitute school nurse, the information is no longer considered personal and confidential and becomes a part of the student's academic record. Information in personal/confidential files should be destroyed when it is no longer relevant or when the student leaves school. Decisions may need to be made about whether information contained in those records should be forwarded to a new school setting.