

# Resources

## Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Information Center

1-800-331-0688, ext. 301

[massfv@fcsn.org](mailto:massfv@fcsn.org)

[www.massfamilyvoices.org](http://www.massfamilyvoices.org)

Provides free, confidential, individualized assistance to families raising children and youth with special health care needs and promotes parent/professional partnerships with health professionals, school personnel, and others.

## Massachusetts Department of Public Health, School Health Unit

617-624-6060

[www.mass.gov/dph/fch/schoolhealth](http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/schoolhealth)

Provides support and information about laws and regulations pertaining to school health.

## MASSTART

978-851-7261, ext. 4022

<http://1.usa.gov/Masstart>

The Massachusetts Technology Assistance Resource Team is a free consultative service that helps families and schools plan for the healthcare and safety of students with special health care needs.

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## Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Information Center

A project of Mass Family Voices at the Federation for Children with Special Needs



## The Individualized Health Care Plan

*Keeping Children with Special Health Care Needs Safe at School*

MASSACHUSETTS  
FAMILY VOICES<sup>®</sup>

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## Children with Special Health Care Needs & School

Parents send their children to school with more than lunches, notebooks and pencils. Backpacks are also full of parents' hopes and worries. Will my child like the teacher? Will he have friends? Will she be able to follow the rules?



When a child has special health care needs, parents have even more concerns. Will my child get his medication on time? Will the nurse know the difference between 'normal sick' and my child's special health needs? Will anyone know what to do if my child has a medical emergency?

An Individualized Health Care Plan, or IHCP, can help ensure your child's medical needs will be met during the school day. The IHCP 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, while transported to and from school, and during other school related activities, such as afterschool sports or clubs.

## Developing the Individualized Health Care Plan

The most important part of developing an IHCP is good communication between the family and the school. Call the school nurse and make an appointment to discuss your child's special health needs. Try to do this before school starts. This gives 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 an appointment as soon as possible.

The school nurse and your family will work together to develop the Individualized Health Care 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 the child's age and condition, he or she may also want to attend. It can be reassuring for teachers to meet your child in person instead of just hearing about a medical diagnosis. If your child cannot attend the meeting, bring a photograph or tell a story that illustrates your child's personality and strengths.



## Suggestions for a Successful IHCP Meeting

- ♥ Be an expert about your child's health care needs/condition.
- ♥ Be prepared to provide contact information for your child's primary health provider and any specialists.
- ♥ If you want the school to contact your child's doctor's directly, sign waivers before the meeting.
- ♥ Bring as much documentation to the meeting as possible. This may include consumer health information packets, written prescriptions or 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 emergency room staff learn about your child, especially if the closest hospital is not where your child usually receives care.
- ♥ Include your child's transportation needs on the plan.
- ♥ Figure out the best way to communicate with the school: written notes, phone calls, e-mail, etc.