

IS Your School Prepared to Handle Emergency Care?

James F. McKenzie

A self-evaluation instrument for school emergency care programs has been developed so that school districts can evaluate the status of their programs and make necessary changes where possible.

Seldom does a school day go by in most school buildings in the United States without at least one student reporting to either the principal's office or the nurse's office for treatment of a sudden illness or injury. The National Safety Council statistics indicate that 57% of the accidents involving children of school age which require the attention of a doctor or cause absence from school of one-half day or more occur on the school grounds, in the building or going to and from school.¹ With the knowledge that there is a good chance of an injury, accident or illness occurring at school, one must ask how well prepared are school personnel to handle these emergency (sometimes life-threatening) situations? The answer is frightening! Evidence²⁻⁴ indicates that few schools are adequately prepared for emergency care situations.

In order to determine the status of your school's emergency care program, the self-evaluation instrument on the following pages has been prepared after a thorough review of the literature⁵⁻²¹ in the areas of school health services and school emergency care.

Since this self-evaluation instrument has not been standardized, there is no set passing score. One could even say that though there are written policies outlining an emergency care program, they may not be implemented in an effective manner; but if school personnel have taken the time to prepare written emergency care policies, they have at least recognized the importance of an emergency care program and the need for advanced preparation.

How well prepared is your school district? ■

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A Self-Evaluation Instrument for a School Emergency Care Program

1. The school district has clearly defined written emergency care policies.
 - The policies have been approved by a school physician, local health department, local medical society.
 - The written policies are distributed to school employees and students.
 - The written policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
2. There is a written policy defining the duties of school employees in the emergency care program.
 - Someone is the designated coordinator of the emergency care program.
 - The school nurse is expected to provide emergency care.
 - The school physician is expected to provide emergency care.
 - There is at least one individual in each school building with current first aid certification.
 - All teachers working in high risk areas (labs, shops, gym, etc.) are to have current first aid training.
 - All school employees at the emergency site are expected to give immediate care and seek additional help if needed.
 - It is designated that an adult employee remain with the ill or injured child until the parent/guardian assumes responsibility.
 - The school district provides periodic in-service training for employees to maintain/improve first aid skills and knowledge.
3. There is a written policy regarding the responsibility for financial charges incurred during the emergency care process (ie, transportation fees, hospital charges, etc.).
 - The district makes health-accident insurance available to students.
 - District employees are urged to carry personal liability insurance.
 - The district retains liability insurance for injuries or accidents occurring on school grounds.
4. There is a written policy regarding the use of the emergency care room/health clinic.
 - Emergency care supplies and equipment are selected after a study of needs and recommendations of the school health service personnel.
 - The emergency care supplies and equipment are checked regularly and replenished when needed.
 - First aid kits are available in the health clinic, main office, high risk areas and transportation vehicles.
 - First aid kits are available for use by extra-curricular activity groups (included are coins for phone calls).

Yes	No	Comment

