

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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