

## HELP CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER A TBI



Because children's daily lives are centered on school, returning to class after a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a critical transition.

Learning, behavioral, and social problems can emerge over time as school demands increase. Schools play an important role in managing a child's TBI. The more educators know about TBI, the better they will be able to support students with a TBI at school.

### WHAT IS A TBI?

A Traumatic Brain Injury disrupts the normal functioning of the brain. A bump, a blow, or a jolt to the head can cause a TBI. With the brain still developing, a child is especially at risk for long-term effects from a TBI. These injuries range from mild to severe. Mild TBI, referred to as mTBI or concussion, is most common.

CDC's Report to Congress outlines current gaps in TBI care, and provides clear opportunities for action to improve the management and outcomes of TBI in children.

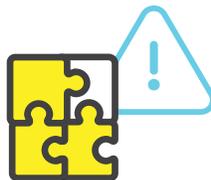


### TBI can Cause Classroom Challenges

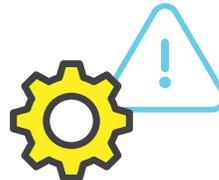
Children with a TBI may experience problems that affect school work, including:



**Difficulty learning  
new information**



**Knowledge gaps**



**Cognitive deficits**



**Emotional or  
behavioral problems**



## COORDINATION IS KEY

While each child’s recovery from a TBI is unique, outcomes are improved when healthcare providers, parents, and school professionals work together throughout the transition from the medical setting to school and home. Healthcare professionals can help by clearly describing the child’s symptoms and health needs in writing, and suggesting follow-up appointments for continued monitoring.

Schools should have a clear protocol for school re-entry, including academic, behavioral, and cognitive accommodations. Success is more likely when schools continue to monitor and support a child’s progress over time.

### COMMUNICATE

 Inform parents about available medical and school services, and continue to monitor and communicate about the child’s recovery and progress.

### COORDINATE

 Form a school-based team, including parents, school representatives, and healthcare representatives to guide the return to school.

### EDUCATE

 Provide education on TBI management and accommodations for teachers, school nurses, school psychologists, and counselors.

### MONITOR

 School personnel can note TBI history in school records, and monitor children during critical transition periods, like moving from elementary to middle and high school.



## Returning to School

**Students who have persistent symptoms or more significant learning or behavioral challenges may be eligible for:**

### 504 PLANS:

A 504 plan may include modified classes, physical accommodations like automatic door openers, or assistive technology, such as a keyboard for taking notes.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES:

Schools can provide students with speech language therapy, physical therapy, special classes, and individualized educational plans.

### SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES:

A school-based health plan can be completed when the student first returns to school. It is written and coordinated by the school nurse to describe health-related issues that impact learning.

Some schools may provide customized case management, mental health services, referrals, and medication through school nursing services.

Check with your school district to learn more about existing resources in your local area to help children with a TBI.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### LEARN MORE

TBI: [www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury](http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury)  
HEADS UP: [www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP)