Supporting Families Raising CYSHCN with Returning to In-Person School

August 13, 2021

Key Discussion Questions

1. Has your Title V CYSHN program been involved in providing or reaching out to families with updated guidance about the safe return to school for CYSHCN, including needed accommodations? About immunizations for CYSHCN? About return to care generally for this population?

2. Do you have examples of partnering with your MCH colleagues around the safe return to school and immunization and preventive care access?

3. Has your program been involved in any way to ensure mental health supports for CYSHCN returning to in-person or virtual school?

American Academy of Pediatrics Guidance on School Re-Opening

• Dr Lynn Davidson, a long-standing member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who is board certified in pediatrics, neurodevelopmental disabilities, and developmental-behavioral pediatrics, presented on the recently updated AAP guidance regarding school re-opening and COVID-19.

• Families have experienced many losses during the pandemic, including loss of family members and friends, freedom of movement, routine, services (including therapies, in home services), academics, and stability. It is important to consider these losses when considering how to help parents and families.

• Dr. Davidson repeated a motto she has heard repeated during the pandemic: Be creative, flexible, responsive and forgiving (of self).

• The AAP statement recommends that children be in school in person (for the most part)
  o Safety must be a multi-pronged, layered approach
  o Considerations:
    ▪ Rate of transmission in the community
    ▪ Masking – most should be able to wear
    ▪ Mental health issues – anxiety, depression, and bereavement among children and parents
    ▪ Need to take shared decision making into account for those who are at high risk for complications from COVID
    ▪ Digital divide
  o Considerations for children with disabilities:
Higher risk for mental health issues  
Greater difficulty with transition back to in person  
Importance of reviewing IEP – what students received or not  

What can we do?  
o Encourage vaccinations – routine and COVID  
o Reach out to families who are highest risk to find out what their needs are  
o Reach out to pediatricians, to local AAP chapters, to subspecialists  
o Coordinate with schools/educators and school nurses  

Discussion  

• Title V CYSHCN programs can disseminate information about vaccinations and safety protocols  
o Ensure that messages are consistent and repeated  
• Differences between school districts and between states inform what strategies are available to do work around return to school  
• What is the process for full FDA approval and why has the FDA not fully approved COVID-19 vaccinations yet?  
o Though the FDA has made the COVID-19 vaccine a top priority, bringing in large team of analysts, there is a lot of data to examine carefully  
o Companies are working to get the proper data to be able to vaccinate 6–12-year-olds, the hope is that it will be approved  
  ▪ Dr. Davidson suggests advising families that if child can’t be vaccinated, they can be “cocooned” when all the adults around them are vaccinated  
• What does the CDC recommendation of booster shots for immunocompromised individuals affect the population we work with?  
o This announcement is very new – the CDC advisory committee is expected to recommend booster shots with the caveat that this will not be widely applied to all immune compromised individuals  
  ▪ Booster shots are intended for individuals to did not initially mount a full immune response to the initial vaccination; It is likely that a very small number of kids who would fall under this umbrella  

Resources Shared  

• States Address Students’ Transition Back to School – NASHP: https://www.nashp.org/states-enact-policies-to-support-students-transition-back-to-school/  