

REFERRAL PROTOCOL BEST PRACTICES

Your role is essential to ensuring that children get the care and services they need during the school day. The following are best practices that can help you follow-up on care for your students may need.

Outreach

Outreach to in-school and external community organizations to identify resources that can provide students with follow-up care can help students improve academic and health outcomes.

- Develop a community resource referral list that can be placed into a binder. This community resource list may include (in-school and external resources):
 - contact person, address, services, hours of operation and accepted insurance plan and forms of payment (ie: sliding scale)
 - Organize resources according to health issue/condition (i.e: vision, dental, asthma, hearing, mental health) with a few copies to distribute to parents.
 - Whenever possible, translate the list into the languages spoken at the school.

Parent Follow-up*

Once you have identified students who need a referral (i.e. vision screening, other health screenings, mental health/counseling):

- Call parents to inform them of the reasons for the referral and that referral form/school health forms will be sent home with their child (i.e. 12s form).
- Depending on the importance of the health issue, continue to reach out to parents:
 - Call parents (i.e: every 2 days, once a week/month) to find out if their child received follow-care, the results or to remind parents to follow up with referral.
 - Meet parent at arrival or dismissal to find out if their child received follow-care, the results or to remind parents to following up with referral.
 - Reissue referral form with school forms via child or mail to parent
 - Reach out to student's teacher or guidance counselors to see how they can help reach parents
 - Engage student when appropriate, to talk to their parents about the referral and the need to follow-up with referral and school nurse. Give incentive to students (i.e: stickers, pencils) when the referral/forms are returned to nurse.
- When talking with parent:
 - Remember parents love their children and sometimes find it difficult to know how to help their children with their health issues, which can bring up feelings of fear or guilt. Choose non-judgemental words at all times. Approaching parents with kindness can help parents hear your good intentions for their child.
 - Pay attention to your body language: Making sure that your body language sends a message to the parent that you are a professional who cares for their child.
 - Send a thank you letter to parent for following up with referral especially if returning referrals have been difficult for a parent.

*Whenever possible, speaking with parents in person is always preferred