

Healthy Transitions to Kindergarten



Health services at schools may be different from services offered by Head Start. Head Start staff prepare families for the transition to kindergarten by having conversations with them about school health services. This document includes questions to engage families. These questions can serve as a guide for determining how to best support families—there are no right or wrong answers. Staff can use families’ responses to identify opportunities to work together to help children make a healthy transition. To prepare for these conversations, staff can contact the receiving schools to learn more about their health policies and services.

Questions to engage all families	Considerations for Head Start staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything you want to know about the school’s health services? • Is there any health information about your child you want the school to know? • Do you think your child will benefit from any health services at school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review available school health services including nursing, counseling, speech and language therapy, etc. • Talk with the family about follow-up based on family or staff concerns. • Provide referrals to community agencies for services the school does not provide.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have the health information and immunization records your child needs to start school? • Would you like suggestions about where to get your child a flu vaccine in the fall? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the school’s immunization and health requirements with families. • Provide copies of immunization records, if needed. • Discuss how immunizations, including an annual flu vaccine, protect children from preventable illnesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you experienced any difficulty accessing health services for your child? • Do you have a plan for back-up care if your child is sick and cannot attend school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the importance of regular well-child care. • Assist families with finding a provider or insurance, if needed. • Review the school’s policy regarding when to keep a sick child home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you interested in information about free or reduced-price meals at school? • Does your child have dietary concerns or preferences you’d like to discuss with the school? • Will you be sending your child to school with their own lunch? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the differences between meal services at Head Start and the school. • Provide meal forms to families. • Discuss strategies to accommodate food allergies or special dietary preferences. • Discuss available options if the school does not offer breakfast. • Offer tips for preparing nutritious lunches.
Questions to engage families with children with special healthcare needs	Considerations for Head Start staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you communicated your child’s healthcare needs to the school? • Will your child need any accommodations, treatments, or medications at school? • If so, would you like to meet with the school health staff to discuss your child’s healthcare needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide copies of any necessary forms the family will need their healthcare provider to complete. • Offer to help the family get information from the school about how they will address the child’s health needs. • Provide contact information for the school nurse or special needs coordinator at the school.