

### **Students with Special Needs**

1. Students with special health care needs may require additional health services and adapted or modified educational programs. The school nurse acts as an advocate for the student and may participate in the planning and implementation of modifications and accommodations (including section 504 and IEP determinations) as needed.
2. The school nurse works with the student, family and health care provider to assess the student's health status and needs, and obtains authorization from parent / guardian and health care provider for restrictions on activities, for medications, and for treatments at school. Authorizations are filed in the red medication book during the school year, and then removed to each student's Cumulative Health Folder after the school year has ended.
3. The school nurse may be a member of the multidisciplinary team which collaborates regarding the educational needs and related health services required by a student with special needs.
4. The school nurse provides on-going information, instruction, and support to staff working with a student with special needs.
5. The Illinois Department of Professional Regulations (IDPR) states that nurses cannot delegate nursing duties to non-nurses. If the parent/guardian or child's physician requests in writing that a non-nurse carry out activities for their child then the school administrator assigns the duty. IDPR says once the duty is assigned the nurse could teach the lay person the task. The nurse should document what she teaches so as to assure the teaching is correct. The nurse cannot be liable for the actions of the person trained as long as (s)he was taught correctly.
6. The school nurse initiates and updates an Individual Healthcare Plan/Action Plan to address the health care status, needs, and goals of students as needed.

### **CARES, IEP, 504 Meetings**

**Collaborative Action and Resources for Educational Success (CARES):** Unit 5 has CARES teams in place in all twenty schools. The primary function of the team is to provide support in the form of intervention ideas, strategies and resources to teachers who refer students experiencing some type of difficulty in the school setting. The critical goal is to find the best combination of methods, materials and strategies to assist the student. Areas of difficulty vary; they may include, but are not limited to, academic concerns, social-emotional concerns, language/communication concerns, health concerns, attention concerns, and motor concerns.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** a plan that is developed for every student receiving special education and related services. Several laws/rules govern the formation of this plan.

**Section 504:** a student is eligible when there is “a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.” A child is not eligible if he is primarily disadvantaged by cultural, environmental, or economic factors.

More detailed information can be found on each of these areas on the district website.

By nature of the school nurse’s Type 73 teaching certificate, she may participate in any of the above meetings. Ideally, the nurse would be invited to any meeting where there was an educational concern related to a health impairment, but in reality the Unit 5 school nurse must sometimes advocate for her own attendance at these meetings. Educating administrators and staff concerning our wealth of knowledge and expertise in the medical arena is an ongoing task for the school nurse.

