

Integration of children with chronic conditions at school

Example from the School Health Service of the City of Zurich

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Ali 11y: Congenital Heart Malformation

- 3x operated
- limited performance
- O2 during night
- Lack of compliance
- → 3x ambulance transport to hospital



Barbara 6y

- ▶ Nut-allergy with risk of anaphylactic shock
- ▶ Parents demand a „nut-free school“...



Christian 14y

- severe asthma
- Risk of life-threatening situations
- parents reluctant to share any information



A systemic view

Health Care
System: GP, Ped,
specialists, hospital,

School

- Class mates
- Teachers
- Director
- Support staff
- Day care structures

Family

Child/adolescent
with a chronic
condition

Community

Needs of children

- To grow up as a „normal“ child and participate
- To feel integrated into the class and the school
 - Social interaction with peers at school and leisure time
 - No stigmatization
 - Participation at school (including excursions, camps, sport events...)
- To be and feel safe: protection of health, to be safe in emergency situations
- Medical needs are taken into account: time for therapies etc.



Needs of parents

- To know that their child is safe at school
- To share the goal of non- stigmatization with school
- To feel understood regarding concerns for the health of their child
- To have clear defined responsible contact persons at school (not too many!)

Needs of parents (2)

- To get support from experts for the communication with the school and for developing individualised plans for the child at school
- To get support for the many health-related additional efforts necessary for their child (eg.: food is provided by school)
- To be sure that sensitive information is protected
- Experts support for planning to meet the children's needs and for communication within school



Needs of 'system school' (1)

- To provide staff with adequate knowledge and skills
 - ➔ to meet needs of the child with a chronic condition
 - ➔ staff: to feel capable to manage all situations
- To balance the needs of the affected child and the class mates
- Clear tasks, competencies and processes
- Clarification of legal aspects



Needs of 'system school' (2)

- Flow of information is regulated
 - Within the system school
 - Between school, parents and medical specialists
 - Precondition: parents have to know, that certain information is necessary to ensure adequate reactions and interventions

Needs of 'system school' (3)

➤ Risk management:

- Identification of potential risks
- Clear rules for emergency situations



➤ Interventions fit into overall framework of the school:

- balance between the needs of the affected child and the school class
- Amount of effort is in balance with the size of the problem
- Financial and human resources of the school are respected
- Ongoing discussion about limits of integration

Needs of the medical specialists

- Recommendation for health care of the child are followed
- The everyday-environment is informed about the child's condition
- Facilitator from the system school (understands quickly grammatical problems, is able to translate needs-profile to the school)
- Synergies between school doctor and private doctor, without redundancies

Deficits of the current system

- Lack of shared understanding and perspectives between medical system and school
- Lack of a unified concept → success of integration depends on individual commitment of teachers and parents
- Unclear processes: lack of using successful approaches, no development for a learning system

Project in the city of Zurich

- Goal:
 - To support schools to successfully integrate children with chronic conditions
- Needs assessment
 - General analysis
 - Literature search
- Workshops for identification of needs and solutions with
 - Parents
 - Teachers and other key players from school
 - Staff of school health services
 - Medical specialists at hospital
 - Private doctors
- Principle: to ensure the commitment of all key persons involved

Projects in the city of Zurich (2)

- Main findings:
 - Importance of the theme confirmed → great interest and engagement of all participants
- Main needs stated:
 - Clarification of legal aspects
 - Regulation of information and flow of information
 - Transparent communication
 - Development of tools for the regulation of emergencies, application of medication etc.
 - Easy access to general information about diseases and tailored information regarding individual children for all school staff

Steps done so far (1)

- ▶ Legal framework:
 - ▶ Document „Medication at school“, developed with SHS, teachers and law department
 - ▶ Regulation of legal responsibility of teachers in specific cases
- ▶ Teacher/school training for emergency situations of children with congenital heart disease
- ▶ Individualized emergency plans for children with life-threatening allergies (Who, when what,how?)



Steps done so far (2)

- ▶ Food allergies/intolerances:
 - ▶ Training for staff of day care structures regarding food intolerance conditions
 - ▶ Provision of menus (n=23 types) for children with food intolerances by the City kitchen service
- ▶ Provision of easy understandable and accessible general information about chronic conditions (started)
- ▶ School doctor acting as translator



Next steps (2013/2014)

- Further clarification of legal aspects
- Definition of roles
- Process-mapping including flow of information
- Process-mapping of entry scenarios
- Case management
- Definition of role of the school doctor

Summary (1)

- ▶ Children with chronic conditions (nowadays more prevalent at school than ever before) do have specific needs that are not met by the pedagogic system
- ▶ These needs can only be met when all systems and persons involved work close together across boundaries of disciplines (A classic public health task!)
- ▶ This collaboration will profit from a well-designed regulatory framework

Summary (2)

Health and Education are linked

- ▶ The current pedagogic paradigm, which is an antimedical one, needs further development to integrate health
- ▶ Health specialists have an important role to play.

==> Let's start!

**Thank you very much
for your attention**

