



SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATORS

JUNE 2018

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School-Based Health Centers Provide Needed Mental Health Care and Trauma Services to Students

Connecticut's School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are comprehensive primary health care facilities licensed as outpatient clinics or as hospital satellites. The SBHCs are located within or on school grounds and serve students in grades pre-K-12. The health centers are staffed by multi-disciplinary teams of pediatric and adolescent health specialists, including nurse practitioners, physician assistants, social workers, physicians and in some cases, dentists and dental hygienists.

A school based health center is not the same as the school nurse's office. School nurses and SBHCs work together, and school nurses often refer students to SBHCs because they are able to treat and resolve student health problems. All SBHC services are confidential. Parents must sign a Parent Permission Form for students to receive services. SBHCs are also able to bill Medicaid and HUSKY A & B health insurance for services provided to students covered by these health plans.

The Connecticut Health Investigative Team's article [School-Based Mental Health Centers Play Vital Role For Hispanic And Black Students](#) illustrates the value of providing mental health and trauma services in school settings, particularly for students of color who would otherwise have trouble accessing care. This article discusses how Connecticut's Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) initiative is helping students. Approximately 50 schools in Connecticut offer CBITS groups to students who have experienced trauma and 90 percent of CBITS participants are students of color.

Schools, school-based health centers and mental health providers can learn more and apply for free CBITS and *BounceBack!* training and implementation support by visiting www.chdi.org/cbits.

2018 School Health Profiles

The School Health Profiles (Profiles) is developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and schools are specifically chosen by them to participate each year. The Profiles questionnaire collects data on the status of school health policies and practices aimed at improving healthy behaviors among students at the middle, junior high and high school levels. The **Profiles** data can be used by districts to monitor and assess school health policies, practices and programs and inform individual school improvement plans. If your school has been chosen, we encourage your participation given the direct relationship between student health and academic achievement.

If each school is selected participates, the results are representative of all the schools within the State of Connecticut. Individual responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your identity or that of your school or community be disclosed. Data will be reported out on the state level.

The survey is administered online. There are two main questionnaires associated with the 2018 Profiles survey: one for the principal, to complete, and one for the lead health education teacher to complete. The copy of the survey is provided to principals and lead health education teachers. If your school has been chosen by the CDC, your principal and lead health education teacher will receive a specific invitation to complete the online Principal's questionnaire titled "2018 Connecticut School Health Profiles - Principal Questionnaire" or "2018 Connecticut School Health Profiles – Health Educator Questionnaire" in an email from Andy DePalma, adepalma@eastconn.org via Survey Monkey.

The Connecticut State Department of Education has asked EASTCONN to administer this process. If you have any questions, please contact EASTCONN Technology Solutions at 860-455-1527.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Education Resources

- National Health Education Standards and Performance Indicators
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm>
- E-Learning Series: Training Tools for Healthy Schools
The Training Tools for Healthy Schools: Promoting Health and Academic Success, eLearning series consists of five core training tools that have been converted to 1-1.5 hour modules for the ease and flexibility for online learners to have easier access to our tools. Continuing education credits are offered to most participants for the CSPAP and SHG. All five modules have a very robust Go Further section to gain additional knowledge and resources.
 - Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program: A Guide for Schools
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/professional_development/e-learning/CSPAP/index.html
 - Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT)
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/professional_development/e-learning/hecat.html
 - Parents for Healthy Schools
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/professional_development/e-learning/p4hs.html
 - School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/professional_development/e-learning/shg.html
 - School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/professional_development/e-learning/shi.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Research on Health and Academics

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/health_and_academics/index.htm

Research shows a strong connection between healthy behaviors and academic achievement (e.g., grades, standardized tests, graduation rates, attendance). Healthy students are better learners, and academic achievement bears a lifetime of benefits for health. However, youth risk behaviors, such as physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary behaviors, tobacco use, alcohol use, and other drug use are consistently linked to poor grades and test scores and lower educational attainment.

- [***Health-related behaviors and academic achievement among high school students, United States, 2015***](#)
Original research study focusing on the connection between self-reported grades in school and 30 health-related behaviors published in CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).
- [***The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance \(Full report\)***](#)
Systematic review of established CDC research that focuses on the association between physical activity and academic performance.

Childhood Obesity Prevention: Resources for Teachers

Let's Move - School Garden Checklist

Before you start a garden of your own, read and download this [step-by-step guide](#), which offers important information about how to safely grow your own fruits and vegetables with your students.

- **Farm to Preschool Gardening Resources**

This [website](#) provides preschool gardening resources compiled from farm to preschool programs around the country. Here you can find gardening best practices, checklists, produce guides, and much more!

- **Department of Public Health (DPH) SNAP-Ed Program**

The SNAP-Ed program provides teacher workshops designed to explore childhood nutrition concepts and a garden-based “[Grow it, Try it, Like it](#)” curriculum. Head Start and School Readiness Programs are eligible for services at no charge. Contact [Teresa Dotson](#) for more information.

Extreme Heat and Schools

The Connecticut Departments of Education and Public Health (DPH) sometimes receive calls about heat waves during the school season. It is important to know that there are no laws or public health codes regarding excessive heat in school buildings resulting from elevated outdoor temperatures. There are no specific recommendations for when to close a school during excessive heat. This decision is made at the local school district level. In the past, some school officials have chosen to shorten the school day to limit exposure to extreme heat. Please note the following suggestions for students and staff located on the DPH Web site at <http://www.portal.ct.gov/DPH/Communications/Crisis-and-Emergency-Risk-Communication/Extreme-Heat> :

- **Allow frequent breaks for drinks.** Don't wait to get thirsty to drink. Drink fluids low in sugar, as drinks with a lot of sugar make you lose more body fluid.
- **Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.** If you know hot weather is forecasted, recommend to parents that they dress their children appropriately.
- **Limit outdoor activity.** Try to keep children indoors and somewhere cool in extreme heat.
- **Limit physical activity and consider cancelling athletic practices and games.**
- **Turn off unnecessary electronics.** Electronic equipment can give off heat.
- **Consider using opaque, heat-absorbing curtains for windows.**
- **Know the signs of [heat-related illness](#).**
- **Call your [local health department](#) for advice.**

Additional resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC - Protecting Yourself from Sun Exposure](#)
- DPH [Illnesses Caused by Heat](#)

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