

School health Program

School age is a period during which the child is undergoing rapid physical and mental development; a healthy environment is required to provide the child with the best opportunity of making the appropriate adjustments that are required during this critical period.

School health program has been defined as the school health procedures that contribute to improvement and maintenance of health status of the pupils and school personnel.

After the pre-school period, a child enters primary education at the age of about six years, and thus he joins a group of school children of his own age and identifies himself with fellows of his age, this will subject him to certain hazards like accidents and diseases. His association with other children in his group does play a part in producing factors which might cause him injuries, or expose him to the risk of infection. Moreover, his close movement with other members of the community in the school both while sitting in the school and in acts like talking, laughing, ect..., increases the chances of communicable diseases.

While he is in school, he needs an environment which can ensure him a comfortable seating arrangement, safe water supply, protection from accidents, adequate sanitary facilities and sufficient opportunities for his physical education.

He also needs knowledge in health education which relates to healthy living and his own responsibilities in matters pertaining to health, so that when he grows up, he contributes this knowledge in bringing of these principles to his family and community.

Why the health of school children deserves special attention?

1-They represent from one third to one half of the total population

2- In order to derive the maximum benefit from the educational programme, the child must be healthy physically, mentally and emotionally.

3- Children at school are exposed to a variety of hazards- physical injury, infection and emotional problems.

4- In many developing countries, the school children are the survivors of a high childhood mortality, many of them still bear the sequelae of diseases and conditions of the preschool age period.

5- The school provides a unique opportunity for health education: a means of establishing a firm foundation for the healthy habits of the future adult population.

6- By safeguarding the health of the children today, one is ensuring the health of adults tomorrow.

7-They spend more than half of their day time at the school where they may be exposed to many health hazards.

The overall objective of the school health programme is to ensure that every student is as healthy as possible so as to obtain the full benefit from his or her education.

The team providing school health services consists of:

Physicians (school health officers), nurses, dentists, psychologists, counselors, social workers for all school children as well as physical, occupational, speech, language & hearing therapists, and audiologists for children with special needs

Components of school health Programme:

1- Medical inspection:

The school entrance examination includes taking detailed history, complete physical examination, dental examination, nutrition assessment, and mental examination. Appropriate grade level immunizations against preventable communicable diseases, screening for health conditions that can directly affect student learning ability (vision, hearing, growth & development), and emergency health services should also be done.

Relevant information pertaining to the school child and any abnormality will be recorded on the medical inspection card and to be followed up until correction.

Communicable diseases control is another responsibility of the school health officer through periodical immunization, detecting cases of communicable disease and checking its spread to other children. Whenever a case of a communicable disease is reported, prompt action will be taken through exclusion of sick children from school and protection of susceptible children against that disease.

The health of school personnel should be kept under careful observation to ensure that they do not transmit infection to the children.

2- Assessment of handicapped children:

The school health Programme also includes mechanisms for finding children who are physically or mentally handicapped, assessing them, supervising them and placing them in the most appropriate institution if special care is indicated.

The main categories of handicapped children are:

- Blind and partially blind
- Those with a defect in hearing and/ or speech
- Educationally subnormal
- Maladjusted and psychotic
- Physically handicapped
- Epileptic

3- Safe school environment:

The school should be cited in a safe place, in an area free from excessive noise, the building should be well constructed so as to minimize accidents. The classrooms should be of adequate size, well lighted and ventilated. Sanitary facilities for disposal of waste should be provided, and there should be an adequate supply of safe water for drinking and washing. There should be also adequate facilities for recreation.

4- Health education:

Health education is essential to impart knowledge of health and disease to the school child which will be useful not only for him but also to the parents.

The course of instructions should include basic information about healthy lifestyles such as diet, exercise, smoking,...

At appropriate age, various aspects of sex education can be incorporated into the syllabus.

Training of teachers is an important factor in school health Programme. Properly trained teachers will be able to make proper observations on the school children and treat minor problems.

School Health Record:

Every child should have his or her own health record for registration of all events and activities concerning health. The record has to start at birth or later in preschool age and goes with the pupils throughout his education and future life.

Content of the records:

- 1-Personal data
- 2-Results of medical examination.
- 3-Immunization given.
- 4-Any disease, injuries, hospitalization.
- 5- Any drugs or treatment given

Value of records:

- 1-health reference for diagnosis and follow up of chronic diseases.
- 2-Source for statistical data and indices.