

PROMOTING CLINIC ENGAGEMENT AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

This document is intended to help clinic staff start thinking about partnering with local schools. It is well-known that there is a reciprocal relationship between health and education. Healthy students are better learners. Partnering with schools in your community can be a great opportunity to collectively improve health and academic outcomes for kids! Working with schools will help reinforce the health education provided in your clinic. It can also increase the number of patients and scope of your practice.

Step 1

Build a relationship with local schools

Schools can be a reflection of community values, culture, and engagement. When clinics build relationships with local schools, it provides an opportunity to bolster the relationship between health and education at a community level. Clinics can help improve health literacy for the children in school and the parents in the greater community. Schools can look to clinics to be a trusted place of care to send their students and families.

- Identify the schools surrounding your clinic
- Identify school personnel that engage with parents. This could include the parent coordinator, school nurse, school physician, school counselors and administrators.
- Schedule initial meetings with school staff
- Get a better understanding of each school's health concerns and any school goals. Goals may include:
 - increased attendance rate
 - reduced asthma episodes in school
 - reduced asthma related absences
 - reduced number of 911 calls
 - increased number of completed annual physical and other school forms
 - In NYC this could mean...
 - Increased number of MAFs
 - Increased number of annual physical forms ([CH205](#))
- Share your clinic's concerns and goals to improve health outcomes of the community.

Step 2

Create common ground

Clinics and schools already have a common goal - to ensure students are happy, healthy, and productive.

Communities may have different approaches to reach those goals.

- Assess the needs and assets of the community to identify areas where clinics and schools can collaborate in improving the health and education of the community.
- Establish a working plan with the school leadership that aligns school and clinic goals based on the needs you've uncovered.
 - Example: Is there a need to decrease the number of emergency asthma visits? Clinics can help ensure students are controlling asthma and can increase the number of Medication Administration Permission Forms so children can receive medications at school.
- Meet regularly with school leadership to assess your progress and keep open lines of communication between the clinic and school to help improve collaboration.

Step 3

Engage with families

Being actively present in the community helps establish reciprocal trust. This is an important foundation and is often necessary in achieving positive outcomes.

- Schedule a time to meet parents to promote annual well visits and your clinic's availability to be a medical home
- Have staff present at school events - especially when they are health related! Have a table at a back-to-school night , or participate (or help organize!) health fairs or events that promote healthy habits.