



FIRST DAY BACK TO SCHOOL HEALTH CHECKLISTS BY AGE

SCHOOL YEAR
2025-2026

READY, SET, GROW!



Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.

The Parent Training and Information Center for the District of Columbia

TRANSITIONS ARE HARD **BACK-TO-SCHOOL PLANNING FOR DC FAMILIES IN EVERY CLIMATE**

Transitions are hard, and this year, DC families face even greater anxieties as the new school year begins under the shadow of federal intervention. With the National Guard deployed to the city and heightened immigration enforcement near schools, many families carry not just the usual back-to-school stress, but deep fears about safety and stability.

Advocates for Justice and Education (AJE) has walked beside families through these challenges since 1996, helping them navigate the complex transitions of each school year. As tried and tested partners, we know that the return to school is about more than academics—it is about protecting children’s rights, ensuring their well-being, and lifting up the voices of families most impacted. Our Health Justice Project was founded to meet the healthcare needs of families of school-aged children with IEPs and 504 plans, recognizing that educational success and health equity are inseparable.

This Parent Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to help you understand our school policies, daily routines, and expectations. We encourage you to read through this handbook carefully, as it will provide valuable information on how we can work together to ensure a positive and enriching experience for your child.

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL HEALTH CHECKLISTS BY AGE



Here are developmentally tailored Back-to-School Health Checklists designed for families of all children, especially children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs (CYSHCN). They build on the IDEA disability categories, DC behavioral health frameworks, and AJE's First Day Packet approach (health navigation, wellness tools, advocacy skills):

Birth to 3 Years Old (Early Intervention / IFSP)

- Confirm Early Intervention services (speech, PT, OT, developmental therapy) schedule.
- Update Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Share care plans with daycare/early care provider (allergies, seizure, feeding).
- Pack daily care kit: diapers, wipes, feeding supplies, meds.
- Hearing, vision, and developmental screenings up to date.
- Identify care coordinator/medical home.
- Schedule well-baby checkups & immunizations.
- Begin early family advocacy skills (record-keeping folder, "questions to ask providers" sheet).

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Pre-K 3 and 4 (IFSP and First IEP)

- Ensure IEP/504 or IFSP-to-IEP transition plan is in place.
- Share allergy/health action plans with the school nurse/teachers.
- Update contact info for emergency pick-up and trusted adults.
- Prepare sensory supports: headphones, a fidget toy, comfort object.
- Create a visual schedule or social story for school routines.
- Book annual dental, hearing, and vision check-ups.
- Confirm transportation arrangements (bus/van, safety seat, aide if needed).
- Discuss routines for toileting, nutrition, and naps with teachers.
- Create a person-centered one-pager.

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Kindergarten to 3rd Grade (Early Learning IEP)

- Review IEP/504 with teacher, school nurse, and counselor; and prep for first triennial review.
- Share medication and emergency plans (asthma, diabetes, seizures).
- Pack mini health kit (inhaler, EPI-PEN, basic first aid, meds with forms).
- Prepare sensory supports: headphones, a fidget toy, comfort object.
- Reinforce self-advocacy basics: the child can state name, trusted adult, and basic needs.
- Monitor literacy milestones—request support if falling behind.
- Confirm behavioral supports (PBIS, calm corner, daily check-ins).
- Ensure that after-school care staff are aware of health needs.
- Encourage routines at home: sleep, hydration, and healthy snacks.
- Create a person-centered one-pager.

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4th Grade to 6th Grade (Elementary School IEP)

- Update health action plans; ensure all staff know them.
- Encourage student self-monitoring of health needs (when to ask for help).
- Review behavioral health supports (Tier 1 SEL, small group counseling).
- Ensure the school provides accessible materials (large print, audio, AT).
- Reinforce self-advocacy basics: the child can state name, trusted adult, and basic needs.
- Confirm academic support: small group reading/math if needed.
- Prepare for puberty conversations; connect to disability-inclusive sex education.
- Build organization skills: planner, homework folder, daily routines.
- Introduce role-play for advocacy (how to ask questions, request breaks).
- Create a person-centered one-pager.

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7th and 8th Grade (Transition to Middle School)

- ☐ Update IEP/504 to reflect middle school environment (more teachers, transitions).
- ☐ Share medication and action plans with multiple teachers.
- ☐ Confirm mental health resources (school counselor, referral pathways).
- ☐ Prepare students for puberty/health changes, focus on body autonomy.
- ☐ Introduce self-advocacy in IEP meetings ("this is what helps me").
- ☐ Confirm extracurricular access (sports, arts, clubs).
- ☐ Prepare for digital tools (assistive tech, learning apps, communication platforms).
- ☐ Talk about online safety and social media health.
- ☐ Create a person-centered one-pager.

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9th to 12th Grade (High School and Post-Secondary Planning)

- Review IEP/504 annually and ensure transition goals are added by age 14 (required).
- Build independent health skills: refill prescriptions, keep health log.
- Connect to school-based behavioral health clinicians for stress management.
- Prepare for transition meetings (college/career planning, vocational rehab).
- Ensure AT devices and accommodations work for standardized tests.
- Discuss safe relationships, sexual health, and consent (disability-inclusive).
- Help youth practice advocacy: leading part of IEP/504 meeting.
- Connect with job readiness programs, internships, or volunteer work.
- Review safety plans for independent travel and community access.
- Create a person-centered one-pager.

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Post-Secondary Transition (18–26 years old)

- Secure adult healthcare providers (primary care, specialists).
- Transfer from pediatric to adult systems (medical, behavioral health).
- Apply for SSI/SSDI, Medicaid waivers, and vocational rehab if eligible.
- Ensure the transition section of the IEP/504 (through age 21) is implemented.
- Build independent living skills: budgeting, housing, and transportation.
- Confirm accommodations for college/workplace (ADA/504).
- Help youth practice advocacy: leading part of IEP/504 meeting.
- Support with health insurance navigation (Medicaid/Marketplace/DC Alliance).
- Encourage leadership in advocacy spaces (youth advisory boards, councils).
- Promote wellness practices: mental health care, self-advocacy in appointments, and stress management.
- Create a person-centered one-pager.