

GETTING HOSPITAL OR HOME INSTRUCTION FOR A CHILD WITH ARTHRITIS

If a child cannot attend school for an extended period of time, hospital/homebound (HHB) instruction may be required.

Definition of HHB

An instructional service made available to a student who is able to participate in educational instruction but who:

- is medically unable to attend school for a minimum of 10 consecutive days or the equivalent on a modified calendar.
- has a chronic health condition causing him or her to be absent for intermittent periods of time anticipated to be a minimum of 10 school days per year or the equivalent on a modified calendar, or five school days on a high school block schedule per year.

If HHB is required, here are the steps to take:

1. Talk to your child's rheumatologist. He or she will need to assist with the paperwork.
2. Contact the school counselor to discuss Hospital/Homebound services and obtain an application.
3. Schedule a meeting with the school counselor to discuss eligibility, the application process and the required paperwork.

Here are some initial questions you may want to ask the school counselor:

- How many consecutive absences are required before services are provided? (This may vary by school district.)
- How will the HHB instructor be chosen?
- How fast can the HHB plan be implemented?

4. Return the completed application and related forms to the school counselor. Once the application is received and verified, the student's eligibility for HHB will be determined and the parent notified. The counselor will also advise about the grievance process if the HHB is denied.

Plan Development

The school counselor (or other school personnel) will schedule the meeting with the appropriate school administrators or IEP team and HHB teacher to discuss services. At this meeting, an Educational Service Plan (ESP) will be developed for the student.

The following issues should be addressed in the plan:

- What is the anticipated length of absence?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate instruction takes place?
- What materials and resources will be available to the student?
- How long will the student receive HHB services?
- Which subjects will be included in HHB instruction?
- How many hours of instruction will the student receive per days absent?
- How will materials and resources be coordinated between school and the student?
- Who will be developing and grading the assignments?
- If the student receives other special education services, how will those be met?
- Which existing 504 accommodations will be included in the plan?
- If standardized tests will be given during the HHB period, how/when will those tests be given to the student?
- How long will the student have to complete HHB instruction?
- What will the school re-entry plan be?
- Who should be contacted if there are problems?

Scheduling

- The HHB teacher, in cooperation with the parent or guardian, will coordinate the timing of the instructional sessions. The times will typically occur during the school day.
- Generally, at least three instructional hours per week are provided. However, this may vary by school district.

Delivery of Instruction

- HHB instruction can be offered on a one-on-one basis, in a small group, at the home of the student, at a health care facility or through online learning courses.

Parental Oversight Process

- Maintain a documentation file of medical forms and affidavits and letters and email correspondence with the HHB teacher and the school.
- Establish good communication. Develop a communication schedule and the best format (phone calls, emails, etc) with classroom teachers and the HBB teacher.
- Follow the chain of command if you have a concern that your child's needs aren't being met, express your concern to teacher, then the counselor or principal and then the school system personnel responsible for the HHB program.

Termination of Services

- Students will be released from HHB services when the projected return date on the application form is reached or the physician indicates that the student is released to return to school.
- Hospital Homebound services may be extended beyond the originally identified return to school date if the physician submits a request for extended services.
- Reevaluation and medical updates may be required every four weeks.

Other Issues to be Aware of

- Most children's hospitals have teaching staff and will help coordinate educational services onsite. Departments vary, but this staff can usually be found through patient services or child life services.
- HHB services are meant to be temporary and are not designed to supplant or replicate the classroom experience.
- Most states provide three to five hours of one-on-one classroom instruction per week for long-term absences, and shorter amounts for intermittent absences.
- Most states require that the HHB teacher be a certified teacher. While a child is receiving this instruction, the classroom teacher is still the teacher of record.
- Private schools are not obligated to provide HHB services. This does not mean they may not be willing to assist.