



Parent Roadmap: Kids with Cancer Still Need School

Second Step on the Journey into Survivorship: Starting “Home and Hospital Teaching”

Some of the shock has probably worn off now and you are starting think about what your new routines are going to look like. Even if your child wasn't a huge fan of studying, s/he has probably asked “what about school?” This is a good sign! After all, school is about academic learning and social interactions; we want your child to get back to these important tasks as soon as possible.

Health Care Related

Checklist of Things to Ask or Do

- Who is responsible for coordinating Home and Hospital Teaching*? How will they communicate with me and with the school system/Home & Hospital teacher?
- How do I know when my child is ready to start doing school work again?
- How can I expect this phase of treatment to impact my child's ability to learn or do school work?
- Are there any health/medical safety concerns I should consider with the home/hospital teacher?
- Establish a schedule and location for doing school work in the hospital. Once your child is home, establish a schedule and location for doing school work at home.
- Tell hospital staff your child is going to start doing school work so they can coordinate care around the school schedule as much as possible.

REMEMBER: Ask people at the hospital and school to communicate. They should get in the habit of sharing information.

*see reverse to learn more about these terms

School/Community Related

Checklist of Things to Ask or Do

- Discuss your child's health status and any medical safety concerns needed with the home/hospital teacher; examples include good hand-washing, avoiding exposure to teacher or classmates if anyone is sick; any added limitations if your child is connected to an IV.
- Set up a communication link to let the home/hospital teacher know if there are changes in your child's health status that might impact their schedule.
- Work out the best schedule and place for instruction; consider what time of day your child usually feels the best and what room/environment will be the most comfortable/non-distracting.
- Discuss your child's school history and experiences with the home/hospital teacher. Examples of things to share include: their favorite/least favorite subjects, what they miss most about school, any school difficulties noted before diagnosis.
- Establish joint goals for the time the teacher spends with your child and how you are going to evaluate progress. Remember your child may be quite tired, so keep the goals simple and easy to achieve at first.
- Help your child stay connected with friends and community activities when possible.

Second Step: Knowledge you need and resources that can help provide it

You have learned a lot of new words and procedures related to cancer and cancer treatment.

Now you're learning more new words and procedures about school and learning to help you help your child.

What is Home and Hospital Teaching?

- Home and Hospital Teaching is a temporary service designed to provide instruction to students who are unable to attend their usual school due to physical illness and/or extended hospitalization.
- Instruction is usually provided one on one in the home or hospital room by teachers supplied by your local school district.
- There is no cost to the family for Home and Hospital Teaching.

How does my child get access to Home & Hospital Teaching?

- Usually services are coordinated by a specific person within the oncology department who can assist with needed paperwork.
- The healthcare team and local school district should communicate to identify the appropriate teacher. The teacher(s) will coordinate with you about visits at the hospital or home. Some hospitals have an on-site school for hospitalized children and/or a school/education liaison; your oncology team will know if such resources are available where your child is being treated.

Can my child still interact with her school if she is getting Home & Hospital Teaching?

- Yes, if you and your child want to. Sometimes, being part of some of the social aspects of school can be very helpful. Remember the first step on the journey to Survivorship? If your child is elementary school age, you may want to consider the "Monkey in my chair" program (<http://www.monkeyinmychair.org/program>), or other ways to connect him/her to her classroom using the computer, web-cameras, and the internet. Organizations such as Chai Lifeline (<https://www.chailifeline.org/>) may help provide a computer at home if your child does not have one. Your child also might begin to attend school for short periods of time, and still continue Home & Hospital.

And remember...

- If you have not already scheduled a neuropsychological assessment for your child, it is a good idea to do this. Ask your Health Care Team for help. When your child returns to school, s/he may learn differently than they did before treatment. The neuropsychological test results are a very important tool for helping to work with any learning differences they may experience.

Next step on the Journey into Survivorship: Returning to School Part-Time During Treatment