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# Preface

School-age children with a variety of common health problems, chronic illnesses, and disabilities are present in virtually every school system across the United States. Because these children are now included in the regular classroom environment, it is important for teachers, classroom aides, school administrators, and day care providers to be familiar with their unique health care needs.

The classroom teacher is often at the forefront in responding to classroom emergencies, recognizing potential health problems, and providing support to children living with chronic illness or disability. This book is a valuable and easy-to-use resource for teachers, school staff, and others in learning about various health problems and the appropriate classroom management of these problems. The goal of this book is to provide concise and practical information about selected health problems that teachers are likely to encounter in their classrooms. It is not, however, within the scope of this book to address every health problem known to school-age children or to include every known situation that can occur in the classroom environment. The authors realize that every child is unique and that deviations from suggested guidelines sometimes must be considered.

## How This Book Is Organized

Part I provides an overview. Chapter 1 covers common health problems, accidental injuries, chronic illness, disability, and the effects of hospitalization on children and their impact on the classroom milieu. Chapter 2 discusses family and community issues influencing school-age children and offers strategies for promoting positive development of children. The central focus of Chapter 3 is stigmatizing issues associated with children. This chapter specifically addresses the concerns of labeling children and the importance of promoting self-esteem in

children. Relationships related to peers, gender identity issues, and sexual identity are also discussed.

Part II is an alphabetical reference guide to 130 health problems that affect preK–6 students. Arranged for convenient “at-a-glance” review, each topic identifies a common health problem, chronic disease, or disability and then offers the following coverage of the topic:

- Provides other names by which the same problem/illness is known or referred to
- Gives a brief description of the problem/illness written in language appropriate for laypersons
- Identifies primary groups affected by the health concern
- Offers associated signs and symptoms
- Presents suggested classroom guidelines with cross-references to appropriate health policies and procedures as well as other related health problems
- Recommends attendance guidelines
- Indicates medications that the child may be taking
- Suggests communication topics to be discussed with a parent or caregiver
- Lists authoritative resources such as national organizations associated with the health problem or illness and possible Web sites where teachers can obtain further information

Part III provides a variety of useful health policies and procedures. This section describes the appropriate method of hand washing as the most effective way in which to decrease the spread of infectious disease in school-age children. In addition, it provides a pictorial guide for administering epinephrine in emergency situations and offers procedures for providing for the needs of children with casts, tracheostomies, and tubes for feeding. Additional sections list medical emergencies that warrant immediate response, a schedule of immunizations, a table of infectious diseases related to pets and reptiles that may be found in the classroom, and guidelines for handling bleeding, cuts, and abrasions. It is the hope of the authors to adequately address the concerns of teachers regarding appropriate management of health issues in the classroom.

## How to Use This Book

The intent of this book is to provide an easy reference for school personnel to access in the event of encountering students who are

experiencing health problems or concerns in the classroom. Teachers who just want to increase their knowledge in assisting students with a myriad of health concerns may also find this book of value. In addition, this book provides suggested guidelines for managing specific health problems in the most effective and least disruptive manner. Teachers can refer to the alphabetical listing of each health problem.

Health problems are identified in this book by both their common names and medical nomenclature. A boldface **911** label is assigned to selected signs and symptoms. This **911** designation serves as an alert that this selected sign or symptom may be indicating a medical emergency or life-threatening situation so that the teacher may want to elicit immediate medical assistance for this child. Classroom guidelines are intended to suggest certain strategies or techniques in planning for the health needs of children present in the classroom. Teachers can refer to the communication section for identifying key questions to be addressed so that the child experiencing health problems can be successfully integrated into the classroom environment. Teachers who desire to further their knowledge beyond the scope of this book may find the selected resources valuable in enhancing their understanding of school-age children's health issues.