

# Understanding Concussion



## and its impact on learning

*A concussion can impact a child's ability to learn and stay focused.*

Regardless of the intensity of the head impact, a concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt (with or without physical contact) to the head. Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury.

### Physical symptoms that are common following a concussion may include:

- Headaches
- Double Vision
- Light & Noise Sensitivity
- Dizziness
- Lack of Coordination
- Physical Fatigue

### Learning difficulties that are common following a concussion may include:

- Mental Fatigue
- Memory Lapses
- Slower ability to take in/respond to new information
- Attention Slippage
- (Potential) language problems

*Any of these symptoms may negatively impact a student's learning, behavior, emotional regulation, or social functioning when they return to school.*

# North Carolina Brain Injury Advisory Council

## Children & Youth Committee

Additional information and resources can be found at:

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/headsup](http://www.cdc.gov/headsup)
- **Brain Injury Association North Carolina**  
[www.bianc.net](http://www.bianc.net)
- **Return-to-Learn After Concussion**  
NC State Board of Education Policy (SHLT-001)
- **Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act**  
<http://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.edu>

### Parent Checklist:

- Concussion contact at school**
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Provide the paperwork from your health care provider, documenting the concussion and any suggested accommodations for school.
- Share concussion diagnosis and relevant information with:
  - Teacher(s)
  - School Nurse
  - School Counselor
  - School Psychologist
  - Coach (if applicable)
- Provide ALL follow-up documentation from the health care provider to the appropriate school personnel.
- Communicate with school staff members about any concerns you have regarding your child's recovery/functioning.

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# Returning to School After a Concussion

## Parent Information



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# Concussion

Concussion is a mild form of a traumatic brain injury (mTBI). There are many signs and symptoms of a head injury or concussion. If your child or teen has one or more of the symptoms below following an injury to their head or neck, seek medical attention right away.

- **Headaches**
- **Appears dazed or stunned**
- **Is confused about events**
- **Answers questions slowly**
- **Repeats questions**
- **Nausea/vomiting**
- **Unsteady on their feet**
- **May lose consciousness (even briefly)**
- **Behavioral or personality changes**
- **Can't recall events prior to/after the hit, bump or fall**
- **Forgets their class schedule or assignments; other memory lapses**



## Returning to School After a Concussion:

### How can I help my child return to school safely following a concussion?

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has a policy requiring each public school system to develop a plan to provide needed support for students who have been diagnosed with a concussion.

#### ***Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:***

- Take rest breaks as needed
- Spend fewer hours at school
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Reduce time reading or writing or in other academic tasks
- Reduce time on computers or other electronic devices

## Steps Parents Should Take:



***Learning, behavior, and emotions can be affected in many different ways and for differing lengths of time following a concussion.***

- Seek/ensure treatment by a health care provider.
- Find out who the “Concussion Contact” is at your child’s school.
- Talk with your child’s teacher, school nurse, coach, school psychologist, and/or counselor about your child’s concussion and symptoms they are experiencing.
- Provide the paperwork from your health care provider, documenting the concussion and any suggested accommodations for school.
- Provide ALL follow-up documentation from the health care provider to the appropriate school personnel.
- Communicate with school staff members about any concerns you have regarding your child’s recovery/functioning.

**Your child’s school will assist you in developing a plan of action specific to your child in order to facilitate their safe return to the classroom/school environment.**

