



SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER

POGO Interlink Nursing Program

A PROGRAM OF
POGO
PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY GROUP OF ONTARIO
FOR KIDS WITH CANCER
FOR NOW, FOR LIFE.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Going to school and staying connected is important for your child's well-being. Planning for your child's education after a cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming. It requires an understanding of how your child is doing in school, how they are feeling socially, and how cancer treatment might affect them. As a member of the healthcare team, your POGO Interlink Nurse is an experienced pediatric cancer nurse who can help you plan for your child's learning during and after cancer treatment.

Is my child able to go to school while in hospital?

In general, children are encouraged to go to school. Your child's healthcare team will tell you when it's safe for your child to attend. Sometimes your child will need to stay home during treatment. How long they stay home depends on their treatment plan. Your POGO Interlink Nurse can help you decide what's best and make a plan for your child's education.

Is my child able to receive an education while in hospital?

School-board certified teachers may be available to help with your child's learning while admitted to hospital. Teachers are available for children in Kindergarten through Grade 12. Your POGO Interlink Nurse can help connect you with the program.

What information should I share with school staff?

How much you share with the school is a family decision and may change over time. In general, open communication is encouraged. Your POGO Interlink Nurse can help you share information during your child's treatment. This support may include phone calls, letters or meetings with school staff.

Is there support for my child's education during long absences from school?

If your child goes to a publicly-funded school, the Ontario Ministry of Education must provide learning support during long absences. Your child can get 3-5 hours per week of one-on-one home instruction from a certified teacher. Your POGO Interlink Nurse will help with the referral. Once a referral is made, there may be a wait before home teaching begins.

High school students may also have other ways to earn credits. Your POGO Interlink Nurse can work with you and the school's guidance department to explore options.

Can my children receive an education if we are living away from home for treatment?

If you are living away from home, your children can be enrolled in a local school.





Does the school need special information when my child returns to class?

Your POGO Interlink Nurse will help you figure out what the school needs to know. This depends on the type of treatment your child had and if they are going back to school during or after treatment. Some examples of helpful information include:

- infection control practices
- the presence of medical devices
- current treatment and side effects
- how your child is feeling and adjusting
- when the school should contact parents

How can information be shared with my child's classmates?

Your POGO Interlink Nurse will offer to visit the school and give a classroom presentation. You and your child will help decide what information to share. The goal is to give clear and age-appropriate facts, answer questions and help classmates support your child.

Are there supports for my other children?

A cancer diagnosis affects all members of a family, including siblings. Sibling support is an important part of cancer care. It is helpful for teachers to know about your family's situation and to think about the needs of your other children during treatment. Your POGO Interlink Nurse can help you share information with their teachers. You can talk about changes in routine and how your children are feeling. A classroom presentation can also help siblings share what is happening in their family.

What supports can help my child adjust to returning to school?

There are a number of supports available to help you and your child when they return to school. POGO Interlink Nurses can help you advocate for your child's needs and connect with the right support services at school.

Emotional Support: Many schools have social workers who can help with your child's emotional adjustment. In some school boards, child and youth workers (CYWs), who support behavioural, social and emotional development of students, are also part of the school support team. The school can help with a referral.

Physical Support: Physiotherapists (PTs) and occupational therapists (OTs) can help your child if they have mobility challenges that require accommodations or a safety plan while at school. Your POGO Interlink Nurse and healthcare team will work with the school to communicate your child's needs. The school can help with a referral.

Speech/Language Support: Speech/language pathologists (SLPs) can work with teachers to support your child if they have trouble with their speech or language. The school can help with a referral.





My child has learning challenges related to treatment. How can they be helped?

Some children who have been treated for cancer may have learning challenges related to their diagnosis or treatment.

If your child has learning difficulties, or if their condition or treatment may contribute to learning difficulties, your child may be referred to the neuropsychology team at your hospital. Neuropsychologists do detailed testing to understand how your child learns, thinks and behaves. Sometimes similar testing can be done by the school. These tests help create a plan for learning support. The results can help build an Individual Education Plan (IEP) if needed.

Your POGO Interlink Nurse can work with the neuropsychologist to help you share the results with the school. Most schools have special education resource teachers (SERTs) who can help plan the right supports for your child.

Are there long-term supports for my child?

The POGO School and Work Transitions Program: Children treated for brain tumours and other cancers may have trouble learning because of their disease or treatment. This can make it harder to reach their school or job goals. School and Work Transitions Counsellors can help your child move from high school to college, university or work. Referrals to this POGO program can be made in various ways including through self-referral, your POGO Interlink Nurse or the POGO AfterCare Program.

Scholarships: Some scholarships are available to children who have had a brain tumour and/or received cancer treatment. These can help with college or university costs. Your POGO Interlink Nurse and/or POGO School and Work Transitions Counsellor can help you find this information.

My POGO Interlink Nurse is:

Contact information:



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