

Our School Clinics – A Fact Sheet

School clinics are medical clinics that are organised through, and held at, a child's school. They give parents and carers the opportunity to meet with doctors, health professionals and support agencies, together with the school staff who see their child every day, to find the best ways to resolve specific health or other issues.

School clinics can be a particularly helpful way of providing care and support to a child with complex needs. They make it as easy as possible for a family to participate. They are an effective way of making sure that a family gains access to the services available to them and is not left to fend for themselves or fall through the cracks in the health, disability service and education systems.

The most important thing about school clinics is that everything revolves around the child and their family. The child's parents or carers are considered the experts on their child because nobody knows them as well as they do. Everyone else brings their specialist knowledge and expertise to a clinic but the best way forward will always be decided by what the family wants and needs to happen to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of their child.

- School clinics can be organised to discuss specific issues, such as behavioural issues, eating, or sleeping issues. They can focus on supporting a family through important periods of change, such as starting school or moving from primary school to high school. A specialised form of clinic – a school transition clinic – is organised as a young person prepares to leave school and move on into adulthood.
- School staff involved in a school clinic might include the school principal, the child's teacher and the school counsellor.
- Health professionals involved in a school clinic might include a paediatrician, another specialist doctor, a psychiatrist, an occupational therapist, a dietitian, and so on. Exactly how the health team is made up varies from clinic to clinic, depending on the issues being discussed.
- Other health and support service providers may also be involved in a clinic, including a disability services case manager or social worker.
- At a school clinic everyone involved talks openly about the particular issues that need to be addressed. The family's priorities are established and everyone is encouraged to participate, offering ideas and suggestions for what steps might be taken to help improve things or provide better support. This might include, for example, introducing new behaviour management strategies at both home and school, doing some new tests, or considering trialling medications.
- All decisions made and actions decided in a school clinic are recorded and shared between participants, with family permission. All professionals involved, from their different agencies, take responsibility for making sure that what's been agreed is followed through. The impact of changes is carefully monitored.

There are clear structures and processes for running a school clinic that ensure it is professionally run. Clinics are guided by a set of foundation principles that inform the way all professionals involved participate. School clinics have a defined set of aims and there are benefits for everyone taking part.

Our school clinics are based on the SchoolKit Clinic model developed in New South Wales by Cairnsfoot School for Specific Purposes, the Kogarah Developmental Assessment Health Service and the Metro-Regional Intellectual Disability Network. Read more about SchoolKit Clinics at schoolkit.org.au.

This document has been sourced from the MRID SchoolKit available online at schoolkit.org.au. It was created as a tool to help run school-based medical clinics using the SchoolKit Clinic model and is copyrighted to the Metro-Regional Intellectual Disability Network.