

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY/CONCUSSION RETURN TO LEARN PROGRAM

HEALTH & WELLNESS UNIT



COLORADO
Department of Education

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Traumatic Brain Injury/Concussion Return to Learn Program is to work with Colorado school districts to develop a comprehensive system of support for all students (athletes and non-athletes) who are returning to learn after having sustained a concussion. This work involves building capacity of school personnel and health professionals, providing in-service and consultation support, developing guidelines/protocols and monitoring and developing appropriate and relevant policies related to supporting students with concussions in the educational setting.

CONCUSSION OVERVIEW

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that approximately 1.6 to 3.8 million sports and recreational concussions occur each year. This excludes the numerous children who sustain concussions from non-sports activities, such as motor vehicle crashes, falls and assaults.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, stretching and damaging the brain cells and creating chemical changes in the brain.

A concussion can lead to a set of symptoms affecting the student’s cognitive, physical, emotional and sleep functions. Fortunately, most people with a concussion recover quickly and fully. But for some people, symptoms can last for days, weeks or longer.

IMPACT ON CLASSROOM LEARNING

While students recover from a concussion, they may experience symptoms that impact their ability to engage in learning. Academic performance may be impacted by symptoms such as: slowed processing speed, memory difficulties, fatigue, headache, sensitivity to light/noise, dizziness, balance difficulties, emotional symptoms, etc.

BEST PRACTICES IN SCHOOL CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

- Students should not engage in physical activity in which they are at risk of being reinjured until all concussion symptoms have resolved and academic adjustments are no longer needed.
- Academic supports may be needed in the form of short-term academic adjustments that are individualized based on the student’s symptoms.
- During the recovery process, academic supports can gradually be reduced as the student is able to tolerate more cognitive activity.

Laws Covering Concussion

Senate Bill 11-040

The Jake Snakenberg Youth Concussion Act

On March 29, 2011, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper signed in to law “Jake Snakenberg Youth Sports Concussion Act.” The Act went into effect Jan. 1, 2012.

The bill requires that:

- Coaches receive education about concussion
- A student athlete is removed from the field of play if a concussion is suspected
- The student be signed off by a healthcare professional before returning to play.



- Communication during the recovery process should occur between school staff involved with the student. In addition, communication should occur between the school, parent and health care provider (with appropriate consent).

JAKE SNAKENBERG YOUTH CONCUSSION ACT, SENATE BILL 11-040

The Jake Snakenberg Youth Concussion Act, Senate Bill 11-040, was named after freshman football player Jake Snakenberg from Grandview High School who died of Second Impact Syndrome following a concussion he received during a football game the previous week. While the Colorado Department of Education does not oversee S.B. 11-040, it supports the bill and helps to ensure that school districts understand the requirements of the law as it pertains to student-athletes ages 11 through 18 years.

Where can I learn more?

- To learn more, visit the Colorado Department of Education Brain Injury website <https://www.cde.state.co.us/healthandwellness/braininjury>.
- For questions, contact Janet Tyler at tyler_j@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-2879.
- Access the [CDE Concussion Management Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)
- Access the [Brain Injury in Children and Youth-A Manual for Educators \(PDF\)](#)
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfags