

An Overview

Why we made this plan?

When someone looks different, unfortunately they are particularly vulnerable to bullying or unkind words from classmates. This plan is intended to help parents, counselors, and teachers work together to identify coping techniques that will help the student, but to also help educate classmates to be kinder and more educated about visible difference. You can read more about these topics at achildrenshouse.org/copingplan.

Your Role

Parents:

You are the expert on your child, and we know it can be stressful when you send them to school and are worried about what others will say. Planning ahead and developing a relationship with your child's teacher can promote an atmosphere of teamwork and give you a wonderful ally in their care! When managing up to 30 young students with multiple needs and teaching goals, a teacher may not have a plan in place for dealing with visible differences, particularly with regard to skin.

Teachers:

You are the experts on development and education. However, we know that skin diseases and their severity are not widely known or understood. Children with skin disease are more likely to struggle with social withdrawal, lack of confidence, and depression. We hope having a preemptive conversation with this family can help you feel prepared for this child's unique disease.

When parents and teachers working together, we can have an unstoppable team!

How to use this form?

This form is intended to help you get the conversation started! Make it work for you -- individualize it, change it, and go over with your child if they are open to discussing. Then set-up a meeting with your child's teacher to review.

Teachers, you are then invited to add, change, modify and ask questions!

School Coping Plan

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Skin Condition: _____

Educate

What language does your child use to describe his/her skin condition to other kids at school?

Parents: Please fill out this box with your child if they can.

Is your child okay with other students helping them answer questions about their skin once they understand the condition? Some children appreciate the support and some prefer to answer questions themselves.

Yes, help from others is okay

No, please ask classmates to tell those with questions to ask my child directly

Other

Normalize

If a student in the class has questions, we have found it can be helpful to draw similarities to other familiar differences.

- All skin is different. Just like people can have all different skin colors, people can also have all different types of skin. Some skin can be very dry, some skin has trouble growing hair, some skin has birthmarks and moles.
- You know how your daddy has to wear glasses to help him see? Well Natalie has to use lots of ointment to keep her skin healthy/feeling comfortable.
- We all have something at some point our body needs help with. We all have different foods that are our favorite, and colors that we like to wear, sports and games we like to play and read. Some things are different some things

Validate and Correct

We understand that kids are curious. Here is an example of how we might handle unkind questions. "I know you had questions and questions are ok, but there are unfriendly questions and unkind words, and there are kind questions and kind words. How can you ask that questions differently with more kindness?" Here are a few things we'd like the students to know about our child's skin condition:

Parents: Please fill out this box with more information about your child's skin condition. Ideas are: that it's not contagious, that they use cream to make it feel better, what it looks like, etc.

Coping tactics

Working together as a team, I hope that we can work together to resolve any issues that might arise for my child with regard to their peers and their skin without disrupting your classroom. I know and respect that teaching and providing a safe space for every child is your first priority. If something emotionally distressing happens at school here are some things that help my child feel better at home:

Parents: Please fill out this box with things that make your child feel better. This is a great section to get teacher's input on what realistic for their class. Ideas are: smooching a pillow or play doh, journaling, making arts and crafts, talking with mom or dad, going on a walk, petting the family dog, and taking deep breaths.

Additional Information

Is there any additional information you'd like to share about your child? When would you like to be contacted by the teacher? Is there anything in particular you'd like them to look out for physically or emotionally?

If you or anyone in the school needs more resources or has questions, please visit achildrenshouse.org/resources or contact us at unite@achildrenshouse.org. We are here to help!