

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

A **child with special health care needs** is defined* as a child who has a “chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional condition that is expected to last 12 months or more and who requires health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally”.

How do I prepare for the arrival of a child with special health care needs in my program?

Step One: Your program’s policies and procedures should address caring for a child with special health care needs. The policies and procedures should state that you have MAT certified or appropriately licensed staff at the program.

Step Two: Discuss with the child’s parent and health care provider the needs of the child and how your program can meet those needs.

Step Three: Work with the child’s parents and health care provider to develop an **Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Health Care Needs** (See Handout 8.4). The plan must:

- Describe the special health care needs of the child.
- Identify how the program will care for the child. The plan of care must be developed by working with the parent and the child’s health care provider. The plan should include any relevant information listed on the Medical Statement at the time of enrollment and any new information, such as a new medical diagnosis or necessary treatment.
- Identify the program staff who will provide care to this child. All staff who will administer medication or treatments to the child must be MAT certified and have valid CPR and first aid certificates or have an appropriate license that exempts them from the training requirement.
- Describe any additional training or skills the staff identified will need to safely care for the child. This must be identified by the working with the child’s parent and the child’s health care provider. In addition, describe who will provide this training and how he/she will teach the staff to administer the medication or treatment. You may wish to contact a child care health consultant (CCHC) to assist with preparing and training staff, providing assistance with policy development as well as ongoing technical support while you care for this child.

Step Four: Have all staff identified in the child’s Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Health Care Needs complete any specialized training identified in the plan.

Step Five: Have an authorized program representative sign the child’s Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Health Care Needs.

Step Six: Have the parent/guardian sign the child’s Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Health Care Needs.

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau