

Research Matters

Hospital to School Transition Following Traumatic Brain Injury

WHY IS HOSPITAL TO SCHOOL TRANSITION FOLLOWING TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI) IMPORTANT?

- Students who have a systematic transition are more likely to get linked with appropriate support services when they return to school.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Authors Todis, McCart, and Glang (2018) analyzed qualitative data from parents and educators of 21 students with TBI who were interviewed annually. Student observational data was also collected in schools. The authors examined the types of transition services offered, and how educators received information about and implemented hospital transition recommendations. Based on their findings, the authors provide recommendations for improving hospital-school transition following TBI.

KEY FINDINGS

- There is inconsistency in how the hospital-school transition is handled across institutions. The three patterns that emerged were:
 - *Hospital staff did not communicate with school staff and passed little or no information about TBI to parents or teachers.* In most of these cases the parents expressed dissatisfaction with the transition process.
 - *Hospital staff did contact school staff.* In some of these cases the parents expressed satisfaction with the transition process, and some did not.
 - *Hospital staff provided information about TBI to the parents and the parents passed the information along to the schools.* In all of these cases the parents expressed dissatisfaction with the transition process.
- When students returned to school after TBI educators were either uninformed about their injuries, or unaware of their needs.
 - In most cases when a student returned to the same school and grade as they had attended before their injury, all school staff were aware of a student's injury, especially in elementary schools or small communities.
 - Awareness of injury didn't ensure accommodations.
 - In larger schools, fewer staff were aware of a student's injury. This was especially the case when the student had no visible injury because staff assumed the student had fully recovered.
 - When a student returned to a new classroom or school, they were less likely to receive accommodations.

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further research is needed to determine what, when, and how transition services should be provided.
- A process for hospital - school transition is needed for all students, not just those receiving rehabilitation services.
- Student recovery should be tracked and monitored so that supports continue as needed over time.
- Educator training is needed so appropriate accommodations can be developed when a student returns to school following TBI.

REFERENCE

Todis, B., McCart, M., & Glang, A. (2018). Hospital to school transition following traumatic brain injury: A qualitative longitudinal study. *NeuroRehabilitation*, 42(3), 269-276.