

School Accommodation Recommendations

Diagnosis: Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD)

Duchenne muscular dystrophy is a progressive genetic neuromuscular disease that affects all major muscle groups in the body, beginning with those in the legs and arms. Due to the progressive nature of this disease, and the fact that physical fatigue in children with DMD usually impacts them within the school environment, it is imperative that educational professionals who work with boys with DMD be aware of their diagnosis, needs and abilities.

Learning disabilities are common in DMD and may impact academic achievement. It is important that school health officials understand that this disease is not contagious, and does not make this student more of a health risk in school. He does, however, run an increased risk of falls and injury once he fatigues.

Within the school setting, the following aids, interventions, and supports are recommended for students with DMD to be able to fully access their school environment and excel academically and socially.

Physical Therapy

- Stretching
- Range of Motion exercises
- Muscle cramp massage
- Safety training (on stairs & playground)
- Hallway safety
- Accommodating activities of daily living (ADL's) to changing physical needs (toileting, lunch time/cafeteria safety, etc)
- Adapted/modified Physical Education (see next section)

Physical Education (Adapted)

Being physically active is absolutely critical in DMD. It is also imperative that students remain included in the general education classroom for PE. The modification of most activities can be done through consultation with the Physical Therapist, with the goal of this student's PE curriculum being recreation, rather than competition or increased strength & endurance. It is critical that boys with DMD be restricted from eccentric exercises, as these may cause muscle damage in boys with Duchenne. ***Under no circumstances should he lift weights, do push ups, pull ups, or abdominal crunches – these activities will be detrimental to his physical strength.***

Occupational Therapy

As boys with DMD become physically weaker, an Assistive Technology Evaluation will be indicated. In addition, an occupational therapy consultation for body positioning, seating, and gross and fine motor function is recommended. Many students with DMD use assistive devices such as manual or power wheelchairs. They may also require modified written assignments or computer technology that maximizes fine motor strength or utilizes voice command/dictation typing systems.

School Accommodations

- An additional set of text books should be provided to the student so that he does not need to transport heavy text books to and from school (or from one classroom to another).
- If the school has multiple levels, the student should have access to an elevator.
- Whenever possible, this student's physical needs should be taken into consideration when designing his class schedule (classrooms should be close together to minimize distance walked throughout the day, etc).
- Preferential seating in the classroom will allow a student with DMD to safely navigate the classroom and access his class environment.
- An Emergency Evacuation Plan should take the student's physical needs into consideration. School personnel should be assigned to accompany him during an emergency. If the school has multiple levels, a 'Safe Room' should be established with the local fire department.
- Field trips and school events should take into consideration the needs of this student. For example, how far will students have to walk from the bus to the front door? Is the field trip destination accessible for wheelchairs? Is there a wheelchair lift on the bus? Have chaperones been informed of this student's needs? Etc.

Thank you . . .

for your commitment to your student. With your support, this student will successfully achieve his academic goals while also learning to adapt to his body's changing physical needs.

For more information regarding Duchenne muscular dystrophy, please feel free to contact the Muscular Dystrophy Association at (800) 572-1717 or visit our website at www.mda.org.

Thank you.