

**The new school year provides a crucial opportunity to enroll children in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). More than 38 million children benefit from these programs, and schools provide a unique and vital setting for enrolling children in coverage to ensure they have access to essential health care services.**

As trusted community hubs, schools can identify uninsured students, connect families with enrollment resources, and facilitate access to preventive and routine care, ultimately supporting both children’s health and academic success.

## Medicaid’s School-Based Services

---

Medicaid and CHIP provide a [wide range of health services](#) that can be accessed directly at school, including those offered through school-based health centers. These services include:

- Preventive care;
- Oral health care;
- Behavioral health care;
- Routine screenings; and,
- Acute care services, such as treatment for asthma and diabetes.

School-based resources are particularly important for students with disabilities, as they help cover supports that these students might need to be successful in school, such as hearing aids, eyeglasses, wheelchairs, and other assistive technology.

For students with more complex needs, Medicaid and CHIP help cover services provided through an [individualized education plan \(IEP\)](#) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These include physical, occupational, and speech therapy services.

## Expanding Vaccination Access

---

Schools also provide an essential setting to ensure millions of children receive lifesaving vaccines that prevent and fight disease.

Medicaid’s [Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment \(EPSDT\)](#) benefit ensures that children under 21 receive all vaccines [recommended](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Through the [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\)](#) program, eligible children — including those enrolled in Medicaid, uninsured, underinsured, or those who are American Indian/Alaska Native — can receive vaccines at no cost, helping to protect vulnerable populations and prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Medicaid coverage of routine vaccines protects millions of children from serious illnesses. Getting the annual flu vaccine [reduces](#) a child’s risk of severe, life-threatening influenza by 75 percent. Additionally, a [study](#) found that the COVID-19 vaccine reduced the risk of hospitalization due to COVID-19 by two-thirds among children aged 5-11 during the Omicron wave.

## Improving Health Outcomes

---

The health care interventions that children receive through Medicaid school-based services provide lasting benefits across all stages of their life.

Children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP tend to have [better academic performance](#), [fewer school absences](#) due to illness or injury, and a [higher likelihood of completing school](#) and pursuing higher education. In the long term, these benefits [translate](#) to fewer emergency room visits and higher earnings as adults, showcasing Medicaid's lasting positive impact.

## Recent Progress in Expanding Medicaid School-Based Services

---

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) continues to implement innovative new initiatives to expand and enhance Medicaid school-based health services. In 2022 and 2023, the agency introduced [new guidance](#) to expand access to school-based health services while reducing the administrative challenges schools encounter when providing services through Medicaid.

This guidance aims to:

- Increase school provider capacity through reimbursement and provider qualification flexibility;
- Reduce administration burden by simplifying billing and claiming processes;
- Encourage use of CHIP Health Services initiatives to address behavioral health issues; and,
- Provide state grants to expand school-based services.

Additionally, CMS is working with the Department of Education to establish a [Technical Assistance Center \(TAC\)](#) to enhance the capacity of state Medicaid and education agencies, local education agencies, and school districts to effectively deliver school-based services under Medicaid.

**For more information about Medicaid's vital role in supporting students, check out our latest infographic highlighting how the program ensures millions of children have access to lifesaving vaccines.**