

Back to School after a Concussion

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Often students return to school with subtle cognitive, academic or behavioral needs following concussion. If these are addressed early on it can alleviate long-term difficulties. Here are guidelines for when a student returns to school after a concussion or mild brain injury.

1. Inform school staff

For information about concussion/mild brain injury: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/default.htm>

2. Monitor student

Watch for any of the possible red flags associated with concussion/mild brain injury:

Cognitive difficulties compared to pre-injury performance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trouble paying attention• Difficulty remaining on task• Slowed responses and or processing of information• Difficulty shifting attention from task to task• Organization challenges• Reduced academic performance	Social behavior difficulties compared to pre-injury <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impulsive behaviors• Initiation difficulties (trouble starting things)• Changes in mood• Depression• Defiance• Fatigue• Confusion
Physical difficulties <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• Blurred vision• Changes in taste or smell	

3. Provide accommodations

A. If red flags appear, teachers can provide minimal accommodations on a temporary basis until symptoms subside (usually within 3-4 weeks). Accommodations might include:

- Reduced assignment load
- Increased time to complete assignments or exams
- Use of an organizer to track assignments
- Rest periods during the day
- Directions in both oral and written formats
- Clear expectations
- Large tasks broken into smaller components

B. If the student continues to have academic difficulty after a month, the student's concerns should be further evaluated by a team and the evaluation process for more formalized support such as a 504 plan or IEP begun.

4. Communicate with the family

Stay in regular communication about changes noticed at school and at home.

For more information or assistance about concussion/brain injury, contact Pat Sublette at 541-346-0597 or the Oregon TBI Consulting Team at: <http://www.tr.wou.edu/team>