



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION SHOULD PROTECT STUDENT HEALTH TO PREVENT DISABILITY**

*Education outcomes measures focus on academic test scores, whereas disability educators have traditionally focused on self-sufficiency in adult life as an outcome.*

The Alliance on Education Excellence sponsored a forum on education reform. A question was raised that focused on the validity of academic assessments in “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB). There is a disconnect between the outcomes measures used in NCLB and those used by disability educators. Outcomes used under NCLB are academic test scores, while disability education outcomes are self-sufficiency in adult life.

### **Summary**

There is impressive evidence that the health of children that include youth with disabilities is poor and their health gets worse as they move closer to school exit. These circumstances may contribute to disability and secondary disabling conditions. Of special concern is the narrowing of the public education curriculum which compromises health functions related to the transition of students to healthy lives.

### **Disability Prevention Issue**

There is concern for improving health outcomes for children and youth with disabilities through collaborative school public health and health education initiatives. There are school public health and health education functions that can be effectively coordinated to enable adequate health outcomes for children with poor health and disabilities. Health functions associated with public education for students with disabilities are access to federal nutrition programs, effective health and physical education programs, counseling, participation in school health programs, effective nursing services and health status measures. Schools should coordinate health functions to improve public health and health education to serve children, including children and youth with disabilities.

### **Intervention**

Post forum discussions were held with presenters about concerns of narrowing the NCLB curricula to reading, math and science, and participation of children with disabilities in the regular curriculum to meet unique needs for self-sufficiency in adult life which includes health of students.

**Recommendation**

Goals of education should include functional healthy lifestyles that contribute to the self-sufficiency in adult life for all children.