

Kids Get Arthritis, Too!



HOW JUVENILE ARTHRITIS MAY AFFECT A CHILD AT SCHOOL

This chart can help you identify the arthritis symptoms that may cause problems at school and learn possible solutions for minimizing their impact.

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL SCHOOL IMPACT	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
PAINFUL OR LIMITED MOBILITY	Difficulty waiting for or getting on and off the school bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if your child qualifies for transportation services under IDEA. • Arrange for your child to get assistance climbing the stairs on the bus.
	Difficulty moving around the school campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for your child to leave class a few minutes early or to arrive a few minutes late. • Arrange for your child to have a classmate assist him or her during class changes and lunch. • Ask the school to schedule classes close together so your child does not have to walk long distances. • Arrange for your child to have permission for longer bathroom breaks or to use the closest bathroom to his or her location. • Arrange for adequate provisions for your child during safety drills and emergency evacuations.
STIFFNESS	Needs more time to get ready in the morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for your child to get an excused absence for classes that begin before he or she arrives at school. • Arrange for your child to get permission to be tardy.
	Stiffness after sitting in one position for too long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the teacher to allow your child to stand and stretch as needed. • Arrange for your child to sit in the back or to one side of the classroom so he or she can stand without distracting other students. • Ask the school to provide a stool for your child to prop his or her legs to help promote knee extension. • Provide or request a chair or thick pillow for your child to sit on during circle time.
NECK PROBLEMS	Neck position causes pain when reading or doing desk work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your child use a book holder to position books at a comfortable reading angle.
PAIN WITH MOVING SHOULDERS AND ARMS	Difficulty carrying books, lunch tray or other items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show your child joint-protection and lifting techniques. • Ask for a second set of books for your child to keep at home so his or her backpack won't be too heavy. • Provide your child with a bookbag with wheels and get permission for him or her to use it between classes. • Show your child how to carry a backpack properly. • Arrange for a classmate to help carry items.

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL SCHOOL IMPACT	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
DIFFICULTY USING HANDS AND FINGERS	Difficulty with writing, doing art projects and using scissors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up your child’s pens and pencils with foam or rubber, or provide ergonomic writing instruments that require less effort to use. • Arrange for your child to get extra time to complete tests or to dictate answers, as well as to record class lectures, use a computer in class, or have other students share their class notes. • Get permission for your child to have shorter homework assignments or be allowed to type assignments. • Get permission for assignments to be typed by a parent.
	Other difficulties, such as opening lockers, using water fountains, opening doors, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistive devices such as door openers or faucet turners . • Arrange for your child to have permission to take longer bathroom breaks. • Arrange for a classmate to assist with these activities.
FATIGUE	Tires easily throughout the school day; sometimes has trouble keeping up physically and academically with other students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for your child to have a rest period during the school day. • Arrange for your child to miss P.E class. • Arrange for your child to stay inside for recess. • Arrange for your child to make up in-class assignments at a later time.
MODERATE TO SEVERE JOINT INVOLVEMENT MANY JOINTS INVOLVED	Cannot participate in regular physical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for your child to miss P.E. classes, have modified physical activity or have alternate duties such as timekeeping.
EYE PROBLEMS	Eyes may tire easily; reduced vision or temporary blindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for seating where your child can see best. • Arrange for a classmate or teacher to read lengthy assignments to your child. • Arrange for your child to record lectures. • Arrange for your child to get assistance moving around campus.
DIFFICULTY WITH SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT	Difficulty telling classmates and staff about arthritis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to talk with one or two students as a way to get comfortable talking about his or her disease. • Offer to educate staff and classmates about your child’s arthritis. • Encourage your child to participate in activities that increase self-esteem. • Connect your child with other children with JA who can share tips on talking to others about arthritis.
	Self-consciousness about splints, crutches or other adaptive devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow your child to personalize his or her assistive devices. • Offer to educate staff and classmates about your child’s arthritis.
FLUCTUATIONS IN DISEASE ACTIVITY	Can do some activities sometimes but is not always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep school staff informed of changes throughout the school year so that accommodations are in place for times when they are needed.