

After a concussion, students may need gradual transition back to academics

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A concussion should not only take a student athlete off the playing field – it may also require a break from the classroom, according to a new clinical report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

In the clinical report, "Returning to Learning Following a Concussion," released Sunday, Oct. 27 at the AAP National Conference & Exhibition in Orlando, the AAP offers guidance to pediatricians caring for children and adolescents after suffering a [concussion](#).

"Students appear physically normal after a concussion, so it may be difficult for teachers and administrators to understand the extent of the child's injuries and recognize the potential need for academic adjustments," said Mark Halstead, MD, FAAP, a lead author of the clinical report. "But we know that children who've had a concussion may have trouble learning new material and remembering what they've learned, and returning to academics may worsen concussion symptoms."

Dr. Halstead will deliver a plenary address on concussion injuries on Oct. 27 at the Orange County Convention Center.

Research has shown that a school-aged student usually recovers from a concussion within three weeks. If symptoms are severe, some [students](#) may need to stay home from school after a concussion. If symptoms are mild or tolerable, the parent may consider returning him or her to school, perhaps with some adjustments. Students with severe or prolonged symptoms lasting more than 3 weeks may require more formalized

academic accommodations.

The AAP recommends a collaborative team approach to help a student recovering from a concussion. This team should consist of the child or adolescent's pediatrician, family members and individuals at the child's school responsible for both the student's academic schedule and physical activity. Detailed guidance on returning to sports and physical activities is contained in the 2010 AAP clinical report, "Sport-Related Concussion in Children and Adolescents."

A symptom checklist can help evaluate what symptoms the student is experiencing, and how severe they are.

"Every concussion is unique and symptoms will vary from student to student, so managing a student's return to the classroom will require an individualized approach," said Dr. Halstead. "The goal is to minimize disruptions to the student's life and return the student to school as soon as possible, and as [symptoms](#) improve, to increase the student's social, mental and physical activities."

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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