

The purpose of school is to receive instruction, to practice and reinforce the learning with output (in-class work and homework) and to demonstrate “mastery” of the material - usually, with tests and ultimately, by grades. Obviously a concussion will affect mental efficiency, speed of input/output and memory of material and will impact all three areas of: instruction, work output and tests/grades.

Did you read “What to do About... Work Output and Tests”: Issues #16 and 17?

If you did, then you noticed that what to do about work output and tests is almost always dependent upon whether or not the student received the instruction.

A concussion can impact the student’s mental energy, processing speed and ability to learn new material for up to 3 to 4 weeks. After a few days of rest at home, most students will be back at school. Parents will want teachers to do all they can to support recovery with a reduction of in-class work/homework, exemption from work output and/or tests... aka “gifts” from teachers. But “gifts” given by teachers cannot happen unless the student IS AT school and has access to the **instruction**. During the initial 3 to 4 weeks of concussion management, the primary goal is to have the student be present at school for as many classes as possible to maximize **exposure** to instruction.

If the concussed student can be at school, can listen, can learn, teachers then have the option to cut back the work and/or remove the work. They will be less worried about a reduction in work output/tests if they know the student is still learning during the recovery by being available in class.



**Goal #1:** Student should in school for as much of the day as possible.

**Plan:** School needs to understand the cognitive effects of concussion.

School needs to support teachers in providing immediate academic adjustments.



**Goal #2:** Symptoms need to be tolerable, manageable and intermittent.

**Plan:** Student should take frequent eye/brain rest breaks – 5 to 10 minutes per hour in the classroom automatically built into the day

Student may also take a scheduled 20-minute rest break mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon in school clinic, if needed. Teachers should consider a reduction in work, a removal of work & focus on *comprehension of learning instead of work output* (in-class and homework) and tests

See *Symptom Wheel Issue #6* for more academic adjustments



**Goal #3:** Concussed student must be OUT of all physical activities: no PE, no physical play at recess, no sports

Plan: Student may rest during PE class or recess

## Parents and Students

Many teachers will meet students more than half way during recovery.

However, the supports teachers provide can only be determined if the student is present at school. Think about it... if a student is not at school and has never heard the lesson, how can the teacher begin to know where or what to cut back?

How will the teacher grade a lesson never learned? They can't and they should not be expected to do so in these instances. If a student is present at school, teachers might make a spontaneous decision to remove a test, cut the problems by half, or only require participation for a grade. Those are “gifts” provided by teachers – richer because the teacher and student have a trusting relationship.

### TIPS

✓ **DO** check in with each one of your teachers daily as you walk in and out of class. **Be a good self-advocate!**

✓ **DON'T** walk in and out of class texting. Teachers know that texting is “off limits” during a concussion.

✓ **DO** work out a plan with each teacher about expectations for their class. Expectations will be different in every class, depending upon the content, the time of day, the style of teaching. Expectations will and should increase daily and weekly.

✓ **DON'T** attend extracurricular activities such as practices, clubs or games if you are not attending classes consistently. “Gifts” from teachers will not be forthcoming if extracurricular activities obviously take a higher priority than academics.