

STARTING SCHOOL: WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME?

Knowing that your child has hemophilia or another bleeding disorder can make everyday decisions, such as starting nursery school, feel overwhelming.

It is important to remember that there is no single “right” option. Parents may have different views or levels of concern about starting nursery school. One parent may feel confident that the child is ready, while the other may worry about safety or whether it is the right time. These differences are normal and can be part of the family’s process of making the best decision for their child.

Each family should consider their own situation, including the severity of the disorder, treatment, previous experiences, and their level of trust in the school.

With the right information and guidance, it is possible to make a safe and appropriate decision. A gradual transition or adaptation period may help both the child and the family feel more confident when starting nursery school.



TIP: You don’t have to decide alone, your healthcare team and hemophilia association are there to support you.



Find local support:

We invite you to contact your national member organizations (NMO) or a hemophilia treatment centre (HTC) by consulting our global directory:
wfh.org/find-local-support



Why can nursery school be beneficial?

Early schooling is not only about education; it is a key life experience. Attending nursery school helps children:

- Build relationships
- Develop autonomy
- Feel part of a group

Education is not only preparation for life; it is part of life itself and of the child's identity development. It also supports:

- Emotional and social development
- The acquisition of routines
- Early autonomy
- Work-family balance

Schooling is an important part of a child's development and identity.

Development in the early years

During early childhood, play, movement, and exploration are not secondary aspects, they are fundamental for physical, cognitive, and emotional development. Through movement, children learn about their bodies, experiment, interact with their environment, and build self-confidence.

Limiting these experiences due to fear can interfere with their development. **Protecting is not the same as overprotecting. Avoiding all risks may unintentionally limit the child's learning, autonomy, and confidence.**

Common fears and concerns

It is completely normal to have questions such as:

- "What if they get hurt?"
- "Will they know how to take care of them?"
- "Is it too soon?"

These concerns are part of adapting to a new reality.

Fear is natural, not only for parents but also for teachers. Teachers may understandably have questions, hesitations, or concerns about caring for a child with a bleeding disorder. By acknowledging these feelings and providing information and support, parents can help build confidence and ensure that the child is not restricted more than necessary.

Conditions for safe schooling

Before starting, it is helpful to ensure that:

- The school is informed about the bleeding disorder
- Staff can recognize and respond to bleeding episodes
- A clear emergency plan is in place
- Communication with the family and the child care/teaching staff should be open and consistent

Agreeing in advance on who to contact and how to act in specific situations can greatly increase confidence for both families and staff.

Who needs to know?

Families often wonder how much information about their child's bleeding disorder should be shared and with whom. There is no single approach that fits every family. However, for safety reasons, key members of staff should have the information necessary to respond appropriately in an emergency.

This may include:

- The head teacher or school director
- The class teacher
- Relevant support staff
- School nurses or health personnel (when available)

The information shared should be proportionate, respectful of the child's and family's privacy, and focused on supporting the child's well-being and participation at school. **Agree in advance who needs to know, what information should be shared, and how communication will be handled.**

Practical recommendations

- Visit the school before making a decision
- Explain your child's condition clearly and simply
- Prepare basic information (contacts, action guidelines)

Your treatment center or hemophilia association can help support and reassure the school.



Early schooling is possible and is beneficial when the right conditions are in place. The goal is not to eliminate all risks, but to find a balance between safety, well-being, and development.

Your child at school: supporting everyday life

School as a space for growth

School is not only a place for academic learning, it is where children build identity, relationships, and self-esteem.

For children with a bleeding disorder, school is also a key place to develop independence and social skills.

Your child is, above all, a child. The bleeding disorder is part of their life, but it does not define them. Encourage the child, according to their age and developmental level, to understand their condition and communicate their needs.

Participation and activity

Participation is essential for the child's development. Whenever possible:

- Encourage play
- Support adapted physical activity
- Avoid unnecessary exclusion

Safe physical activity is generally encouraged and supports both physical and emotional development. Participation helps build confidence, skills, and relationships.

A child like any other

It is important for your child to experience school as normally as possible. Your child should be able to:

- Play
- Participate
- Learn
- Interact with others

School is about belonging, participating, solving problems, and growing.

Overprotection vs autonomy

Finding the right balance means:

- Protecting without over-limiting
- Supporting without restricting
- Encouraging the child to develop autonomy progressively

Helping children learn to understand their condition, express their needs, and ask for help is a key step in building autonomy.



Educational needs and support requirements may change over time. Regular review and communication can help ensure that support remains appropriate as the child grows.

Challenges that may arise

Some challenges may include:

- Absences due to medical appointments or bleeding episodes
- Pain, fatigue, or physical limitations
- Restrictions in certain activities
- Lack of awareness in the environment
- Overprotection or lack of adaptation
- Occasional isolation or misunderstanding

Not all challenges are related to the bleeding disorder. **We should not focus only on hemophilia. Children with bleeding disorders can also have the same developmental, emotional, and social needs as their peers. Schools should also promote an inclusive environment and address bullying or stigma when it occurs.**



The key: communication

One of the most important factors for successful schooling is communication. Coordination between **the family/parents, the child, the school, the healthcare team, and associations** helps anticipate situations, reduce anxiety, and facilitate inclusion.



TIP: The child should not only be the subject of decisions, but also an active participant in discussions and plans that affect their daily life, according to their age and level of understanding.



What the school needs to know

The educational team does not need complex medical knowledge, but they do need clear and practical information:

- What the bleeding disorder is
- Warning signs
- How to respond to a bleeding episode
- Who to contact in an emergency

Basic safety tools

Useful tools include:

- An updated contact sheet (family, hospital, emergency services)
- A simple action protocol (1 page)
- Clear and accessible information

The simpler the tool, the easier it will be to use in daily practice.

School should be a place where the child can participate, feel included, and develop.



For more great resources about bleeding disorders:

The WFH eLearning platform is your one-stop-shop for all your educational resource needs. With just a few clicks, you can find everything you need on hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders—from a quick introduction to in-depth guides and articles.



eLearning.wfh.org