

Pandemic Planning

Taken from <http://www.ohioandemicflu.gov> – Last updated July 24, 2006

Being prepared for an influenza pandemic can help protect the health of staff members and students. Experts believe a worldwide outbreak, or pandemic, of influenza will happen someday. Preparing for a pandemic is much like preparing for other emergencies. During a pandemic, schools and daycares may be temporarily closed to lessen the spread of flu. While many schools have systems in place for notifying staff and students of "snow days" there are still other issues to think about.

There were three flu pandemics last century: 1918, 1957 and 1968. The following passage from the 1957 Ohio Department of Health annual report provides an overview of the flu's impact on Ohio schools.

Influenza was usually noted first in communities in school populations. These school outbreaks were usually sharp with many acutely ill students being sent home from school during the first several days of the outbreak. High absenteeism resulted, occasionally as high as 80 percent on some days. Generally, the first to be affected were children of junior or senior high school age, with rapid spread to younger age groups. . . Two telephone surveys were completed involving children and families associated with schools in which outbreaks had occurred. These were done in Lucas County and Columbus. Attack rates of 54 and 65 percent were reached in the school children during the three weeks following the beginning of the outbreak. Approximately 33 percent of the family contacts had also become ill, during this period, while almost one-half of the families reported no illness. The disease was usually not severe, lasting 3 to 5 days. The mean duration of absenteeism was approximately three days.

Devoting time and resources to planning is important; even if the current H5N1 avian (bird) flu virus circulating overseas does not emerge to cause the next pandemic, another eventually will.

In the event that schools are closed, below you will find links to resources that your child may use while schools are closed.

Surfing the Web for Learning

Reminder.... Although we have previewed all of the following websites, please remember that on-line websites change often. At the time of this publication, the sites listed were in operation and suitable for use with children. Always check out the sites and materials prior to use by your child.

Check These Out with Your Child

<http://pbskids.org>

www.enchantedlearning.com

www.toread.com

www.starfall.com

www.dltk-teach.com

www.kidzone.ws

www.literacycenter.net

www.hubbardscupboard.org

www.gigglepoetry.com

www.janbrett.com

<http://abcteach.com>

www.readersthetre.ecsd.net

www.activityvillage.co.uk/alphabets.htm

www.earlylitature.ecsd.net

www.sesamestreet.com

www.schoolexpress.com

Sites for Teachers/Parents

www.puzzlemaker.com (make a word search from spelling words)

www.blocks4reading.com

www.eduplace.com (Create graphic organizers to help writing ideas flow)

www.ode.state.oh.us/families/ohioeducationsystem/academiccontentstandards (An explanation of Ohio's new content standards)

www.readingrockets.org (A site full of information for parents who have young readers)

www.readinglady.com