



Sample School Health Letter from Pediatrician to School

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in regard to my patient, Sally Jones.

Sally was seen by me for evaluation of possible ADHD/angry outbursts/ behavior problems/ poor attention. A thorough medical evaluation was completed and revealed the most likely cause to be an overactive stress response (also known as the toxic stress response) caused by high levels of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

In the toxic stress response, the body has difficulty regulating the stress response: it is quick to release high levels of stress hormones, the release of hormones may be greater than normal, and the body has difficulty shutting off the stress response. The effects of the toxic stress response may be on behavior, brain development, the immune system, hormones or all of the above.

Symptoms of a toxic stress include – being easily triggered, difficulty calming oneself down in stressful situations, impaired executive functioning (difficulty with attention, memory, impulse control and self-regulation). This impaired executive functioning can often lead to behavioral symptoms at school. Other symptoms include frequent infection, increase risk of asthma and allergies, increased aches and pains including headache and abdominal pain, and overweight or obesity.

The treatment regimen involves reducing the dose of adversity, regulating the stress response and enhancing the capacity of caring adults in the child's life to help buffer her stress response. Activities that regulate the stress response include – sleep, exercise, nutrition, mindfulness, mental health and healthy relationships.

Sally's treatment plan includes:

1. Guanfacine X mg by mouth every morning
2. 60 minutes vigorous exercise, 5 days per week.
3. Mindfulness practice, 10 minutes twice per day
4. In addition, Sally should receive trauma-focused mental health services and a trauma-focused individualized education plan. Examples of a trauma-focused education plan include more regular check-ins with the child's family; identifying and effectively coordinating with mental health and other services outside the school; supporting access to community resources; and promoting predictable routines in the classroom to ensure the child's physical and psychological safety.



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me. I look forward to partnering with you to support Sally's health and academic success.

Sincerely,

Name of Primary Care Provider

For more information on toxic stress, please visit:

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

<https://www.stresshealth.org/>

<https://traumaawareschools.org/traumaInSchools>

<https://traumasensitiveschools.org/>