

Preface

This book exists for two primary reasons: (1) the incredible pressures on educators to address children's medical issues in school settings and (2) the rapid pace of news and information delivery, which often occurs despite safeguards to ensure credibility and verifiability. Educators are charged with making policies, differentiating instruction, providing educational accommodations, managing the physical plant, providing special education services, collaborating with families, and working with the community in response to children's medical, physical, and psychological issues. However, educators often have little training, support, or information to address these important issues. When faced with a medical question, many people (including us) turn to the Internet. Although much information from the Internet is high quality, much is not. Peer-reviewed scientific papers are often given the same weight in search engine results as advertisements for the latest snake oil. Information about medical issues is (1) presented in esoteric medical science journals with little relevance to schooling, (2) included as part of an encyclopedic but cursory overview of many topics, or (3) summarized and simplified on Web sites with questionable accuracy and oversight. We developed this book to give support and information to educators based on a critical review of scientific research that is credible, in depth, and practical.

Genetic and Acquired Disorders is the second book in a three-volume series entitled *Current Topics and Interventions for Educators*. This series presents detailed reviews of recent scientific research on a variety of topics in pediatrics that are most relevant to schools today. *Current Topics and Interventions for Educators* is intended to provide not only detailed scientific information on pediatric issues but also glossaries of key medical terms, educational strategies, case studies, handouts for teachers and parents, and discussion questions. Readers are presented with critical reviews of scientific medical research, including discussion of controversial issues. The authors of each chapter have completed scholarly reviews of the extant research and carefully considered the quality of research design, methodology, and sampling in determining what can be considered empirically valid conclusions versus conclusions based on hyperbole, conjecture, or myth. We believe that this information will help educators address the pediatric issues that affect schoolchildren and be better equipped to discuss these issues with parents, staff, and medical teams.

This book originated from a regular feature in the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) publication *Communiqué* called "Pediatric

School Psychology.” We edited and published many detailed articles that provided in-depth, critical evaluation of research to keep school psychologists current on medical knowledge that could impact their practice in the schools. We found that school psychologists shared this information with policy makers, administrators, social workers, teachers, therapists, and families. This feedback told us that there is a wider audience for these topics.

Educators, students, school nurses, administrators, policy makers, and school psychologists can use this book in a variety of ways. This book can serve as a reference tool, textbook for a course, or a basis for continuing education activities in schools. The literature reviews are critical, challenge popular understanding, and often present controversial information. We would also like the information in this book to serve as grist for discussion and debate. More than ever, educators are charged by law, regulation, or circumstance to address medical issues, despite lacking medical training. Therefore, consultation, reasoned discussion, debate, and consensus building can lead to improved educational services for children with medical and psychiatric issues.

Genetic and Acquired Disorders: Current Topics and Interventions for Educators is a 14-chapter volume divided into three sections: (1) advances in health care and coping with loss in schools; (2) chromosomal, genetic, and metabolic disorders; and (3) acquired disorders. The volume opens with a discussion of advances in medical science and how these advances have led to new challenges for families and schools. Contrastingly, despite advances in medical science, coping with the death of a member of the school community is commonplace and requires a comprehensive intervention approach. The section on chromosomal, genetic, and metabolic disorders includes the controversy concerning rare chromosomal disorders, phenylketonuria, the genetics of autism, the biological basis of shyness, and families of children with genetic disorders. The section on acquired disorders includes chapters on prenatal alcohol exposure, prenatal exposure to antidepressants, celiac disease, maternal postpartum depression and behavior problems, asthma and quality of life, food allergies, and diabetes. Although not inclusive, this volume covers topics that are among the most urgent and current in pediatrics in the schools.

—Paul C. McCabe and Steven R. Shaw, Editors