

## Asthma Education Makes a Difference in Child Care!



### Meet Hannah and Her Family

Hannah is five years old and attends the [Goddard School in Forked River](#). Everyone in her family has allergies and asthma, but Hannah's is the most serious. Her dad and her sister Kayla, age 10, have asthma that is triggered by exercise so Kayla takes her asthma medication before she plays basketball. She keeps her inhaler in her gym bag.

Hannah has an [asthma treatment plan](#) and takes daily medication to stay healthy. She takes a fast acting medication for milder symptoms and increases medication using a nebulizer for more severe symptoms. And she remains active. She has just started playing soccer.

Hannah knows a lot about controlling her asthma. The mats in her school for afternoon naps were a trigger for her asthma so she made her own. With foam and special allergy reducing bed sheets sewn together to cover the foam, she can rest peacefully. And she always takes this mat with her when she is staying away from home – like the family trip to Disney World!

### Mom and Dad Breathe Easier Too

"When Hannah was in a different child care program, I was called every day to come take Hannah home because she was so sick," said Hannah's Mom. "It wasn't because they didn't want to help; it was because they didn't know how. Since Hannah has been attending the Goddard School in Forked River I am so relieved. She hasn't been sent home once because all of the staff knows what to do. **Finally my husband and I can both hold full time jobs!**"

*"It wasn't because they didn't want to help; it was because they didn't know how"*

### Meet Toni



Toni is one of the owners of the Goddard School in Forked River and she was previously a director of a Goddard School herself. She is actively involved in all the operations of the school, including the Quality Assurance Program to see that children stay safe and healthy.

Toni was concerned with the growing number of children in their care with allergies and asthma. They were already using an "Allergy Intake Form" with new students that registered. But they wanted to do more. PACNJ, in collaboration with the [Children's Home Society of New Jersey](#), Ocean County's Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, provided the training to all of their staff on [Policies and Practices for Asthma Friendly Child Care](#).

"The information on [asthma triggers](#) and [asthma symptoms](#) was very important," said Toni. "Our staff doesn't give medication, that's done in the administration office. But, they need to be aware of the early warning signs so they can get

us right away when they see a change. Now they understand that when a child in there class has asthma they need to look for anything that could trigger an asthma episode. And they do! I have seen staff close windows on high pollen days.

### Setting Policies to Reduce Asthma Triggers

Toni explained that after the training they took action to keep the building as clean as possible:

- We have always had our cleaning crew come every day and clean everything, including carpets and flooring, but we revised our contract with the company to include cleaning the intake vents of our ventilation system
- I was taking the stuffed animals and toys home every week to wash them. Now we bought a washer and dryer for the school and wash them every day
- And we all know to go to the link on the PACNJ website to [check the pollen count](#) during this allergy season.

"We want to go above and beyond," said Toni, "because we want the children to participate in all of our activities including our science and nature explorations outside. We don't want any child to feel left out because they have asthma."

"My advice to child care programs is that it is very important for parents, staff and administrators to work together as a team. And take [Policies and Practices for Asthma Friendly Child Care](#), it really can help!"

**Want to know more about  
PACNJ's "Policies and  
Practices for Asthma Friendly  
Child Care" Training?  
Email: [info@pacnj.org](mailto:info@pacnj.org)**

### Going Above and Beyond

The [Goddard School in Forked River](#) hosts the American Lung Association *Walk for Life and Breath* each year. "The reason we got involved is that we provide nebulizer treatments for so many asthmatic children here on a daily basis," said Gary, the other owner of the school and Toni's dad. "And on top of that, all of my family has asthma. By conducting the walk, we get all the families involved in our charity event and they know we are doing it to help their children breathe easier."

