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Educational Foundations and
Special Services

**SOCIAL STATUS AMONG EARLY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC
ASTHMA (101 PP.)**

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This study examined the social status of first grade students with chronic asthma within the school environment, in order to better understand factors that might contribute to such children's overall adjustment and social functioning. The goals of this study were to determine if the social status of young elementary aged students who have chronic asthma was different from peers without chronic asthma; to determine if there were differences between children with and without chronic asthma in perceived health, cognitive skills, academic achievement skills, mental health/behavior, and social skills; and to identify predictive factors of the social status of children with asthma.

Data were extracted from the National Institute of Child Health and Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (NICHD-SECC), a multi-site longitudinal study of outcomes relative to child care. The primary participants of the current study, first grade students with asthma ($n = 117$), were compared to an equal sample of participants without asthma ($n = 117$) matched by gender and poverty level. Data were analyzed using chi square analysis and *t*-tests for independent means. Predictive factors of the social status of children with asthma were determined using multiple logistic regression analysis. No differences were found in the social status membership of children with asthma and children without asthma, nor were differences found between children

with and without chronic asthma in perceived health, cognitive skills, academic achievement skills, mental health/behavior, and social skills. Popular social status membership for children with asthma was predicted by two teacher rated variables: social skills within the average range and absence of maladaptive behaviors.

Issues relative to the social environment of children with chronic illnesses and to the importance of focusing on positive social outcomes are discussed. Suggestions for ways to increase positive peer relationships among children with chronic illnesses are provided, as well as future research directions related to chronic illness and school based peer relations.