

Teacher Tip Sheet for the Student with Diabetes in the Classroom

Medical Care

- **Follow the students' diabetes care plan and emergency protocols.** Make sure you understand the plan and your responsibility. Ask questions of the school nurse* if you do not understand.
- **Be prepared.** Always carry a quick and portable snack such as crackers or a small can of juice when you and your student with diabetes leave the classroom or the school grounds. Examples of such times include fire drills, field trips and special presentations and assemblies. A plan should be developed by the school nurse* for unplanned disaster or emergency (72 hours). Make sure you are familiar with the plan and practices for unplanned emergencies should include practicing plans for child with diabetes.
- **Never leave a child alone when he or she is experiencing low blood sugar.** If your student with diabetes says that he or she feels low in blood sugar, give the student a quick-acting carbohydrate snack such as fruit juice, regular soda, or glucose tablets. If your student with diabetes needs to see the school nurse*, **always** have another person go with that student.

Accommodations

- **Allow unrestricted bathroom breaks.** Let the child know that it is okay to go to the bathroom whenever necessary, and have a water bottle available for when his or her blood sugar is high. If his or her blood sugar is high, the body's natural response is to eliminate the extra glucose by using the bathroom.
- **Plan for school sponsored trips.** Children with diabetes must be included in any field trip or school sponsored event. Plan with the school nurse* and family well in advance of the trip in order that plans for any accommodations for the child to safely participate are in place.
- **Plan for classroom parties.** If there is a special school party or occasion where "treats" will be served, let the family of the student with diabetes know in advance, if possible. This will allow the family to discuss options with the child so that he or she can make responsible choices. Often, treats can be worked into the child's meal plan.
- **Accommodate for testing.** Both high and low blood sugar levels may make it difficult for the student to concentrate at times. It may be necessary to allow for blood glucose testing prior to a test, for extra time for a test or re-scheduling a time for the student to take a test if his/her blood sugar levels are too high/low. Follow any accommodation plan the student services team has put in place.

Support

- **Remember that every child with diabetes is different.** Each child with diabetes may have different symptoms of low blood sugar. Situations that can affect your student's blood sugar are insulin, foods eaten, exercise, illness, stress, and any changes in routine.
- **Respect the student's confidentiality and right to privacy.**
 - **Be discreet.** Do not draw unnecessary attention to your student's condition. A student with diabetes may have to eat snacks periodically in the classroom. Remember, he or she **must** eat whenever they feel low in blood sugar. This is not the student's choice, but a necessity!
 - **Provide inconspicuous and gentle reminders.** Pay close attention to your student's regular snack time. Younger children may not remember their snack time. Pass the student a note or work out a unique password between the two of you to remind him or her of snack time.
- **Do not "label" students with diabetes.** Never single out a child as the "diabetic kid".
- **Do not sympathize; empathize.** Children with diabetes need understanding, acceptance and support, but not sympathy.
- **Be patient.** The student with diabetes may have minor problems with organization. Both high and low blood sugar levels may make it difficult for the student to concentrate at times. You may have to repeat some things, especially if the student has been to the nurse's office during class time.

Remember:

- **Communicate with all involved.** Work as a team with the student with diabetes, his or her caregivers, the school nurse*, and other educators.
- **Your support is key to the child with diabetes' success.** Your willingness to understand and support the child with diabetes will help ensure your student receives proper care and attains optimal academic performance.

*If the school does not have a school nurse or access to a school nurse, please see the school administrator.