Diabetes Goes to School

School Issues in Type 1
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Overview of Georgia Schools

- Over 1.5 million students k-12 in the state
- Fulton County Schools have more buses than Marta
- 189 districts - local control
- Over 2015 public schools and 300 Private Schools
- 1300 licensed nurses LPN/RN
- No certifications or training or clinical oversight from state
- Last 10 years challenges I have seen level of care needed in schools vents, trachs, tube feedings
- Complexity of care for 1,000 students and staff, secretaries, janitors, “Nurses”
3 ways to accommodate health needs

- IEP
- 504
- IHP
How do we decide what kind of plan?

SST meeting held at school
Parents
Teachers
Administration
What do parents need to prepare?

The letter
During the spring or summer before your child begins school, write a letter to the principal of your child’s school requesting “a meeting to discuss educational accommodations for our child with * ______”. In the letter, request that the following people be present:

• The principal
• The school nurse
• Nutrition director from the lunchroom?
• All classroom teachers
• All specialty, such as PE, teachers

Make sure you request the meeting BEFORE the first day of school and that you give the principal a way to contact you with the date and time for the meeting.
I.E.P.s Individual Education Plans

From IDEA  Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997

- Funding Statute so that school districts can provide assistance to children whose disabilities affect their learning
- May be most helpful for increased absences, tutoring, attendance issues, testing issues
- Funding comes from federal government
504 plans

- Civil Rights law to protect the educational rights of children with disabilities who are "normal classroom" students

- No funding from federal government

- Completed with school funds

- Include parent’s responsibilities
Individual Health Plan IHP

- Should be used for any child who has type 1 Diabetes
- 2 page plan from Endocrinologist to begin
- Involve School Nurse when available
- Involve lunch room staff - Nutrition Directors - Carb counting for school lunchroom meals
- Involve Classroom teacher BR pass, absences, snacks, sit near door
- Involve Specialty Teachers particularly PE to provide safe exercise opportunities with special regard for low blood sugars
How to start an I.E.P., 504 Plan or IHP

- Written request for an evaluation to principal
- Note from Endocrinologist noting child will need accommodations for a free and appropriate public education because of diabetes
- The choice of how to accommodate a child’s health needs at school is generally made at a meeting with principal and/or special services team (SST)
- Bring 2 page plan from Endocrinologist's office
Maybe just a Plan

- Until a child reaches middle school or high school most often a school will choose to do an Individual Health Plan

- If a child is succeeding academically in a regular classroom and their needs are being accommodated a school can choose to follow a written health plan (IHP)

- Becomes a priority for formal 504 or IEP when child reaches middle school and/or freshman in high school for national testing /college accommodations
At Middle School and High School levels, parents need to remind Principals there is a need for a formal paper trail of accommodations.

- Ask that child be allowed to test blood sugar prior to exams and tests write BS on top of paper.

- Be allowed to retake tests after intervention if blood sugar too low or too high, family can experiment with scholastic achievement in elementary school when child is taking minor exams.

- Use JDRF and ADA resources.
What determines if a Section 504 Plan is Necessary? Like ALL other students, those students with a Section 504 eligible disability are entitled to a free appropriate public education.

An appropriate public education for a Section 504 disabled student may require the provision of specific accommodations and related services in order to meet the needs of the student.

Section 504 focuses on assuring access to educational services and the learning process that is equal to students who do not have disabilities.
Who Needs a 504 Plan?

- For a student to qualify for Section 504 protection, the student must meet three criteria:
  - mental or physical impairment which
  - substantially limits
  - one or more major life activities i.e. learning
  i.e. problems with breathing or digestion

It is important to understand that all three criteria apply to a student before he/she is eligible for 504 protection. In addition, this disability must be why the student cannot equally access or receive benefit from the school’s programs and services.
Sample Accommodations for IEPs or 504s or IHPs

- Possible Recommendations
  - Adherence to child specific diabetic care plans (IHP)
  - Time during school day for blood sugar testing
  - Classroom snack times if needed- parents should provide
  - See if child can have permission to take own blood sugars in class room or easy access to school clinic to take meds
  - Plan for homework or tutor when hospitalizations or illnesses result in school absences
  - Instruction for all staff on low and high blood sugar: Teachers, staff, administration, secretary, counselor, bus drivers, maintenance
  - Permanent Hall pass for bathroom use, nurse visit
  - Emergency Plan never send a child alone to clinic if low blood sugar is suspected or determined
Free access to water at desk and in special classes

Be sure all adults understand paradigm of insulin fits food not food fits insulin

Parties. Notify parents ahead of time in order for them to fit party food into their child’s meal plan.

Field Trips. Trips may change meal times which can affect blood glucose levels. Notify parents of changes so they can decide if an additional snack is needed, and determine the timing of that snack.

Ongoing dialogue is necessary as changes occur in lunch schedules or PE activity/schedule. Ideally, all school staff (including the bus driver) involved with the student should attend the annual conference to make sure everyone is trained in the same manner.
Parent Responsibility

- Ask for planning meeting
- Provide Diabetes Care Plan
- Be sure you are comfortable with staff selected to provide care at school-credentials
- Provide and restock supplies as needed
  - Insulin, syringes, test strips, lancet devices, lancets, logbook
  - Ketone strips- (Bayers Foil wrapped)
  - Fast and slow acting Carbohydrates
  - Glucose tablets
  - Glucagon kit if school allows someone to be trained
Psychosocial Aspects

- Psychosocial Issues.
  - School staff’s awareness of the possible impact of diabetes on personality development is essential.
  - Children with diabetes should be perceived as “normal” and fully able to participate in all school activities. It is critical for their self-esteem and peer acceptance.
  - At the elementary level, classmates should be taught about diabetes and reassured that diabetes is not contagious.
  - At the middle and high school levels, teenagers are less comfortable discussing a chronic disease for fear of being different than their peers.
What Role Can Your School Nurse Play?

- Talk with parents about utilizing a diabetes care plan, providing equipment, materials, snacks
- Assist child with insulin regime/snacks
- Provide diabetes education as a staff development topic
- Help determine if an I.E.P. or a 504 would be appropriate to suggest for the student
- Individualize accommodations and related services
- Make referrals for children new to the area. Assess if financial circumstances have changed and make referrals to obtain access to treatment
- Provide clinic visit information to parents for their doctor visits, communicate concerns
- Keep careful watch for unexpected symptoms, bullying
Parent Tips for a successful plan

- Be positive and friendly- win-win, provide written diabetes information, all supplies needed, GOOD phone number
- Know that most educators want all students to succeed to the best of their ability
- Diabetes may be a new topic for your child’s school staff
- Start early a few weeks before school starts to schedule mtg with principal for first plan
- Set up meeting at end of year to review plan for the next year
- The smaller the school the more likely you will get all the staff involved
- Elementary plans are easier then Middle or High School plans- more classes, more teachers, more child’s reluctance to be “different”, Parents are less welcome as advocates by the children themselves
To go alone or not to go alone

• Depending on your comfort level, you can go to the meeting alone or with a nurse liaison.

• The nurse liaison will act as your child’s advocate in educating the school staff about the condition or the needs of your child.
  • The nurse liaison has years of experience working through these meetings and making sure the proper paperwork is filled out.

• However, plenty of families have had these meetings without liaisons present; just be sure you are well educated beforehand.
  • If in doubt, ask for a nurse liaison.
Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta

- Provides a free service School Nurse Consultant/Liaisons supported by Kohl’s Cares for Kida and Friends
- Voice mail 404-785-6996
- [www.choa.org/buildingbridges](http://www.choa.org/buildingbridges) scroll down to bottom for school nurse liaison consent form
- Sign and fax to liaison for your county
- If out of metro area- liaisons can help by contacting school by phone
- Will work with parent, school nurse, MD and school administrators to educate school staff and can help develop plans
What if the meeting is not going well?

- Stop- don’t sign- reschedule to get more information for educators
- Bring copy of your diabetes doctor’s letter
- Bring a care plan from doctor
- For children 14 yrs and older consider including them in the plan
- Think about high school and will you need testing accommodations for SATs /ACTs
- Ask for mediation in writing from the school district superintendent
- Last resort- contact Georgia Advocacy office 1-800-537-2329 , a private attorney or HeLP Law
HeLP Legal Services Clinics:
Health Law Partnership (HeLP) provides free, direct legal services to low-income children and their families (at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level).
HeLP is a community collaboration of:
• Georgia State Law
• The Atlanta Legal Aid Society
• Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
HeLP believes that by combining the health care expertise of hospital professionals with the legal expertise of attorneys, we can provide a service to address the legal, policy, and ethical issues that affect children’s health.
HeLP can assist with legal issues with:
• Public benefits
• Family law
• Housing
• Education
• Employment
• Consumer
• Permanency planning and consent for care
Onsite legal clinics are located at Children’s at Egleston and Children’s at Scottish Rite.  For more information ask a social worker at Children’s or call 404-785-2005.