



National Association of School Nurses

CONSENSUS STATEMENT

Safe Delivery of Care for Children with Diabetes in Schools

This Consensus Statement was developed to address the needs of a child living with diabetes for management and safe delivery of care during the school day. The care of children with diabetes is a mutual concern of many children, parents, educators, health care providers and health organizations. We are interested in working with these individuals and groups to find the best solution for providing these services.

- Diabetes is a health concern requiring daily, long-term, comprehensive, safe management. Students with diabetes must have appropriate management in school:
 - ✓ To promote the safety of students in the school setting;
 - ✓ To reduce the number of emergency situations;
 - ✓ To quickly manage emergency situations that may develop;
 - ✓ To minimize the long-term negative effects of diabetes; and
 - ✓ To support the students' academic success.
- Schools are responsible for providing the health needs of students.
 - ✓ Two federal laws provide the right to services to students who need health services during the school day to remain in school: IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
 - ✓ Case law has consistently supported the need for schools to provide these services.
- State nurse practice acts define the scope of nursing practice. They are put in place to protect the public and provide a standard of care that can be expected by all.
 - ✓ Nurse practice acts vary from state to state and delineate what, if any, nursing functions may be delegated, and the conditions under which they may be delegated.
 - ✓ In some states, it is a clear violation of the nurse practice act to delegate to anyone other than another nurse.
 - ✓ Tasks that involve assessment or judgment are nursing functions that cannot be delegated.
- Delegation is the transfer of responsibility for the performance of an activity to another, while retaining accountability for the outcome.
 - ✓ The nurse is responsible for determining the appropriate level of care needed for the individual student, including whether the task can be delegated. Each child responds differently to the changes that occur in growth and health status. The delegation function requires that the nurse individualize each child's care and does not allow generalizing care.
 - ✓ By definition, a delegated nursing service requires that the nurse train and supervise the person providing the service. The performance of the task must be periodically evaluated and documentation of the training and evaluation are required.
 - ✓ Furthermore, the delegation of care provides a system for a trained person to contact the nurse for interpretation or questions.
 - ✓ General monitoring and standardized tasks that do not require assessment or judgment may be delegated to non-medical persons.
- Healthy People 2010 Objectives for Improving Health states, "Increase the proportion of the Nation's elementary, middle, junior high, and senior high schools that have a nurse-to-student ratio of at least 1:750". The supporting rationale for the objective includes this statement, "Nurses manage care and provide services to support and sustain school attendance and academic achievement."

- The Individual Health Care Plan is a description of the nursing interventions that the student needs for care during the school day. The plan reflects the individual needs and competencies of the student at a particular period of time. The school nurse in developing the IHP:
 - ✓ Assesses the developmental, cognitive, and physical status of the student to determine the ability of the student to independently manage the care of their health. The younger, less experienced, or newly diagnosed student may require more assistance with diabetes management;
 - ✓ Identifies the medical interventions the student's physician has ordered;
 - ✓ Determines the nursing interventions needed based on the health and developmental status of the student;
 - ✓ Establishes the interventions provided at school, which may include blood glucose monitoring, insulin administration, dietary intake, instruction in identifying signs of and response to hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia, instruction in how to perform a blood glucose test, and instruction in how to administer insulin;
 - ✓ Prepares an Emergency Health Plan; and
 - ✓ Assists the student to determine realistic and achievable personal goals to attain self-care and independence in the management of their health.

- Unlicensed staff and volunteers who receive training regarding general diabetes management without regular professional supervision are not a safe and appropriate management system for children with diabetes.
 - ✓ Non-medically trained school staff may be well intentioned, but may not have the competence, skills, or availability to handle the responsibility and complexity of responding to the needs of students with diabetes.
 - ✓ Model legislation promoting volunteers to provide care for students with diabetes has a provision that protects school districts and school employees from liability for civil damages if they act "as a prudent person would." It does not exempt the school district or employees from charges of negligence, a standard that is often easy to reach.
 - ✓ Minimally trained, non-medical personnel and non-supervised volunteers lower the standard of care and may jeopardize the health and safety of students with diabetes.

Adopted: January 12, 2005