

# Answers to FAQs Care of Students with Diabetes Act

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ICSA publishes this guidance as part of its continuing effort to provide assistance to school leaders. The responses to the FAQs represent the combined thinking of committee members. Potential questions may arise that are not addressed in this guidance. The *Care of Students with Diabetes Act* (Act, 105 ILCS 145/) raises several unanswered questions regarding its implementation in a manner consistent with the Illinois Nurse Practice Act and other State and federal laws. The Illinois Council of School Attorneys Special Education Committee sought further guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation, and Illinois State Board of Education in 2011 and 2016. Responses were received in 2016. This document has since been updated.

**This guidance is published for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice. For legal advice or a legal opinion on a specific question, you should consult a lawyer.**

Section I.	Process for Selecting a Delegated Care Aide (Aide)	p. 2
Section II.	Training	p. 3
Section III.	Developing a Diabetes Care Plan	p. 7
Section IV.	Classroom Management	p. 8
Section V.	Sample Authorization, Release, and Acknowledgement	p. 9

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## Section I. Process for Selecting a Delegated Care Aide (Aide)

### A. What are the collective bargaining implications of the Care of Students with Diabetes Act (“Act”)?

Employers whose support staff are represented by a labor organization are required to bargain over the employees’ terms and conditions of employment. Since the Act will change the work of employees designated as Delegated Care Aides, most likely school districts will be asked to bargain over how those changes impact these employees. This is referred to as “impact” bargaining. For example, the union may seek to bargain over the rate of pay for the Aides. School districts are advised to inform the relevant union of intended changes and, if requested, bargain over the impact of such changes. In rare cases, an existing bargaining agreement may waive any requirement to bargaining during the term of a current agreement, but this is unlikely in most districts. We recommend that each district work with its legal counsel to determine what (if any) issues need to be bargained.

### B. If the Delegated Care Aide is a member of the collective bargaining unit, how will his/her membership affect the Act’s requirement to enter into individual agreements with the Delegated Care Aides?

Some collective bargaining agreements may contain a provision prohibiting the district from entering into any individual agreements with its employees. The Act’s requirement that such agreements be signed overrides such prohibitions. Other bargaining agreements may require that individual agreements be consistent with the collective bargaining agreement. Most likely, such requirements can be complied with through bargaining with the union as discussed in Section I(A), above.

### C. Should districts create new employment positions for Delegated Care Aides, or can the role of the Delegated Care Aide be added to a current position’s job description?

The Act does not require a school district to hire additional personnel for the sole purpose of serving as a Delegated Care Aide, nor does it require specific employees to serve as an Aide with no other duties. Because the responsibilities of each Aide will vary depending on the number of students with diabetes in a given school district and the needs of those students, the decision of whether to add the role of Aide to a current employment position or to create a new employment position for the Aide will be unique to the needs of each district.

If a school district creates a new position for the Aide, it may need to bargain the new position’s impact on the district’s current employees, including issues regarding compensation and separate seniority classifications. We recommend that each district work with its legal counsel to determine what (if any) issues need to be bargained.

### D. Should a school district post and/or describe “diabetes care” as “an essential function of the job”?

Because the Act requires a school district to have a Delegated Care Aide to provide care to students with diabetes, a school district should strongly consider having diabetes care, including the specific functions to be performed by the Aide, as an essential function of that job. By including diabetes care as an essential function of the job, a district would be able to ensure that it can fill the position with someone who is both capable and willing to perform the necessary duties. School districts may not require an employee (other than a certified school nurse, non-certificated RN, or administrator) to administer medication to students. (105 ILCS 5/10-22.21b). Before making any changes to an employee’s job description, the administration, in consultation with legal counsel, should examine its applicable collective bargaining agreement (if any) to make sure that changes are made in compliance with the agreement.

### E. Can an employee serve as the Delegated Care Aide for more than one student?

Yes.

**F. Can an employee serve as the Delegated Care Aide for students enrolled in different school buildings?**

Yes. The Act does not require that the Delegated Care Aide be a full-time employee assigned to the same building as the students he or she serves. Before assigning an Aide to multiple students in different school buildings, however, school districts should consider whether the Aide will be able to practically perform all of the functions required by the Act if the students he or she serves are located in different school buildings.

**G. How can districts prevent losing their Delegated Care Aide(s) in the event of a reduction in force?**

School districts should consider creating a separate seniority category for Delegated Care Aides. In that way, a reduction in other positions would not be as likely to impact the staffing of this position.

**H. Are the sub-contracting requirements in Section 10-22.34c triggered by the Care of Students with Diabetes Act?**

It depends on whether the services to be subcontracted are considered services “currently performed by any employee” of the district. To the extent the district currently has employees performing the duties required by the Act, it could be argued that Section 10-22.34c must be complied with before those duties can be subcontracted. On the other hand, if the duties to be subcontracted did not exist before the Act was implemented, then the requirements of Section 10-22.34c should not apply. The difficulty in resolving this issue is that some duties probably were performed before and some will be new. A resolution to this question may require input from the Illinois State Board of Education and ultimately may need to be clarified by the legislature or the courts. However, if a school district subcontracted these services before Section 10-22.34c was enacted, it does not need to comply with that provision in the future as long as it continues to subcontract the services.

## **Section II. Training**

**A. Who must receive training?**

The Act mandates training for two groups - all school employees and Delegated Care Aides. The Act also mandates that training be consistent with guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in its publication, *Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel* (September 2016) (Guidance), [www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/ndep/health-care-professionals/school-guide/section3/Documents/NDEP-School-Guide-Full.pdf](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/ndep/health-care-professionals/school-guide/section3/Documents/NDEP-School-Guide-Full.pdf).

Note: while the Act calls for two levels of training (as did the Guidance in effect at the time the Act became law), the Guidance was updated in November 2012 and again in September 2016 to recommend three levels of training. We recommend that school districts periodically check for the latest version of the Guidance and follow the recommendations contained therein regarding levels of training.

The September 2016 version of the Guidance recommends the following three levels of training: Level 1 for all school personnel (also mandated by the Act); Level 2 for school personnel responsible for students with diabetes throughout the school day (e.g., classroom, physical education, music and art teachers and lunchroom staff, coaches, and bus drivers); and Level 3 for one or more school staff members designated as trained diabetes personnel who will perform or assist the student with diabetes care tasks (mandated by the Act for Delegated Care Aides). Specifically:

- Level 1. All school personnel should receive training that provides an overview of diabetes, how to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of low blood glucose (hypoglycemia) and high blood glucose (hyperglycemia), and whom to contact in an emergency.
- Level 2. Classroom teachers and all school personnel who have responsibility for students with diabetes throughout the school day should receive Level 1 training with specific instructions for what to do in case of an emergency, plus:
  - Additional training to carry out their individual roles and responsibilities;

- An expanded overview of diabetes (including the types of diabetes, the role of blood glucose monitoring, and the importance of balancing insulin/medication with physical activity and nutrition and how it is done);
- Procedures and brief overview of the operation of devices/equipment commonly used by student with diabetes;
- Impact of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia on behavior, learning, and other activities;
- The student's Individualized Health Care Plan, Section 504 Plan, other education plan or IEP;
- The student's Emergency Care Plans for Hypoglycemia and Hyperglycemia;
- How to activate Emergency Medical Services in case of a diabetes emergency;
- What to do during a schoolwide emergency (e.g., lockdown or evacuation);
- Tips and planning needed for the classroom and for special events; and
- An overview of the legal rights of students with diabetes in the school setting.
- Level 3. One or more school staff members designated as trained diabetes personnel should receive training from a diabetes-trained health care professional, such as a certified diabetes educator. Level 3 training should cover all information from Level 1 and Level 2 training as well as:
  - General training on diabetes care tasks specified in the student's Diabetes Medical Management Plan;
  - Student-specific training for each diabetes care task;
  - How to document that all diabetes care tasks are performed; and
  - A plan for ongoing evaluation of the trained diabetes personnel's performance.

Guidance, Diabetes Overview, Train School Personnel (p. 18-19).

## **B. Initial Training of Delegated Care Aides**

### **1. What must the training of Delegated Care Aides include?**

The initial training must be consistent with the Guidance. The training also must be individualized by a student's parent(s) or guardian(s). §25(d).

Per the Act, Delegated Care Aides must receive training that is individualized to the tasks set forth in a student's diabetes care plan, including training to:

- a) Check and record blood glucose levels;
- b) Recognize and respond to the individual student's symptoms of hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia, as set forth in the diabetes care plan;
- c) Estimate the number of carbohydrates in a snack or lunch;
- d) Administer and record the administration of insulin, according to the individual student's diabetes care plan; and
- e) Respond in an emergency, including how to administer glucagon and call 911. §25(b).

### **2. What does it mean that training is to be "individualized by a student's parent or guardian"?**

The Act does not identify what is meant by "individualized by a student's parent or guardian." The Guidance suggests that parents/guardians should:

- Submit a signed Diabetes Medical Management Plan from their child's personal diabetes health care team to the school health team,

- Permit sharing of medical information necessary for their child's safety between the school and their child's health care providers,
- Provide accurate and current emergency contact information to the school,
- Attend and participate in school health team meetings to discuss implementing their child's Diabetes Medical Management Plan, review services their child may need, and to develop a 504 Plan, other education plan, or Individualized Education Program,
- Provide specific information about their child's diabetes and performance of diabetes-related tasks at home, and
- Inform the school nurse or designated school staff about any changes in their child's health status or medical orders.

Guidance, Actions for School Personnel, Parents/Guardians, and Students, Actions for the Parents/Guardians (p. 57-58).

As the training is to be consistent with the Guidance, any individualization of the training by a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) should minimally attempt to include the above information. Inviting parent(s) or guardian(s) to participate in the training is one way of meeting this requirement. Absent the issuance of regulations to the contrary, school districts also may individualize the training through staff member reports of information gathered from parent(s) or guardian(s) and/or distribution of an information sheet completed by parent(s) or guardian(s) along with the student's individual diabetes care plan.

### **3. Who performs the initial training?**

Initial training must be provided by a licensed healthcare provider with expertise in diabetes or a certified diabetic educator. §25(d). A parent/guardian may, but is not required to, participate in the training for purposes of individualizing the training to his/her child.

### **4. Who qualifies as a licensed health care provider?**

A licensed health care provider may be one of three individuals holding a current and active license: a) a physician, b) an advance practice nurse who has a written agreement with a collaborating physician who authorizes diabetes care, or c) a physician assistant who has a written supervision agreement with a supervising physician who authorizes the provision of diabetes care. §10.

### **5. Who can be a "certified diabetic educator"?**

Diabetic educators are certified by the National Certification Board for Diabetic Educators (NCBDE), in the United States. In order to be qualified for certification, an individual must be licensed in one of several healthcare related professions, meet other minimum professional practice experience and continuing education requirements specific to diabetes, and pass an examination. Once initially certified, the certificate must be renewed every five years. Professions which may qualify for certification include: clinical psychologist, registered nurse, occupational therapist, optometrist, pharmacist, physical therapist, physician, podiatrist, certified clinical exercise specialist, registered clinical exercise physiologist, registered dietitian, registered physician assistant or social worker with a master's degree or higher. For further information, see the NCBDE website at: [www.ncbde.org](http://www.ncbde.org).

### **6. What other considerations are there for initial training of Delegated Care Aides?**

- Maintaining the student's privacy rights if the same trainer is used to train multiple Delegated Care Aides simultaneously. As the training is to include information individualized by a student's parent(s) or guardian(s), parent(s)/guardian(s) may be requested to provide a release of information in compliance with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* and the *Illinois School Student Records Act* or training time should be scheduled to allow for individualized training times for each Delegated Care Aide/ Student pairing;

- Identifying a qualified healthcare professional willing to provide training addressing the needs of individual students with whom the healthcare professional may not have an existing treating relationship;
- Providing the qualified healthcare professional who agrees to conduct the training with sufficient information about students' respective diabetes health care needs in advance of the training to support delivery of appropriate information during the training, after having secured appropriate written consents for release of the information from the students' parents;
- Identifying for each student the staff members appropriate to receive individualized training, per the student's diabetes care plan/504 plan;
- Scheduling the training during an in-service day with a primary session for the basic training and then sufficient individual student-specific sessions with all appropriate staff; and
- Costs associated with preparation and training time needed by the trainer to address individual student needs.

### **C. Training Updates for Delegated Care Aides**

#### **1. When must a Delegated Care Aide's training be updated?**

Whenever there is a change in the student's diabetes care plan and at least annually.

#### **2. What training is required when a student's diabetes care plan changes?**

The Act is silent in regard to the scope of training when there is a change in a student's diabetes care plan. Minimally, the training should include any information necessary to support the Delegated Care Aide to continue to assist in implementation of the diabetes care plan.

#### **3. What is required in an annual training?**

Absent further guidance, the annual training should cover the same topics covered in the initial training, updated for changes in any individual student's diabetes care plan or guidance provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

#### **4. Who can conduct the annual training or a training due to a change in a student's diabetes care plan?**

The Act is silent in regard to who may conduct trainings, once an initial training has been provided.

#### **5. What is the parent/guardian role in the annual training or a training due to a change in a student's diabetes care plan?**

The Act does not specify the parent/guardian role in training other than to provide for individualization of the training to the child. However, training is to be consistent with the Guidance, which recommends specific actions for the parents/guardians, as discussed in Section II(B)(2), above.

### **D. Training of "All School Employees"**

#### **1. Who is required to be trained?**

The Act mandates that "all school employees", in schools that have a student with diabetes, receive training during a regular in-service training required by Section 3-11 of The School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-11). For purposes of this training, a school employee includes: *a person who is employed by a public school district or private school, a person who is employed by a local health department and assigned to a school or a person who contracts with a school or school district to perform services in connection with a student's diabetes care plan.* **§10.**

## **2. What must the training provided to all school employees address?**

The training minimally must cover *the basics of diabetes care, how to identify when a student with diabetes needs immediate or emergency medical attention, and whom to contact in the case of an emergency.* §25(a). This is consistent with what is recommended in the Guidance.

## **3. Who can conduct the training for all school employees?**

The Act does not specifically identify who must conduct this training.

## **4. When must the “all school employee” training be completed?**

The training must be conducted any time a student with diabetes is in attendance at a school and may be incorporated into the school’s regular in-service training schedule. §25(a). The Act does not identify a particular date by which the training must be completed. It is advisable to consult with your school district’s attorney to determine how to address the timing of training from a legal risk management perspective.

## **Section III. Developing a Diabetes Care Plan**

### **A. Who needs to have a diabetes care plan?**

Under the Act, a diabetes care plan is required for any student with diabetes who seeks assistance with diabetes care in the school setting or who has been managing his or her diabetes care in the school setting.

### **B. Where can school districts find an example of a “reasonable” diabetes care plan that contains all of the elements required under the Act?**

There is not yet a model diabetes care plan that contains all of the elements required by the Act.

School districts may find the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Guidance helpful when preparing or reviewing students’ diabetes care plans. [www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/ndep/health-care-professionals/school-guide/section3/Documents/NDEP-School-Guide-Full.pdf](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/ndep/health-care-professionals/school-guide/section3/Documents/NDEP-School-Guide-Full.pdf). The American Diabetes Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics both support its use by school personnel. Guidance, Supporting Organizations (p. 2).

In addition to the general parameters that the Guidance provides, Chapter 1, Diabetes Overview, may be particularly helpful to districts as they review their students’ diabetes care plans for reasonableness and compliance with the Act. Chapter 2, Actions of School Personnel, Parents/Guardians, and Students, provides checklists of recommended actions for each member of the school health team, including administrators, school nurses, school staff members, parents/guardians, and students with diabetes.

Chapter 3, Tools for Effective Diabetes Management, contains a sample Diabetes Medical Management Plan, which provides some examples of what would likely be considered “reasonable” components of a diabetes care plan. Keep in mind, however, that this Diabetes Medical Management Plan does not contain all of the necessary elements of a diabetes care plan as required by the Act, nor does it specify the exact “services” to be provided. Chapter 3 also contains a sample template for an Individualized Health Care Plan (prepared by the school nurse) and Emergency Care Plans for Hypoglycemia and Hyperglycemia (prepared by the school nurse).

We recommend that each district work with its legal counsel to determine whether its particular students’ diabetes care plans comply with the Act.

### **C. Should school districts obtain parental consent in order to speak with a student’s physician?**

Yes. When reviewing a diabetes care plan for compliance with the Act, school districts should seek to obtain parental consent in order to speak with the student’s physician about the necessary care and management of the student’s diabetes. See Section V.

## Section IV. Classroom Management

### A. Does the Care of Students with Diabetes Act change self-administration by students?

Yes, a student's ability to manage his or her diabetes in the classroom is greatly impacted by the Act. Indeed, at the outset of the Act, the General Assembly finds that many students are capable of managing their diabetes independently and that such self-management is consistent with the recommendations of pediatric endocrinologists and certified diabetes educators. From this finding, the General Assembly then goes on to mandate that students be permitted to manage their diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school and at school events and activities if authorized by the student's physician in his or her diabetes care plan. The DHHS Guidance also strongly encourages school districts to permit students to perform diabetes care tasks "in the classroom, at every campus location, or at any school activity." Guidance, Diabetes Overview, Understand Why Diabetes Self-Management Is Important (p. 36).

### B. What is "self-management" of diabetes?

The Act contains an entire section devoted to a student's "self-management" of his or her diabetes. Section 30 of the Act provides that a student must be permitted to engage in the following activities if his or her physician has authorized these activities in his or her diabetes care plan:

1. Check blood glucose levels when and wherever needed;
2. Administer insulin;
3. Treat hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia and otherwise attend to the care and management of diabetes in the classroom, in any area of school or school grounds and at any school related activity or event; and
4. Possess the supplies and equipment necessary to monitor and treat diabetes on his or her person at all times.

### C. How is "self-management" accomplished at school?

If a student's physician has indicated as a part of a student's diabetes care plan that the student is capable of checking his or her own blood glucose levels, determining and administering the appropriate insulin dosage or other appropriate treatment, the student may complete those tasks without the assistance of the school nurse, delegated care aide or other appropriately trained school staff member. In such a case, the student must be permitted to manage his or her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school on school grounds or at any school event or activity. Finally, if authorized by the student's physician, the student must be permitted to carry supplies in the school building, on school grounds or at school events or activities. The student's equipment may include glucometers, lancets, test strips, insulin, syringes, alcohol swabs, a glucagon injection kit, glucose tablets and food and drink as determined necessary by the student's diabetes care plan. In addition to addressing these issues in the student's diabetes care plan, school districts should also request that physicians and parents complete the district's administration of medication, self-administration and self-carry forms.

When a student's physician authorizes the student's self-management of diabetes care, the school district must carefully plan with the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and physician how the student should manage diabetes within the classroom, where and how to dispose of the used diabetes supplies and equipment in a safe manner consistent with universal precautions and local waste disposal laws, and how to record the student's glucometer readings and insulin administration during the school day. In addition, school districts should identify other areas of the school building or grounds where the student may test blood glucose levels and treat his or her diabetes, and devise a plan to address these same issues in other locations.

Note, however, that if a student's physician has not authorized the student to manage his or her diabetes care in the student's diabetes care plan, the school district may require the student to meet with a school nurse, dedicated care aide or other appropriately trained school staff member outside of the classroom to care for and treat his or her diabetes.

**Section V. Authorization, Release, and Acknowledgement**

*Consider asking parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign the following:*

**Sample Authorization to Provide Diabetes Care,  
Release of Health Care Information, and Acknowledgement of Responsibilities**

As provided by the *Care of Students with Diabetes Act*, I hereby authorize [School District] and its employees, as well as any and all Delegated Care Aides named in the Diabetes Care Plan or later designated by the District, to provide diabetes care to my student, \_\_\_\_\_, consistent with the Diabetes Care Plan. I authorize the performance of all duties necessary to assist my student with management of his/her diabetes during school.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to ensure that the School is provided with the most up-to-date and complete information regarding my student’s diabetes and treatment. Therefore, I consent to the release of information about my student’s diabetes and treatment by my student’s health care provider(s), [student’s health care provider(s)], to representatives of [School District]. I further authorize District representatives to communicate directly with the health care provider(s).

I also understand that the information in the Diabetes Care Plan will be released to appropriate school employees and officials who have responsibility for or contact with my student, \_\_\_\_\_, and who may need to know this information to maintain my student’s health and safety.

Pursuant to Section 45 of the *Care of Students with Diabetes Act*, I acknowledge that the District and District employees are not liable for civil or other damages as a result of conduct, other than willful or wanton misconduct, related to the care of a student with diabetes.

Parent/Guardian Signature\* : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Failure of parent(s)/guardian(s) to execute this document does not affect the civil immunity afforded the District and school employees by Section 45 of the *Care of Students with Diabetes Act* for civil or other damages as a result of conduct, other than willful or wanton misconduct, related to the care of a student with diabetes, or any other immunities or defenses to which the District and its employees are otherwise entitled.