

# Diabetes: Tips for the Classroom

**What is a section 504 plan?** A section 504 plan is a formal plan created for students with medical diagnoses to ensure their medical needs are cared for at school without interfering with learning. A 504 plan includes specific accommodations based on the student's current medical diagnosis.

**What is the difference between an IEP and a section 504 plan?** An IEP plan is for students that need a more specialized education plan such as resource classes for ADD, ADHD or more instruction/therapy due to other medical diagnoses. A section 504 plan would be for students that need classroom accommodations in a traditional class setting due to a medical diagnosis.

**How do I get a section 504 plan for my child?** First you will need to talk with the school guidance counselor or 504 plan coordinator, complete initial paperwork, and set up a meeting to start the process. **To make the most of your meeting, be as prepared as possible.** Prior to the meeting we encourage you to review the suggestions below and make a list of what you think would be the most helpful for your child and bring the list to the meeting. You may also want to bring the student's school care plan, educational material for the school about your child's medical condition, and a diagnosis letter provided by the Endocrinologist if needed. After the first meeting, be sure to follow up with the school guidance counselor or 504 plan coordinator to ensure that the process is completed and that the formal 504 plan is in place.

**The list below is a suggestion of accommodations that could be requested at the student's upcoming 504 or IEP meeting. This list is not meant to be an all-inclusive list.**

## General suggestions for students with diabetes:

1. Allow student to carry low treatments and have the ability to use as needed for low blood sugar at any time (including in the classroom).
2. If student feels that blood sugar is low or high, allow the student to signal the teacher without drawing unneeded attention. Ex: card or ruler with a certain color to indicate the issue.
3. If appropriate for their age and maturity level, allow student to carry needed testing supplies at all times.
4. Allow the student to carry and look at CGM (continuous glucose monitor) receiver or phone app (Dexcom or Freestyle Libre) as needed. Parent and school can agree upon disciplinary action if technology is misused in the classroom. Ex: playing on phone instead of looking at CGM app or receiver.
5. If student is feeling like he or she has low blood sugar do not allow the student to walk alone to the nurse's office.
6. Allow the student to leave early or come in late without punishment due to medical issues. Parent must report the medical issue to the school nurse. Ex: high blood sugar with ketones prior to school or leaving school early due to high blood sugar with ketones as per the school care plan.
7. Student may participate in PE and sports without restriction as long as the student can check blood sugar every 30 minutes and as needed. Student should also be able to carry low blood sugar treatments and snacks and have access to them at all times. (please review activity section of the school care plan)

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## ***Continued from front***

8. No restrictions from attending field trips. Student should have one trained staff member on site to manage diabetes care if parent cannot attend field trip.
9. Allow the student to carry a water bottle and have bathroom access without restrictions in the classroom, PE and sports.
10. Allow the student adequate time to complete assignments/tests if the student needs to leave the class during testing or classroom assignment to take care of their diabetes.
11. Other possible topics to discuss with your coordinator could include the following: fire drills, school lock downs, standardized testing, and method of communication between the school and caregivers.

**What do I do if I have issues with the school honoring or completing a section 504 plan?** Section 504 of the US Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was designed to help parents ensure that their child/student with medical diagnoses will have the opportunity to be successful academically. Once a 504 plan is created and agreed upon by all parties it is a legal document that must be honored by the school. If you need further assistance with the process you can contact the school board, JDRF, or Le Bonheur Diabetes Clinic.

## **Important notes:**

1. The section 504 plan must be renewed yearly. Please contact the student's 504 coordinator or guidance counselor prior to the beginning of each school year.
2. If changes need to be made during the year parents must request a meeting to modify the plan.

## **Additional Resources and References:**

<https://www.jdrf.org/t1d-resources/living-with-t1d/school/504-plans/>

[https://www.jdrf.org/wp-content/docs/JDRF\\_School\\_Advisory\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://www.jdrf.org/wp-content/docs/JDRF_School_Advisory_Toolkit.pdf)