

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY IN THE USE OF A PARENT DESIGNATED ADULT  
(PDA) IN THE CARE OF STUDENTS WITH DIABETES  
IN SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Attention parents of diabetic students: Information on Parent Designated Adult (PDA) and parent responsibility in the use of a Parent Designated Adult (PDA) in the care of students with diabetes in the Seattle Public Schools was delineated in the law RCW28A.210.330-.350. Please see [Seattle School Board Policy 3415](#)

The use of a Parent Designated Adult (PDA) in the care of students with diabetes in the schools has been an option for care since September 2001 and is described in the task force's [Guidelines for Care of Students with Diabetes](#), currently under revision to reflect the more recent changes in law. In the past this person **could not** be a school district employee. The law changed in 2002 so that unlicensed school district employees could serve in this capacity.

A Parent Designated Adult is a volunteer. The PDA must receive appropriate training from a health care professional or an expert in diabetic care in order to carry out the tasks ordinarily requiring a nursing license; tasks needed to support a student with diabetes while at a school when the licensed nurse is not available. The tasks that can only be done by the parent or a licensed nurse are finger pokes for blood sugars, insulin injections and giving glucagon. It is the responsibility of the parent to identify the school district employee willing to act as a PDA as well as to secure the professional who will train the PDA. The professional cannot be the school nurse. The nurse has no authority to delegate the activities required. The training must be related to the activities that the PDA will be required to perform.

It must be understood by all concerned that acting as a PDA by a school district employee is voluntary. Neither the parent nor school district staff may coerce an employee to act in this capacity.

Once the employee has consented to act as a PDA, s/he must file a letter of intent with the school nurse. The letter must be dated and is only good for one year. A new letter of intent must be filed at the beginning of each school year if the employee intends to continue as a PDA. The letter documents the training date and who the trainer was.

The school nurse is not responsible for supervising those procedures performed by the PDA as authorized by the parent/guardian.

### Process to Establish a Trained PDA

- Identify a staff person willing to act as a PDA.
- The prospective PDA will complete the paperwork indicating willingness to be PDA and give the document to the school nurse.
- Parent/Guardian will secure a trainer for the PDA.
  - According to the law, the training must be conducted by a health care professional or an expert in diabetic care selected by the parent.
    - The trainer cannot be the school nurse.
    - Those considered experts are licensed health care professionals, diabetic educators, and trained personnel from the American Diabetic Association.
  - A parent is not, for the purposes of this training requirement, considered an expert unless they have additional credentials such as physician etc. It needs to be someone who is recognized in the field as having the body of knowledge needed to educate in the area of diabetes.
  - Resources for parents are The American Diabetes Association, their own endocrinologist staff, their own primary health care provider or his/her staff, Diabetic educators, or a non-school district licensed health care professional with expertise in diabetes.

The PDA carries out the duties and responsibilities ordinarily assumed by the school nurse or parent while the student is at school. While all staff are responsible for recognizing the signs and symptoms of a low blood sugar and helping the student access a quick-acting source of sugar, the PDA's duties are more involved. PDAs are authorized to perform blood glucose checks and administer insulin if prescribed by the health care provider. They have a deeper understanding of the disease and its management. Nurses may assist the PDA to understand the basic issues related to diabetic care but the parent is responsible to supervise the PDA's activities in any activity that requires a license to perform.

Questions? Contact your student's school nurse or Seattle Public Schools' Health Services Manager, 206-252-0750.