

## FEEDING YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

### Responsibilities of Feeding Children at School

#### Snacks

- ✓ Parents should provide foods for daily snacks
- ✓ Parents should provide foods to treat hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- ✓ Parents should set up a *Diabetes Care Plan* (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) – and/or – an *IEP* (Individualized Education Plan) that specify when and what will be eaten at snack times

Schools are not mandated to supply snacks for children with diabetes, but may opt to supply snacks. The only time they would be obligated to supply a snack is if the child is participating in an after school snack program at the school.

#### Meals – Breakfast and Lunch Programs

USDA Document: 7CFR Subtitle Section 15b.26(d) clearly states the responsibilities of the School Food Authority in providing food services for children in special needs:

(d) Food Services. In providing food services to any of its students, a recipient to which this subpart applies may not discriminate on the basis of handicap.

Recipients shall serve special meals, at no extra charge, to students whose handicap restricts their diet. Recipients may require students to provide medical certification that special meals are needed because of their handicap. (Medical Statement Form for Ohio Department of Education)

Where existing food service facilities are not completely accessible and usable, recipients may provide aides or use other equally effective methods to serve food to handicapped persons. Recipients shall provide all food services in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of handicapped persons as required by Subpart d, Section 15b23 (b).

## **Working School Lunch into Your Child's Meal Plan**

**School lunch** can be worked in as a part of a child's/teen's meal plan. To fit into the plan:

- ✓ Parents and child need to review the menu in advance. Remember menus are subject to change.
- ✓ Ask the cafeteria manager about carbohydrate content of the foods.
- ✓ Discuss and decide which menus conform to the meal plan weekly.
- ✓ Pack appropriate substitutions when necessary.
- ✓ Pack a lunch when the lunch menu is unacceptable.

Use the same guidelines with the breakfast program.

A **traditional school lunch** provides the following:

- 2 oz of meat/meat substitute
- 2 starch servings
- 1 vegetable serving (questionable items)
- 1 fruit serving (questionable items)
- 600-800 calories (some schools are working on reducing calories)

**A la Carte/Snack Bar items** can pose a temptation for kids to eat extra or to have friends buy them extra to eat. They can eat items as long as they are worked into the meal plan. For example, chips, cookies, fresh fruit, fruit roll-ups, unsweetened fruit juice, ice cream (small container), granola bars, pretzels, etc.

When **packing a lunch**, keep these things in mind:

- ✓ Try to pack healthy choices that your child can finish eating in the allotted time. Many only have 15-20 minutes to eat once they sit down.
- ✓ Remember lunch is a social time. If your child is a talker, you need to take that into consideration.
- ✓ When possible use an ice pack type packet in their lunch container.
- ✓ Remember: If it can be packed, it can be traded.

## **Other lunch issues**

Traditional school lunch contains a fair amount of fat to meet calorie requirements, causing delayed absorption of carbohydrates. Many children experience high blood sugars because of this.

Children may choose to eat extra foods, high sugar foods, or other food choices that cause high blood sugars which can affect behaviors at school.

Children may not finish their lunch, often throwing it away, putting them at risk for low blood sugar.

## **Handling School Parties**

School parties can be fun for everyone, if steps are taken to include the child with diabetes so they don't feel left out. Suggested steps include:

- ✓ Communicate with the room mother and other parents that your child has diabetes and what that means.
- ✓ Make sure that acceptable foods are going to be available.
- ✓ When possible parties and treats can be close to the time that your child would normally eat their snacks
- ✓ Suggest that parents bring in nonfood treats for all kids on birthdays, holiday parties, etc. such as pencils, stickers, etc.

## **Handling Physical Activity at School**

Some children, depending on their insulin regimen, will require extra food for P.E. class. Usually 15 grams of carbohydrates is enough to cover the activity.

When sending extra food, please consider the amount of time that it takes your child to eat that food item.

Seasonal sports may require either adjusting the insulin or adding additional food to what they normally eat to prevent problems with lower sugars.

Information provided by Jane Griffin.