

Implementation of a School Diabetes Education and Support Program



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The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the Dubin Family Fund for their ongoing support of this program.

INTRODUCTION

Diabetes is a lifelong chronic illness that must be managed throughout the day regardless of what environment a child with diabetes is in. Additionally, diabetes and its management should not interfere with the child's academic success or emotional well-being while under the care of a school or other childcare setting. This may be difficult if the school nurse or staff is without the proper education and support. The purpose of this quality improvement (QI) project was to increase school diabetes education sessions by 20% each year, over the first three years, following the development of a diabetes education and support program at a NYC pediatric diabetes center.

METHOD

Through the creation of a diabetes school liaison Registered Nurse and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (RN, CDCES), a pediatric diabetes center in NYC began establishing a Diabetes in School Education and Support Program for patients with diabetes and the schools/camps/childcare programs they attend. QI Initiatives were planned, tracked and carried out each year. Education sessions provided to schools were tracked to measure program growth. Survey responses of the school staff were also reviewed to identify supports needed.

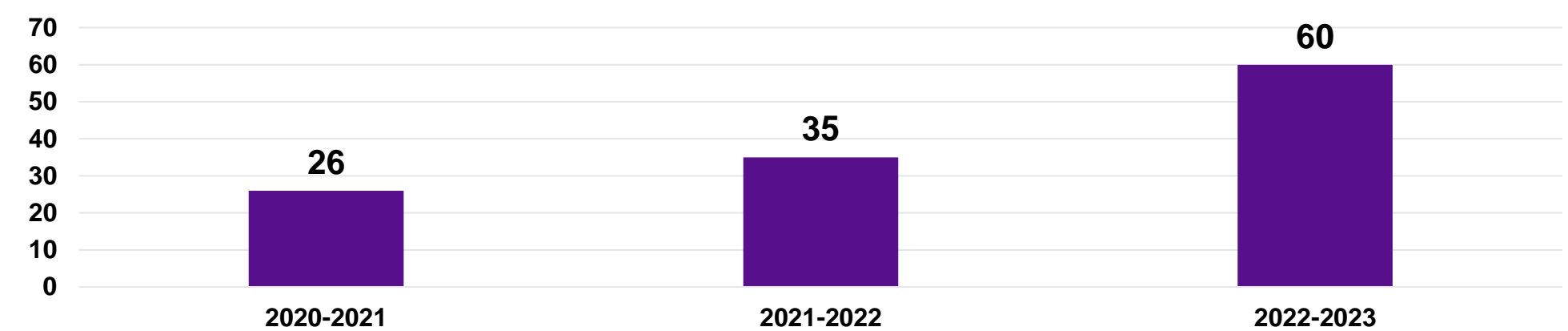
RESULTS

To assess the School Diabetes Education and Support Program the number of in-person and remote education sessions was tracked. In year one (2020-2021), 26 schools received individual education sessions, 35 in year two (2021-2022), and 60 in year three (2022-2023). Results from surveys administered to school staff were also reviewed to understand unmet needs. One question asked if the school professional felt proficient with diabetes technology. Out of 51 respondents, 17 felt proficient, while 27 (52.9%) reported having limited education/understanding of technology and 7 felt they had a lack of proficiency in diabetes technology. Comments written at the end of the surveys indicated support and education was needed by the school staff.

CONCLUSIONS

The need for a diabetes education and support program for school staff in NYC is clear. Nurses and school staff are using the school RN, CDCES liaison for support and the number of individual education sessions has increased by over 20% each year for the past three years. Additionally, school staff report a need for education on diabetes technology as the technology is continually changing. In the future, diabetes outcomes of children attending schools in NYC and the knowledge of school staff should be evaluated. Continued QI efforts, such as recorded education availability and additional events, should be created to improve the School Diabetes Education and Support Program and to help continue to increase the number of school education sessions provided per year.

School Education Sessions by Year



2020-2021 QI Initiatives

- Liaison reach out to schools at child's diagnosis (504, accommodations, etc.)
- Liaison to provide education about diabetes at school at diagnosis
 - Created PowerPoint and option for separate class
- School education events
 - School Staff education event and safe at school event
- Continue meeting with NYC clinics to discuss schools and diabetes
- Meet with schools remotely when possible to teach staff about diabetes

2021-2022 QI Initiatives

- Create dedicated e-mail and phone number for school liaison
- Creation of yearly online survey for parents to request school forms
- Quarterly Zoom program

2022-2023 QI Initiatives

- Begin making school bags for child to bring to school nurse at diagnosis
- Monthly Zoom program
- Protect staff time of school liaison for school related tasks
 - In-person/remote school education sessions continue to increase
- Create surveys and questionnaires to assess needs and identify challenges of staff and parents

School Staff Quotes

"NYU staff offered support to my school in the past two years, which was vetoed by the Principal. However, I am still able to call the NYU staff personally as a resource."

"It is good to refresh skills before school starts. Not every year there is student with diabetes and so it is always nice to refresh skills. Diabetes technologies change all the time. Thank you for doing this."

"We need consistent support from the health care provider, parent and the school administration."