# Back to School How to Communicate About SDS and Our Children's Needs?

by Christian Del Ré




September can be a time of anxiety in any home with the start of a new school-year. Kids are nervous, parents are nervous, and between battling to get back into school routines, we also have to worry about whether or not our child's teacher knows what SDS is and what special needs have to be met each day to keep him or her safe. Yes, the IEP and the 504 state what needs to be done, but communicating one on one with the teacher and administrators is also extremely important.

For the past five years my wife has scheduled an appointment with the school principal, and before the start of the year, she meets with the administrative team as well as Anthony's teachers to give them the SDS 101 talk and to go over what special considerations Anthony needs while in school. The social worker from our hospital also calls in and participates in the meeting. In addition to SDS, Anthony is also hypoglycemic, which brings a whole other list of concerns.

I have attached some of the documents we use each year; feel free to adapt and edit them for your own family. Here is also a check-list of important things you may want to do before the start of the school-year:

1. Arrange a meeting with the school principal to inform/remind them about your child's needs.
2. Meet or speak with your child's teachers to discuss your child's needs and ways to help keep the room safe for a neutropenic child.
3. Meet or speak with your school's Social Worker, Guidance Counselor, and/or Psychologist so that they are aware of some of the anxieties that come along with having a chronic illness.
4. Prepare a letter for the school addressing the concerns you plan to speak about with the school team. Highlight some of the important ways to help your child fit in with other children, such as a buddy box (which we have adopted so Anthony can have some items he is able to share with his classmates so he doesn't feel so isolated).

5. Prepare a list of medications that your child is on. Even though they are on file at the school, alerting the teachers to what medications your child takes daily helps make it more digestible for them.

Reach out to other parents and see what they do, and we will be adding these items to the SDSF website shortly that can be downloaded and edited.

Let's try not to lose the fun and laughter in our lives during the school-year! Stay safe everyone.