

Sam's Law

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much will this cost the schools and taxpayers?

All of the training and materials will be provided FREE to all Texas schools. Seizure recognition and first-aid training to our public schools is FREE courtesy of the Epilepsy Foundations located in Texas.

Why is this law important? How many students in Texas schools have epilepsy and seizures?

Despite the prevalence, epilepsy is still highly misunderstood by the public and stigmatized. In Texas, it is estimated that **49,050 children have active epilepsy**¹ (CDC, Epilepsy Data and Statistics)². For students living with epilepsy, it is important that schools are well-equipped with the tools necessary to provide a safe and enriching environment. The requirement for training is called Sam's Law and is potentially life-saving legislation.

Why train all the school employees?

Sam's Law makes certain that school personnel, including nurses, teachers, paraprofessionals, and bus drivers, are not only prepared but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to the student experiencing a seizure. By bringing awareness to the entire educational community, students living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder can feel safe in school, reach their full academic potential, and build meaningful friendships without fear of being stigmatized.

What are the training requirements?

The training required by Sam's Law is simple. For school personnel, a video training fewer than 30 minutes in length or a live training delivered by the Epilepsy Foundation annually.

School nurses would be required to undergo a 2-hour and 15-minute online or live training.

In Texas, there are approximately **841 students per school nurse**³. In 2005, research indicated the only 60% of school nurses felt confident in their ability to manage students with seizures. To address this concern, the Epilepsy Foundation partnered with the National Association of School Nurses to develop a comprehensive training program. After participation in the *Managing Students with Seizures*⁴ program nurses showed improvement in their confidence to handle epilepsy at school (Austin, Kakacek & Carr, 2010)⁵. By participating in the Managing Students with Seizures program, school nurses will enhance their knowledge of epilepsy and will optimize the delivery of care for students with seizures.

What is seizure first aid?

Seizure first aid is not hard. This training is so important because, if you do the wrong thing, such as holding a child down or putting something in their mouth during a seizure, it can cause potential harm or even death.

What is a Seizure Action Plan?

A Seizure Action Plan is a short form written by the student's neurologist and parent(s). It describes in detail any anti-epileptic medications and emergency medications the child may take, seizure triggers, types of seizures the child has, frequency of seizures, proper first aid for that specific child, emergency protocols, and other important information like emergency and neurologist contact information. The Epilepsy Foundation believes a Seizure Action Plan⁶ is essential to preventing an emergency and informing others what to do in emergency situations when a student experiences a seizure in school. Seizure Action Plans are absolutely vital in ensuring the safety of students who suffer from epilepsy.

Sam's Law FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SOURCES

1. Texas Population Projections Program (<http://txsdc.utsa.edu/Data/TPEPP/Projections/>)
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/pdfs/mm6631a1.pdf>)
3. National Education Association, A National Look at the School Nurse Shortage (<http://www.nea.org/home/35691.htm>)
4. Epilepsy Foundation, Seizure Safe School Act (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/30b27d_b7026f68371748c38e3edfb41b5f5bbc.pdf)
5. Impact of Training Program on School Nurses' Confidence Levels in Managing and Supporting Students With Epilepsy and Seizure, Austin, Kakacek & Carr, 2010 (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/30b27d_2e28337a1ea148f98199ad015b746024.pdf)
6. Seizure Action Plan (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/30b27d_07d215a69048404a918eb394e448bee2.pdf)