Common questions from children:

Why does [redacted] wear the device on her arm and waist?

[redacted] has Type 1 Diabetes, which means that part of her body doesn't work as well as yours. The thing on her waist is called a pump, it gives her a special medicine called insulin. The one on her arm tells the teacher and her parents how she is feeling by showing them how much sugar she has in her body. This is the one that may beep or make music during class sometimes.

Can I play with them?

It is very important that no one plays with them. If you are curious, [redacted] can show you.

How did she get Type 1 Diabetes?

We aren't really sure why [redacted] got diabetes. Its probably a little bit from the way she was born and a little bit from when she got sick when she was little. She didn't get it from eating too much sugar.

Why does she bring her own snack?

For people with Type 1 Diabetes its very important that they get exactly the right amount of medicine (insulin) for what they eat. She brings her own snack so her mommy knows exactly what she is eating. She can eat all of the same foods as you we just need to know what and when she is eating.

Why does her mom come into the class sometimes?

Sometimes her mom will come in the class to give her more medicine and sometimes she will come in to give her candy. She may need to eat candy if she has too much medicine. Unfortunately, she can't share this candy its kind of like medicine too! Sometimes when her mom comes to the class she will need to do a "finger test" this helps her figure out how [redacted] is feeling just like the thing on her arm.

What Is T1D? (a simplified explanation)

T1D often develops in children, adolescents, and young adults, so it used to be called "juvenile diabetes." Now we know that T1D can be diagnosed at almost any age. T1D is not contagious. You cannot catch T1D from someone who has it. T1D is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. While its causes are not yet entirely understood, scientists believe that both genetic factors and environmental triggers are involved. Although T1D cannot be cured, it can be controlled. This differs from the more common type 2 diabetes (T2D), where individuals still produce some of their own insulin, but the insulin is either insufficient in quantity or ineffective in its ability to stabilize blood-glucose levels. Ineffective action of insulin is called insulin "resistance." Many factors can cause insulin resistance. People with T2D can sometimes manage their disease with diet and exercise. Some individuals with T2D can take an oral medication that improves the effectiveness of the insulin, while others need to inject additional insulin.

About blood-glucose levels

A healthy pancreas produces insulin, a hormone that the body uses to change glucose in the blood into energy. Glucose in the blood comes from the food and drink a person consumes. A person with T1D doesn't produce any insulin. Without insulin, the glucose builds up in the blood, causing high blood glucose, or hyperglycemia, which can be extremely dangerous. In people without T1D, the pancreas maintains a "perfect balance" between food intake and insulin.

Insulin needs

Since people with T1D can't produce their own insulin, they must put insulin into the bloodstream through injections or an insulin pump. If people with T1D inject too much insulin (or eat too little), they may have a hypoglycemic reaction. Hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) is the most common problem in children with T1D. It can be very serious and requires immediate action. People with T1D often struggle to determine how much insulin to inject. In a simple and perfect world, this question would have an easy answer (e.g., always eat a certain amount of food and inject a certain amount of insulin). However, in reality there is no way to know how much insulin to inject with 100% accuracy. Many factors influence how much insulin people need to get to the desired "perfect balance" of glucose and insulin. These factors include types of food, the effects of stress, illness, and exercise. Also, as children grow, their insulin needs change. Since determining how much insulin the body needs to "balance" the amount of glucose is really a best guess, sometimes the guess is inaccurate, and high or low blood glucose results.