



Preventing Sudden Cardiac Death in Your Schools with AEDs

The SADS Foundation wants to make sure that each child grows up happy and healthy! It is important for all staff members to know: how to recognize a sudden cardiac arrest, that time is critical, who the first responders are, that there is an AED, where the AED is, and enough about the emergency plan to know how to initiate it if they ever witness an unresponsive victim.

Facts about Automated External Defibrillators (AED)

- A shock delivered by an automated external defibrillator (AED) within 3-5 minutes may save these lives. Survival rates decrease by 10% with *each minute* of delay.
- If a shock is not needed, the device will not shock the victim (i.e. if there has been a seizure, injury, or another cause for the victim to collapse). In this case other reasons for the collapse should then be assessed and CPR should be continued if needed.
- AEDs are safe and easy to use. A study published in *Circulation* found that sixth-graders with no training were able to correctly use AEDs, and use them at an only modestly slower pace (90 second versus 67 seconds) than trained EMTs.
- And AEDs work. Survival rates up to 74 percent have been achieved in places that have successfully implemented AED programs.

Why Schools Should be Concerned with Sudden Cardiac Arrest

- Schools are public gathering places where 20% of the general public is present at any given time.
- Unfortunately, anyone can suffer sudden cardiac arrest. SCA is unpredictable and can happen to anyone, anytime.
- The average time it takes emergency crews to arrive is between 8-12 minutes, giving your students and visitors a very minimal chance at survival.

How does an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) save lives?

- The only way to effectively treat sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is with an electrical shock delivered by a defibrillator. Voltage stored by the defibrillator pushes an electrical current through the heart by means of the electrodes placed on the chest. This brief electrical pulse halts the chaotic activity of the heart, giving it a chance to start beating again with a normal rhythm.
- AEDs are extremely easy to use, difficult to misuse and have been designed specifically for lay responders. This enables anyone to give a defibrillation shock that could save a life.

Can the user of an AED or our School District be held liable?

All 50 states in the U.S. have Good Samaritan laws, giving immunity to lay people who help others in distress. AED programs are included under national Good Samaritan laws. In addition, the federal Cardiac Arrest Survival Act (CASA) provides additional Good Samaritan protection, including limited immunity for those who provide emergency treatment with an AED.

Resources for Schools

- Project S.A.V.E. provides help in developing/revising your plan, including lists and protocols.
- Project A.D.A.M. is a program to help schools become heart safe and provides materials and assistance for programs around the country.
- American Heart Association—AED guidelines, etc. for businesses & schools.
- SADS Foundation—sample emergency plans, links to resources (including the above).