



The Art of Parenting While Sick helps parents with chronic health conditions feel seen and supported and find solidarity in a global community. To learn more, visit parentingwhilesick.com

HOW DO I...

talk about my condition with the people in my child's life?

Advice for Parents and Caregivers

If your condition causes frequent flare-ups, medical emergencies, or hospitalizations, you may need to talk about your health with the people in your child's life, such as:

- school personnel
- music or religious teachers
- sports coaches
- camp staff
- and other caregivers

It can feel vulnerable to talk about your condition with people you don't know well.



The following **five-step script** is designed to be short and fact-based, which helps keep the conversation calm and comfortable.

Contact the person you need to talk to ahead of time and let them know you'd like to talk for a few minutes in-person or over the phone about something important.

You may want to jot down a few notes and practice your script ahead of time so you feel more at ease during the conversation.

Remember: you're not burdening anyone with this kind of information. Most teachers, coaches, and mentors want to know what's going on with you because it helps them support your child better.

5-step script ➡

The 5-step script

1. Say the name of the condition and what it is.

Keep the explanation simple. Most people mainly need to understand:

- What the condition is (in one sentence)
- What might happen
- What it means for your child

“I have sarcoidosis, which is an inflammatory condition that can affect my lungs and heart. Right now, I am having a flare up of my symptoms and it feels a lot like the time I was hospitalized with a pulmonary exacerbation.

I’m going to get checked out later today and in case I do have to go into the hospital. I wanted to give you a head’s up, so we have a plan in place for Sadie.”

2. Be clear about the plan for your child.

Adults who work with kids feel more comfortable when they know what the plan is. Be sure to clarify:

- Who the backup caregiver is
- Who will pick up or drop off your child
- Whether your child might miss school or activities
- Who they should contact if something comes up

“If I wind up back in the hospital, my sister Maya will take care of Sadie. She’s my emergency contact so the principal’s office has her information on file. I’ll send it to you, so you have it, too.

Maya will handle dropping her off and picking her up and will decide whether she should attend school. If she’s too upset to go to school, Maya will contact the school right away to let you know.”



5-step script (continued) ➡

The 5-step script

3. Let them know what to watch out for.

Teachers, coaches, and activity leaders are typically happy to help you keep an eye on your child's wellbeing. You can mention behavior that would be unusual for your child like:

- anxiety or worry
- difficulty concentrating
- unusual quietness or irritability
- missing assignments or practices

“Sadie can get worried about me when I’m not doing well, so if you notice that she’s acting differently, please let Maya know if it’s urgent. If it’s not urgent, you and I can check in in a few weeks. As you know, she’s usually very good about turning in her work and she’s been getting good grades, so if she falls behind or seems distracted in class, please let me know and we can figure out what support she might need.”

4. Thank them for their understanding.

This is a nice way to cap the conversation.

- Acknowledge their role in your child's life
- Thank them for their time and understanding
- Talk about next steps

“Thank you for taking the time to talk. You’re so important to Sadie—she loves your class. While I’m navigating this difficult time, it helps me feel better to know you’re going to keep an eye out for her. I really appreciate your support. I’ll send you an email, so you have all the information we discussed.”

5. Follow up with a short note or text message.

After the conversation, sending a quick email or message is a thoughtful touch so the person doesn't have to rely on their memory. Remember to include:

- The backup caregiver's name, role in your child's life, and contact information
- Any temporary changes to pickup/drop-off
- A reminder to let you know if your child's behavior changes

