

Sharing Responsibility: How to Foster Interdependence



Life doesn't make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that it is better for us all.

Erik Erikson

DEFINING INTERDEPENDENCE

While we often talk about setting up our children to be independent, consider the collaborative advantages of **inter**dependence. The journey from dependence to interdependence can be incremental and fluid. You may find that you and your child have different thresholds of dependence for the different aspects of T1D management (the physical, emotional, or intellectual).

	Physically	Emotionally	Intellectually
Dependence "You" paradigm: Depends on others to fulfill needs.	Needs physical assistance for diabetes management (i.e. site changes, administering insulin, etc.)	Bases identity and self-worth on other people's opinions and behaviors (caregivers, health care team, etc.)	Relies on others to make decisions for them (food choices, carb counting, deciding insulin doses, speaking at clinic visits)
Independence "I" paradigm: Does things for self without relying on others.	Takes care of their own physical needs around diabetes management.	Derives sense of worth from within, independent of others' opinions.	Makes decisions and forms opinions without others' input.
Interdependence "We" paradigm: Capable, confident, and seeks collaborative support.	Can manage the physical aspects of diabetes by themselves, but asks for help when needed (i.e. when sick).	Has an strong internal sense of self-worth, but also takes other's opinions and feedback into consideration.	Thinks independently, while also considering information and perspectives from others, especially when facing challenges or new situations.

ALLOWING FOR MISTAKES

Allow both yourself and your child to make mistakes and learn from them. This encourages them to come to you when something goes wrong, and keeps you engaged in their growth. Diabetes isn't a perfect science and there is no such thing as a 'perfect diabetic' so it's important to remind ourselves and our kids that weird stuff happens. When diabetes is frustrating, confusing, or inconsistent, knowing that you have a strong support system can make all the difference.

Sharing Responsibility: Scaffolding



“Decide collaboratively who’s responsible for what... what the teen is expected to do on their own, and how the parent is going to help.”

Dr. Sam Marzouk

Scaffolding is a learning tool that helps to foster ownership and interdependence in new skills and responsibilities. Much like scaffolding around a construction site, support systems are gradually and mindfully pared back to reveal a free-standing, independent structure. Remember, scaffolding can be re-introduced as the project develops. **Make sure your child knows that you’re there to offer support, even in moments of independence!**

PROCEDURAL SCAFFOLDING

The scaffolding technique includes the following steps:

1. **Direct Modeling (The I DO Phase)** - Demonstrate the task in real time.
2. **Guided Learning (The WE DO Phase)** - Approach tasks collaboratively, offering guidance and support as necessary. When something is challenging or goes wrong, problem solve *together*.
3. **Independent Practice (The YOU DO Phase)** - Promote the expectation that tasks can be completed without supervision.

NOTE: Make use of graphic organizers, visual aids, or schedules to help assist your child transition through the scaffolding steps.

VERBAL SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding can be a part of everyday communication with your child. Promote a growth mindset by incorporating aspects of verbals scaffolding into your T1D discussions, such as by...

Prompting Questions - Determine what they are ready for/capable of.

ex. *Are you ready for practice? What are you going to do before hand to try to avoid a bad low?*

Paraphrasing - Show them you understand, model a growth mindset & find their knowledge gaps.

ex. *You went low during practice today, and I hear that it was frustrating for you to have to sit out. I get that you don't want it to happen again. Can you walk me through what happened?*

Using Think-Alouds - Problem solve together.

ex. *What do you think you/we can try next time to avoid going low?*

Reinforcing Context - Discuss why it matters (without lecturing!).

ex. *I'm glad we got to talk about this today. I'm proud of you for managing your sugars and asking for support when you need it so that you can stay safe and healthy!*



Sharing Responsibility: Growth Zones & SMART Goals



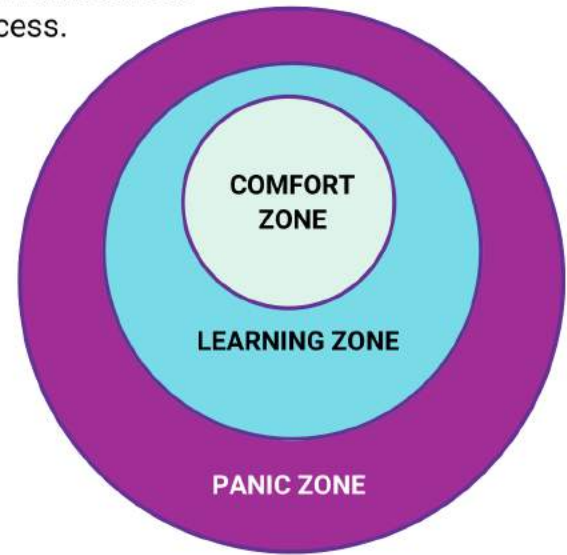
THE LEARNING ZONE MODEL

Learning how to navigate between zones of comfort, learning, and panic zones can help your child approach new challenges and responsibilities with confidence and excitement. Moving between the different zones is a fluid process. Let you and your child return to the comfort zone when needed, especially during times of stress. Use familiar skills from your comfort zone to anchor you as you explore the learning zone, and make sure to check in with your child about how they are feeling throughout the process.

The Comfort Zone: Staying in the comfort zone, you continue doing what you know you are good at and don't push yourself to learn and achieve more.

The Learning Zone: Moving into the learning zone, you are striving to move one or two steps forward. This takes confidence in yourself and trust in those around you.

The Panic Zone: Moving into this zone may be a sign that you are overconfident. You may be jumping ahead of what you are ready for. Make sure you fully evaluate what you and your child are ready for.



S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

To help your child take on more responsibility around their T1D management, goal setting can help you both manage the process more mindfully. Broad goals such as *"I want my child to be independent"* can feel overwhelming. Applying a **SMART Goal** framework and short-term goals will reduce stress, making the process feel less overwhelming and achievable. When setting goals together, check to make sure they are:

S	Specific: Target a particular area for improvement.	Example: The goal is for my child to be able to order supplies when away at school.
M	Measurable: Determine a way to indicate progress.	Example: My child will have been responsible for successfully ordering their supplies twice.
A	Achievable: Is the goal agreed to and is it attainable?	Example: Yes, we have talked about it and my child feels ready.
R	Relevant: Is this the right time for this? Does this serve larger goals?	Example: This goal will help my child become more responsible ahead of starting post-secondary school.
T	Time Bound: Include a timeline for expected results.	Example: This goal should be achieved by August.