Eight-year-old Kamdyn, who has type 1 diabetes, was enrolled in an after-school Boys & Girls Club program in Gloucester, Virginia. Before Kamdyn started, her mom, Chelesa, contacted the program’s director to talk about Kamdyn’s diabetes care needs. The director, who has type 2 diabetes, was supportive and offered to be trained on Kamdyn’s care. He told Chelesa that they would watch Kamdyn during the first week—then evaluate how things were going.

On Kamdyn’s second day in the program, her blood sugar level began to drop a bit, but was still within a normal range. Chelesa explained how to give Kamdyn some gummies to treat the dropping blood sugar. At the same time, a regional Boys & Girls Club Service Director was nearby and overheard what was happening. She decided that Kamdyn posed a safety risk to the program.

At 8:30 PM that night, Chelesa received a call and was told that Kamdyn could not return to the program the next day. Chelesa did not have another option for after school care, so this was a problem, especially on such short notice. Chelesa knew about disability discrimination law and was upset. She knew that her daughter had legal rights and should not have been barred from the program, just because of diabetes.

Chelesa contacted the American Diabetes Association. She spoke with a Legal Advocate, who confirmed that Kamdyn was protected under federal law. It was illegal to exclude her.

Chelesa was happy to confirm that her daughter had legal rights, but believed it would be hard to challenge the Club’s decision on her own. However, she had confidence that the American Diabetes Association would be respected as a national leader, so she decided to write a letter to challenge the Boys & Girls Club decision, explaining that she had received information about Kamdyn’s rights from an attorney at the Association.

Chelesa didn’t just write the letter to help her daughter. She also wanted to help other children who might be turned away from the program, just because of a disability. She wanted to educate the program’s staff about the law and help get the policy changed.

In her letter to the Boys & Girls Club, Chelesa wrote “you have a great program that is a wonderful asset to the community. It should be open to all children, as your mission states.”

The Boys & Girls Club’s regional staff responded the very same day Chelesa’s letter arrived. Kamdyn was accepted back into the program. Kamdyn does not currently attend the Boys & Girls Club program, but Chelesa may want to enroll her again in the future. She’s happy they’ll have that option.

“It’s nice being able to use the American Diabetes Association as a powerhouse along with legislation to help keep our children safe and treated fairly. Thanks for all you do.” Chelesa Wilds.