

Medication Administration in  
Early Education and Child Care Settings

HEALTHY FUTURES  
Promoting Health Through Education

Introduction to Medication Administration in Early Education and Child Care Settings

Module 3: How to Administer Medication

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Objectives:

- Most common errors
- 5 Rights
- Identifying "as needed" conditions
- Universal/standard precautions
- Preparing to administer medication
- Medication administration procedure
- Communicating with the child

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Introduction: Common Errors in Medication Administration

Approximately 5% of emergency room visits for unintentional medication overdoses among children under the age of 5 are for **medication errors**.



Source: [https://www.cdc.gov/medicationsafety/protect/protect\\_initiative.html](https://www.cdc.gov/medicationsafety/protect/protect_initiative.html)

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## Most Common Medication Errors



- Errors are most commonly made with analgesics or pain relievers

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## The "5 Rights"

- Right child
- Right medication
- Right dose
- Right time
- Right route



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## Right Child

- Check the name on the medication label and the child's name
- If any question arises, check a second identifier such as date of birth



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### Right Medication

- Read the label to make sure you have the correct medication
- Especially important for children who are taking more than one medication



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### Right Dose

- Check dose on label and authorization form
- Use proper measuring device
- Check measuring device carefully



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### Right Time



- Check the permission form
- Check the label
- Note the time
- Look at the clock
- The right time
- In an emergency, "now" is the right time to give medication

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### Right Route

- How is the medication to be given?
- Check the label and Authorization to Give Medicine form

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### “As Needed” Conditions

P<sub>2</sub> R<sub>1</sub> N<sub>1</sub>

- Some medication only need to be given “as needed”
- Specific instructions
- OTC medications should be kept to a minimum
- Orders should state the maximum number of times the dose can be repeated

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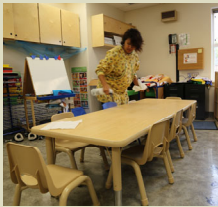
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### Standard Precautions in Child Care Settings

- What are stand precautions (sometimes called universal precautions)?



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**Standard Precautions in Child Care Settings**

The #1 infection control measure to prevent illness is handwashing



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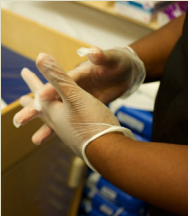
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**Standard Precautions in Child Care Settings**

- Disposable gloves
- Washing hands after using gloves
- Proper disposal of materials
- Environmental sanitation



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**HEALTHY FUTURES**

**Group Activity:  
Prepare to Administer Medication**

List the steps to prepare to give medication to Martina before actually going to get her.



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**HEALTHY FUTURES**

**Group Activity: Prepare to Administer Medication continued**

**Steps**

- Wash hands
- Prepare work area
- Take out the medication
- Check the label and the items on the forms to see that they match
- Get proper measuring device
- Check the time

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**Medication Administration Procedure:  
Prepare the Medication**



- Use the appropriate measuring device
- Measure the amount on the label
- Change the form of the medication **ONLY** if label states for you to do so

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**Medication and Food**

- It is usually best not to mix medication with food
- Ask the prescriber or pharmacist
- If medication is mixed with food or liquid, **all** of it must be taken
- Give the child something to drink immediately afterward to help with the taste



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**Medication Administration Procedure:  
Prepare the Child**

- Communicate
- Explain the procedure
  - *Never call medication "candy"*
- Wash the child's hands, if appropriate
- Position the child



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**Prepare the Child: Infants**

- Support the infant's head
- Hold the baby semi-upright
- Keep the infant's arms and hands away from the face
- Gently press the chin to open the mouth
- Rock the baby before and after



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**Prepare the Child: Infants**

- Syringe or dropper:
  - Position on one side of the mouth along the gum
  - Squirt slowly to allow time to swallow
- Special dosing nipples work best when the baby is hungry
- Give oral medication before feeding unless instructed otherwise



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**Prepare the Child: Toddlers**

- Ask parents about their techniques
- Give some control or choices
- Be honest
- Use age-appropriate language
- Be positive
- Thank & praise



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**Prepare the Child: Older Children**



- Explain why we take medication
- Teach
- Involve the child in the process
- Books that talk about medication

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**HEALTHY FUTURES**

**Medication Administration Procedure**

- Check 5 rights
  - Note any special instructions
- Take the medication from the container
  - Prepare the medication
- Check the label again
- Give the medication



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**Medication Administration Procedure:  
Finishing Up**

- Praise the child
- Check the label again
- Return the medication
- Record the medication
- Clean the measuring device
- Wash your hands
- Observe the child for side effects



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**HEALTHY FUTURES**

**How to Give Oral Medication Video**



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**Measuring Oral Medication**

- Oral Measuring Devices
- Dropper
- Syringes
- Dosing spoon
- Medication cup
- No kitchen spoons



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**Topical Medication**

- Skin creams, ointments, patches
- Eye drops, ointments
- Ear drops



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**HEALTHY FUTURES**

**How to Give Topical Medication Video**



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**HEALTHY FUTURES**

**How to Give Ear Drops Video**



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## How to Give Eye Drops and Ointments Video



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## Inhaled Medications



- Nasal sprays and drops
- Metered dose inhalers and nebulizers

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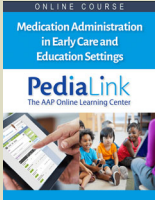
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The AAP Online Learning Center

## PediaLink: Medication Administration in Early Care and Education Settings



ONLINE COURSE  
Medication Administration in Early Care and Education Settings  
PediaLink  
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For more information, an online course is available through PediaLink.

To sign up please visit:  
<https://shop.aap.org/medication-administration-in-early-care-and-education-settings/>

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Promoting Best Practices for All Children

### Resources

- **State Specific Policy Information** at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>
- **Caring for Our Children** at <http://nrckids.org/CFOC>
- **Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 4th Ed: A Quick Reference Guide** Edited by Susan S. Aronson, MD, FAAP and Timothy R. Shope, MD, MPH, FAAP.

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Promoting Best Practices for All Children

### Summary & Questions



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Promoting Best Practices for All Children

### Disclaimer

- Curriculum provides education for personnel in the child care setting who give medication to children but are not licensed health care professionals
- Curriculum is not a substitute for written policy and professional medical guidance and not a certification of competency
- Each program must review state laws, regulations, and resources, and adapt accordingly

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**HEALTHY  
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Helping Health Happen in Early Childhood

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## Acknowledgements

- This curriculum has been developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The authors and contributors are expert authorities in the field of pediatrics.
- The recommendations in this curriculum do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate.
- Listing of resources does not imply an endorsement by the AAP. The AAP is not responsible for the content of resources mentioned in this curriculum.
- Website addresses are as current as possible but may change at any time.
- Support for the Healthy Futures curricula has been provided through funding from Johnson & Johnson Consumer Inc.

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Helping Health Happen in Early Childhood

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## Acknowledgements

- **Colorado:** Guidelines for Medication Administration: An Instructional Program for Training Unlicensed Personnel to Give Medication in Out-of-Home Child Care, Schools, and Camp Settings, Fifth Edition, 2008, developed by Healthy Child Care Colorado
- **New Jersey:** Medication Administration in Child Care developed by Healthy Child Care New Jersey
- **North Carolina:** Medication Administration in Child Care in North Carolina developed by the Quality Enhancement Project for Infants and Toddlers, with funding from the NC Division of Child Development to the Department of Maternal and Child Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- **West Virginia:** Medication Administration: An Instructional Program for Teaching Non-Medical Personnel to Give Medication in Child Care Centers in West Virginia developed by Healthy Child Care West Virginia and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services

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**Acknowledgments**

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**Content Reviewer Advisor**  
Andrew N. Hashikawa, MD, MS, FAAP  
*AAP Early Childhood Champion (Michigan)*  
University of Michigan Injury Center

**Curriculum Content Consultant**  
Kelly Towey, M.Ed.

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