

Child Safety: Medication Administration (Video 5)

Danette Glassy: Hello. I'm Doctor Danette Glassy. I'll be your host for this episode of Keeping Them Safe.

Today, we'll be talking about medication administration, which includes how to handle, administer, and store medication in early care and education programs. It's important to note requirements for your programs vary greatly from state to state. Most states, territories, tribes, or local health departments may have different regulations, training requirements, forms, or other procedures in place. It is important to understand and follow your state or local regulations as they pertain to medication administration. Medication is an important part of the health and wellness of children, but it can be dangerous if the wrong type or wrong amount is given to the wrong person or at the wrong time or even at the wrong way. It's important for you, as an early care and education provider, to know how to keep children safe around medication.

Caring for Our Children is a collection of best practice standards for early care and education providers. Caring for Our Children provides guidance for medication administration in your program.

Let's talk about four recommendations now. Your program should limit the types of medications you administer. Medication administration should be limited to prescription or over-the-counter medications ordered in writing by a child's prescribing healthcare provider. Your program will also need the written permission of the parent or guardian. The parent or guardian must bring any prescribed medication to your program in the original container labeled by the pharmacy to ensure that the right child is receiving the right medication. The specific information that is needed on the written permission form can be found in Caring for Our Children. Another strategy is to encourage parents or guardians to give children prescription medication at home, if possible. There is the potential for error when early care and education programs administer medication, so the at-home option might be safer. Another issue is having medication in your program is the risk of accidental poisoning. As we know, children are naturally curious. That colorful pill or bottle of liquid can look like candy to a child. Programs must make sure that children do not have access to medicine. As early care and education staff, it's your responsibility to ensure that medication is in a proper container and kept away from children. Caring for Our Children recommends that all medications have child-resistant caps. These caps have been known to greatly decrease incidents of poisoning in young children. Caring for Our Children standards also recommend that programs store medications so they are inaccessible to children. All staff should be aware of the poison control number. It is 1-800-222-1222.

Next, let's talk about training. All states and territories require that teachers and program staff who supervise children are properly trained in medication administration. Increasing numbers of children who attend early care and education programs take medication, so training is

extremely important. Be sure to follow your state's regulations on medication training requirements. At the end of this video, check out the additional resources and online training that include more information on this topic. Finally, let's talk about what should happen if your program experiences an emergency, including evacuations, lockdowns, and shelter in place. The time to think about and plan for medication transport is before a potential emergency. Every early care and education program should have a written plan for handling first aid supplies and medication to be included in an emergency kit. The written plan should include individual care needs for children who have medications, equipment or other assistive devices, including detailed instructions on medication administration and how staff will ensure medications, equipment, and devices will be included in the emergency kit. Remember: You can find resources and trainings on the video page.

Before we close, I have a few questions for you to consider. First, what is your current plan for making sure your staff understand your state's policies and procedures on medication administration? Second, how do you ensure your staff are practicing safe administration procedures? Third, how do you ensure children will have access to their medications in the case of an emergency?

Thank you for spending this time with me. We'll see you on another episode of Keeping Them Safe. Remember: The more you learn the safer they are.