

Orientation-Level Training

For School Employees Who
Administer Oral Medications to
Students

This manual is:

- A resource.
- Not a substitute for delegation, training, and supervision by a school nurse.
- Be sure you understand your district's policies and procedures.

Training by your school nurse is necessary to dispense medication in a school setting.

- The manual is not a substitute for training by your school nurse.
- Having this manual does not mean you can dispense medication.
- Topics covered:


 Supervision—types and responsibilities.


 Confidentiality—how to protect the students and ourselves.

 Paperwork—documentation with example forms.

 Medications and procedures for accepting them at school.

 Procedures—wash hands, dispense medications.

 What to do before and during a field trip.

 Advocating for ourselves—how to protect yourselves.

What are oral medications?

- Oral medications are those taken by mouth.
- For guidance on administering inhaled medication, consult the school nurse supervising a particular student's care.

Contact school nurse for:

- Gastronomy feedings.
- Use of inhalers.
- Medications taken by gastrostomy tube.

The paraeducator is a school employee who:

- Provides instructional and other direct services to children and youth.
- Works under the supervision of a certificated/licensed staff member.

The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in New York has lead the way for using the term “paraeducator.”

Para = along side

Helps us all—educators, parents, and community understand what a paraeducator is and does.

There are approximately 20 different job titles in Washington State for paraeducators.

Assumptions:

- Delegation, training, and supervision are required.
- Certificated/licensed staff are responsible and accountable for the management of programs.
- Nurses and O.T./P.T. have additional laws and regulations due to licenses.

Assumptions (Cont.):

- Clear expectations.
- Established routines.
- Ongoing communication needed.

We all need to have open and regular communication, so we can provide quality service and care to students. There are three types:

1. Formal communication, i.e. regular meeting times.
2. Informal communication, i.e. in hall, at coffee machine.
3. Open communication establishes:
 - a. Clear expectations.
 - b. Routines.
 - c. Ongoing communication.

What can I do? Chain of command.

- Paraeducators cannot train another person to perform health related tasks.
- Paraeducators may not take orders from a physician.

EMPHASIS

A paraeducator cannot train another paraeducator to perform a health related task. Only a nurse can train a paraeducator.

A paraeducator can fax the health care professional authorization forms to the doctor, but the nurse interprets this information and delegates/trains the paraeducator.

There must be a parent request/authorization to administer medication on file.

Activity Instructions:

Ask participants what a paraeducator would say if a doctor's office called to give information? If a parent asked you, the paraeducator, to call the doctor?

Supervision

- Oral Medication Law
- The oral medication law (RCW 28A.210.260) requires that paraeducators be trained and supervised by a registered nurse (R.N.) or a physician (M.D.).
- Paraeducators must be trained and supervised in the administration of oral medications.

Supervision is most often the responsibility of the school nurse.

Levels of supervision—nurses

- Immediate supervision
- Direct supervision
- Indirect supervision
- Most often, supervision is indirect.

Give examples of immediate supervision:

Nurse comes to school with student and stays with student all day, providing all health care needs for student.

Give examples of direct supervision:

Nurse is always in building but not always with one specific child. They train and delegate some procedures such as administration of oral medications or gastrostomy feeding to others, but they are on the school campus for immediate assistance.

Give examples of indirect supervision:

Nurse may only be in school one day a week. Health care services are delegated to other trained staff members.

It is necessary that procedures be established for immediate contact with the nurse.

Confidentiality and release of information:

- Why must confidentiality be maintained?
 - 📄 It's the law!
 - 📄 Federal laws, state statutes and regulations, and local school district policies require it.
- Health care providers may share health care information with teachers and paraeducators to the extent that they need to know.

Suggestion: Have a list of who will work with student and have parent sign, so the parent will know who will be working with child.

Question: “How many of you work playground?” The nurse may give you a medical alert for a child with seizures on a need-to-know basis.

Suggestion: Take a Polaroid picture of students with medical alert and put it on the medical alert notice.

If there is a health (safety) issue, e.g., playground or lunchroom/medical alert, information can be shared by the nurse without the permission of a parent.

The nurse determines what information needs to be shared and who needs to know. Paraeducators are advised not to share confidential information with other staff, teachers, or paraeducators. Have the nurse do this.

Confidentiality (Cont.):

- Generally, health care information cannot be disclosed to anyone without the consent of a parent or a student who is 18 years of age or older.

Confidentiality is one of the most important responsibilities for educators to adhere to.

Because many paraeducators live in the community where they work, they may be placed in difficult situations such as being asked questions to which they cannot respond to because of confidentiality guidelines.






Who may have access?

- The law permits those with signed consent to have access to health care information (Chapter 70.02 RCW).
- The health care provider determines who needs information and how much information is needed to provide safe health care.

Example: Medical alert is needed for lunchroom and playground for the child's and your safety.

Ask participants for other examples.

The “Five Rights:”

-  Right Child
-  Right Medication
-  Right Dosage
-  Right Time
-  Right Route

Activity—Pre/Posttest and case scenario 1 and 2 are in Section 2, Training Activities

Give examples for each “R.”

- **Right Child:** Ask name of older children, picture of child on medicine bottle if a young child. If you know the child, greet him/her, “good morning Mark.” Ask another adult to verify if unsure or child is nonverbal.
- **Right Medication:** Locked area in original pharmacy container with student’s name, check log, picture on bottle.
- **Right Dosage:** Check log and medication.
- **Right Time:** Every effort should be made to ensure medication is given at the appropriate time. However, medication may be given within 30 minutes before or after designated time. This does not apply to seizure medication, it needs to be given **on time**. Explain why it is important to give medication on time, e.g., give anti-seizure or broncho-dilator on time to prevent seizures, maintain therapeutic level in the blood. Do not depend on children to come from class on time, call the classroom. You cannot give medication outside of a 30-minute time frame because the student forgot to come down. This would be a medication error. Check with district or nurse for specific district procedures.
- **Right Route:** The way the medication is to be delivered to the child whether by mouth, inhaler, gastronomy tube.

! Idea: Posted list inside medication cupboard with name, medication, and picture of each child.

! Idea: Same person in health room all the time, easier to prevent errors or correct potential problems.

Parent/guardian responsibilities:

- Bring sufficient medication in appropriate container.
- Bring Authorization for Administration of Oral Medication form with written instructions.
- Form is valid for one school year.

Have the parent count medication in the bottle and sign Receipt of Medication form along with paraeducator or have two people (ask another staff member) to count, log, and initial form.

Discuss: There have been instances where health room staff have been accused of taking medications for own use or financial gain. Having two (2) people count and initial the medication record form protects against this happening.

Form **must have** signature of parent/guardian.

- Form good for only one school year.
- Health care professional may fax form, but parent must still sign.
- Refer to sample form in participant's manual.

Suggestion: Have parent keep blank forms at their doctor's office or send to doctor to keep.

School nurse or delegated staff responsibilities:

- Make sure appropriate forms are filled out and proper directions supplied.
- Give medication at proper time; make sure log is filled out and initialed.
- Report any difficulties to school nurse.
- If an error occurs, fill out Medication Error Report.

District responsibilities:

- Develop policies in alignment with state guidelines.

All districts have policies and procedures. Ask your school nurse for further clarification.

Medication administration records:

- Parent permission form.
- Authorization for Administration of Oral Medication at School.
- Receipt for Medication.
- Medication Administration Log.
- Medication Error Report.

See Section 3, Sample forms:

Authorization for Administration of Oral Medication at School. **Valid for only one school year.**

Parent Permission,. **Valid for only one school year.**

Receipt for Medication

Medication Administration Log

Medication Error Report

Give error examples:

- Error in any of the five “Rs.”

Ask and explain what you would do.

1. Medication was given to wrong student. What do you do with the student?
2. What to do with the pill that has dropped on floor or spilled in sink. (Flush).
3. Who to notify? Call parent, call nurse, record on error form, follow district policy.

Accepting medication at school:

- Medication must come to school in original container and must be accompanied by the proper authorization.
- School district policy may require a count of medication when brought to school.

1. Check medication name on form and bottle:

- Name must be the same.
- Medication must come in original bottle.

2. Check that child's name is correct:

- Matches authorization form.
- The form must be signed by parent/guardian and health care professional.

3. Check that amount of pills, capsules, or liquid is correct:

- Have two people (parent if possible) count.
- Sign verification on Receipt of Medication.

4. Set up medication.

Administration of medication:

- Correct student name.
- Correct medication name.
- Correct dosage.
- Watch student take medication at the right time via the right route.
- Fill out and initial child's Medication Administration Log.

Optional: Glo-Germ Hand Washing Activity-Refer to Section 2, Training Activities

Oral Medication Activity-Refer to Section 2, Training Activities

Supplies needed:

1. Empty bottles of pills.
 - Obtained from pharmacy along with blank labels.
 - 25-30 M&Ms for pills.
2. Medication Administration Log.
3. Authorization for Administration of Oral Medications at School form.

Instructions:

1. Divide class into groups of four to five. Explain that one participant in each group will be the "paraeducator" and the rest will be "students," in a health room office.
2. Give the "paraeducator" the Medication Administration Log and Authorization for Administration of Oral Medication at School form and pill bottles.
3. Give the "students" slips of paper telling who they are and how they should act.
4. Allow ten minutes for role play.

Who received medications: (1) John? Ask all to raise their hands if John received his medication.

It was his brother's medication and it is expired. What should you do? Call parent to get correct medications. If child received the medication and the parent cannot be reached, call school nurse. (2) Kathy Lee Jones? OK, if you have written documentation that it has been changed, follow orders. (3) Bob Brown? OK, he should have received his. (4) Jill Hill? Does the Authorization for Administration of Oral Medications at School form match the bottle? It does not match, if there is anything different between form and bottle do not give medication. Call the nurse.

Medication errors:

- A medication error is a violation of any of the “Five Rights.”
- Report errors immediately to supervising nurse.
- Fill out Medication Error Report.
- Observe student for serious and/or life-threatening symptoms.
- If student is developing serious and/or life-threatening symptoms, follow building/district emergency procedures.

Oral Medication Activity (continued)

Any errors?

- John, wrong name on bottle, date expired. Call parent or nurse.
- Jill, form different from bottle. Call parent or nurse.

Any problems?

- How did they solve the problems?

Note: When medication is running low, be sure to notify parents in plenty of time to refill.

Changes in medication:

- A paraeducator may never change a student's medication prescription unless verified and directed by the school nurse.

Ask participants what they would do in the following circumstances:

1. Child says, "I do not take blue pills anymore, I take yellow."
2. Parent calls and tells you the child takes two pills now, not one.
 - Follow directions on medicine and physician's authorization for medication at school.
 - Notify nurse; she may call doctor for verification.

Over-the-counter medications:

- The same procedures apply to both prescription drugs and over the-counter (OTC) medications.
- Consult your school district/building policy.

1. Needs to be in original container.
2. Have parent put child's name on container, if not already there.
3. Same authorization form required for OTC medications at school.
 - Parent/guardian signature.
 - Health care professional signature.
4. Same procedures should be followed as for prescription medication.

Field Trips:

- Take permission slip from home.
- Take copies of Authorization for Administration of Oral Medications at School form and Medication Administration Log.
- Keep medication in a secure location.
- Return medication to locked area when returning to school.

Suggestions:

- Keep extra bottles of originals to use on field trips.
- Ask pharmacy for empty bottle(s) to use on field trips.
- Have one person designated to distribute medication.
 - ✓ That person needs to be trained, delegated, and supervised by the school nurse.
- Carry medication in a locked container or in a fanny pack.
- Alert parents in advance of field trip and have signed permission slip.

• **Authorization for Administration of Oral Medications at School form needs to be obtained for all medication not normally given at school (e.g., overnight field trip).**

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Advocating for oneself:

- What should you do if your supervisor directs you to administer medication or to perform health care procedures or other tasks/procedures you have not been trained to do, are not qualified to do, or are not legally allowed to perform?




Guidelines:

- You should be trained and supervised by a licensed health care professional.
- You should be trained in techniques for "universal precautions."
- You will need to be prepared to respond appropriately to student and/or building emergencies in the school setting.




Guidelines (Cont):

- You should be aware of your school district and/or personal liability insurance coverage.
- You should be aware of state laws or collective bargaining agreements.
- You should support the proactive development of IEPs and IHPs.

Steps to follow:

- If you are being directed to perform a task you are not qualified to do or which you believe is illegal:
 -  Explain to your supervisor that you believe it is not safe or it is illegal for you to perform the procedures.
 -  Call the school nurse or others to discuss what you are being directed to perform.
 -  If you are still being directed to perform a task, proceed to the next steps.

Steps to follow (Cont.):

-  Document what you are being asked to perform. Put your objections in writing. (For example, “You are asking me to perform a health care procedure I have not been trained to do and that could endanger the child.”)
-  Ask the supervisor to put the directive in writing.
-  Call your union representative.

Steps to follow (Cont.):

- 📄 Ask to see the school district's liability insurance policy regarding coverage of educational employees complying with a directive of a supervisor.
- 👤 Comply with the direct order unless you feel you will jeopardize the safety of the student.
- 👤 It is necessary to follow the above steps only until the problem is resolved.