

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency
HEALTHCARE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE
Psychotropic Medication



Contact the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) Clinical and Health Services Administration (CHSA) On-Call Information Line at 202.498.8456, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. For purposes of this quick reference guide, the term “child” includes both infants and youth, as applicable.

Psychotropic Medication Administrative Issuance CFSA-12-9

1. Birth parents or legal guardians of a child have to provide consent before the distribution of psychotropic medication. Consent is required for each individual psychotropic medication, and may be required for each change in medication dosage. (See CFSA’s policy on [Medical Consents](#)).
2. A psychiatrist has to perform a mental health assessment, including necessary lab work before diagnosis.
3. The social worker, psychiatrist, caregiver, nurse care manager (NCM), birth parents, or legal guardians should participate in any information-sharing discussion regarding medication, side effects, and effectiveness.
4. If the birth parents, legal guardians, caregivers and NCM were not present when it was learned that the child needed psychotropic medication, the social worker must immediately inform them of such.

Medication Administration and Management Policy

1. A child in CFSA’s care must be enrolled in Medicaid. If medication is needed prior to enrollment, CHSA’s Healthy Horizons Assessment Center (HHAC) should be notified for assistance.
2. If a medication error occurs, caregivers and/or social workers must immediately contact the healthcare practitioner, pharmacist, or HHAC for advice.
3. The caregiver must inform the assigned social worker within 1 business day if medication, including over-the-counter medication, is prescribed.
4. Caregivers must consult with the child’s primary health care provider or with the HHAC nurse practitioner prior to administering over-the-counter medications.
5. The administration of medication to a child in care may be considered “routine” or “non-routine” medical care, depending on the circumstance.
 - a. *Routine* medical care is critical to the healthcare process, particularly for addressing chronic and acute medical issues. It includes but is not limited to treatment and medications for ordinary illnesses, dental treatment and care, immunizations, well-child visits, preventative health services, and psychotherapy provided by a professional who is not a psychiatrist.
 - Health care practitioners who are authorized to prescribe medications include licensed doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.
 - b. *Non-routine* medical care includes but is not limited to elective surgery, non-routine dental treatment, non-routine medical tests, psychiatric treatment, and the administration of any medications associated with the non-routine medical care, including psychotropic medications.

6. General guidelines for administering medication to children in care follow the “Five Rights of Medication Administration” (*Institute for Safe Medication Practices, 2007*):
 - a. Right person
 - b. Right medication
 - c. Right dosage
 - d. Right mode of administration
 - e. Right time
7. All medications must be kept in a safe place and out of the reach and sight of children, unless the child is trained and authorized to self-administer.
8. All medications shall be kept in the container in which they were received from the pharmacist because the information on the label is necessary to properly identify the patient, provider, medication, instructions for use, and the date the prescription was dispensed.
 - In consultation with the health care practitioner, the caregiver may choose to put medications in a pill organizer for the day or week in order to better track the child’s use of prescribed medications. This may be especially useful for children who take more than one dosage of a medication throughout the day.
9. Expired or no longer prescribed and unused prescription medications shall be discarded immediately.
 - a. In congregate care facilities, health care professionals supervising medication administration shall discard unused or expired medications and document as appropriate.
 - b. Other caregivers should consult with the health care practitioner or pharmacist on the proper disposal of medications.

To read the online policy guidance in its entirety, click on [Medication Administration and Management](#) and refer to *Procedure D: Psychotropic Administration*, or visit CFSA’s online policy manual at <http://cfsa.dc.gov/>.