


20.15, Medication Administration, Storage, and Disposal	
Application: All Department of Children's Services Employees, Contract Provider Employees, and Foster Parents.	
Authority: TCA 37-5-105(3), TCA 37-5-106, TCA 68-1-904	Standards: COA: PA-RPM 4.01, 4.05, 4.06, 4.07, & 4.08. ACA: 5-JCF-5C-29 and 5-JCF-5C-53.
Commissioner: 	Date: 01/09/2026
Original Effective Date: 3/1/1998 Current Effective Date: 02/09/2026	Supersedes: 12/21/21 Last Review Date: 7/14/2025
Glossary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <u>Medication Administration</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dispensing or giving a child/youth the correct dose of prescribed or over-the-counter medication at the correct time and via the correct route. The medication must be stored securely in a locked container or area so children cannot access it. 	

Policy Statement:

Children/youth in the custody of the Department of Children's Services (DCS) will receive medications in a timely manner, under the direction of a prescribing practitioner, and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. All foster homes and facilities under the direction of or contracted with DCS shall regulate the handling of medications in accordance with professional standards, good security practices, and appropriate state and federal laws.

Purpose:

Safety is the paramount concern for children/youth receiving medication while in DCS custody. Whether children/youth are in foster homes or congregate care facilities, they will receive care that enforces and enhances the five (5) principles of medication administration, also known as the "five rights", including right person, right medication, right dose, right time, and right route. These simple, effective, best practice "rights" will promote safety, maximize benefits, and reduce the risk of medication administration to children/youth.

Procedures:

A. Administration, Distribution, and Assisting with the Self-Administration of Medication

1. Nurses may administer medication.
2. Foster parents may administer medication.
3. Unlicensed staff employed by licensed agencies (e.g., group homes or residential programs) providing services to children/youth in DCS custody may not administer or assist with the self-administration of the following, per [Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-1-904\(c\)\(4\)](#):
 - a) Vaginal medications.
 - b) Rectal medications.
 - c) Intravenous (IV) medications.
 - d) Intramuscular (IM) medications.
 - e) Certain subcutaneous injectable medications.

Exception: Insulin injections may be allowed under specific circumstances.

4. Trained, unlicensed personnel may assist with self-administration of medication in congregate care facilities that are licensed under Title 37 and under contract to provide services to children/youth in DCS custody.
5. DCS Case Managers may distribute medication to custodial children/youth in certain limited circumstances. For more information, see the [Protocol for DCS Case Managers to Distribute or Observe Self-Administration of Medication for Custodial Youth](#).
6. Medications are administered/distributed in accordance with the provisions of the Tennessee Nurse Practice Act, The Tennessee Pharmacy Practice Act, [Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-1-904](#), and the applicable rules and regulation of the Tennessee Boards of Nursing and Pharmacy.
7. Facilities ensure medications are administered/distributed in accordance with the licensure requirement for their facility.

8. See the [*Protocol for Medication Administration, Storage, and Disposal*](#) for more information.

B. Required Training

1. Foster parents receive four (4) hours of comprehensive training every two (2) years in medication administration from a licensed Registered Nurse to ensure safety in medication procedures.
2. Unlicensed staff receive six (6) hours of comprehensive training every two (2) years in assisting children/youth with self-administration of medication from a licensed Registered Nurse to ensure safety in medication procedures.
 - a) Documentation of this training is maintained on-site at the facility for review by DCS and other state reviewers.
3. DCS Case Managers receive and complete the Distribution or Observation of Self-Administration of Medication for Custodial Youth Awaiting Placement training annually.
 - a) Documentation of this training is maintained by DCS Statewide Training.

Forms: None

Collateral Documents:

[*Protocol for Medication Administration, Storage, and Disposal*](#)

[*Protocol for DCS Case Managers to Distribute or Observe Self-Administration of Medication for Custodial Youth*](#)