

GUIDELINES FOR A REGISTERED NURSE TO TRAIN AN UNLICENSED SCHOOL EMPLOYEE TO ASSIST STUDENTS WITH MEDICATIONS

Consistent with the board nursing advisory prepared by the ACON School Nurse Task Force issued on May 19, 2006, the following guidelines will be adhered to by registered nurses when designating and training an unlicensed school employees to assist students with medication.

The RN assigned to the school or the RN supervising the clinical practice of the LPN assigned to the school in collaboration with the LPN may select, train, determine the competency of and evaluate unlicensed school employees for assisting students with regularly scheduled medications in situations where the RN or LPN on staff at the school is absent or not available.

Determination of training appropriateness

The RN assigned to the school or the RN supervising the clinical practice of the LPN assigned to the school will determine if it is safe to train unlicensed school employees to assist students with medications.

To determine if training of unlicensed school employees is appropriate, the RN will consider the following.

- whether the students' conditions are stable and predictable
- the nature and complexity of the medications
- the risk to the students in the event of a medication error
- the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities needed to assist the students with the medications
- the competency of unlicensed school employees
- whether the outcome anticipated is stable and predictable
- the number of unlicensed school employees that can safely be evaluated by the RN

The RN will consult with students' healthcare practitioners, as necessary, for advice regarding training unlicensed school employees to provide specific medications.

Selection of unlicensed school employees to assist students with medications

The RN assigned to a school or the LPN in consultation with his/her RN supervisor should work with the school's principal to identify school employees who agree to assist students with medications if the RN or LPN is absent or not available.

Training may be offered to all school employees who volunteer. However, the RN will recommend to the school's principal only those trainees who complete the training and pass the outlined competency requirements for assignment to assist students with medications.

The school principal, with written authorization from a student's parents/legal guardians, may assign one or more of the individuals recommended by the RN the duties of assisting students with medications.

Parents/Legal guardians should be made aware of and understand the difference between administration of medications and assisting with medications.

Training and determining competency

An RN must provide the initial training and competency determination of unlicensed school employees. The RN may delegate training updates that do not include procedural changes and periodic re-evaluation of an unlicensed school employee's competency to a LPN only after the RN has determined and documented that the LPN is competent to perform the tasks. The RN

should develop a checklist for the LPN to use during training updates and the re-evaluation process. Training updates that include procedural changes will be treated as an initial training, and therefore, must be first provided by an RN.

Unlicensed school employees may be trained to assist students with medications in the absence of the RN or LPN on staff at the school to provide health services for students, if the school district has the following.

- a written policy that authorizes the training of unlicensed school employees by an RN or LPN under the direction of an RN and provides for error reporting and error tracking
- written procedures outlining task specific trainings and quality assurance measures including competency determination, post-emergency evaluation, error reporting and error tracking

Training for unlicensed persons may include the skills necessary for assisting students with medications to be given by oral (including feeding tubes), topical, nasal and sublingual routes, and medications that are inhaled (e.g., asthma inhalers). Unlicensed school employees may not be trained to give routinely scheduled injectable medications, instill drops into the eye or ear, insert medications rectally or vaginally, or to give any form of insulin. See advisory #50 for exceptions related to training unlicensed school employees to administer medications that may be needed for medical emergencies. See advisory #51 for guidance regarding training unlicensed school employees for select tasks such as gastric tube feedings.

The instructional plan must include the following.

- step by step instructions and rationale for the tasks
- return demonstration of the tasks to evaluate competency and to assure accuracy and safety
- observation of the unlicensed school employee performing the tasks to evaluate competency and to assure accuracy and safety
- an evaluation of knowledge related to the tasks to measure understanding of pertinent concepts
- provision of written instructions as a reference
- a plan for seeking advice and/or emergency assistance from qualified licensed healthcare personnel
- a plan for ongoing evaluation of student outcomes by an RN
- documentation of instruction provided and a plan for training updates at least annually
- documentation of initial competency and periodic re-evaluation of competency at least annually

Upon completion of all training sessions, the trainees must be advised that the skills taught are to be used only for meeting the needs of the students for which they have been assigned to assist with medications at school or school-sponsored functions and are not transferable to other settings. The trained unlicensed school district employees cannot delegate the tasks to others or supervise others in performing the tasks. Because of risks for anaphylaxis and/or other untoward reactions, an unlicensed person must never assist students with the initial dose of a routinely scheduled medication.

If a portion of the training involves course content for which the RN or LPN is certified to teach to unlicensed persons (e.g., cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction), and the RN or LPN provides the training according to the specifications of the certifying body, then that portion of

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the training is transferable to other settings and the RN or LPN will provide the trainee with the appropriate certificate.

Evaluation

The RN will maintain a training file on each school employee trained.

The RN will ensure that the competencies of unlicensed school employees trained to assist students with medications are re-evaluated at least annually and that training updates of procedural changes are offered in a timely manner.

The RN may delegate training updates that do not include procedural changes and periodic re-evaluations of an unlicensed person's competency to a LPN, only after the RN has determined and documented that the LPN is competent to perform the tasks. The RN should develop a checklist for the LPN to use during the training update and re-evaluation process.

Following an absence of the licensed nurse during which a trained unlicensed school employee has assisted students with medications, the full-time RN or LPN assigned to the school will perform a post-procedural review. The RN or LPN should document the results of the procedural review in the school employee's training file. If the results of the post-procedural review indicate that the expected quality of care was not met, the RN must intervene by providing additional instruction or advising the school principal/administrator to rescind the assignment.

A licensed healthcare prescriber or an RN must be available via telecommunications to answer questions that the trained unlicensed school employee may have when assisting students with medications in the absence of the RN or LPN assigned to the school.

A plan for the trained unlicensed school employee to follow for emergency situations must be outlined.