

**State of Connecticut  
Department of Children and Families**

**Medication Administration  
Certification Training**



**2010**

# DCF Medication Certification Training

For non-medically licensed staff of DCF licensed or operated child caring facilities, DCF offers a Basic course in medication administration and a Recertification refresher review. Each is described in the following pages.

## **Basic Certification Course**

The Basic course is designed to initially prepare non-medically licensed staff with the skills to safely administer medications to children in DCF licensed or operated child caring facilities. The Basic certification requires 1) satisfactory attendance for classroom instruction, 2) skills verification, 3) passing a written exam and 4) successfully completing an internship at the employing facility.

The Basic certification course is conducted by a DCF nurse instructor or by a facility employed or contracted licensed medical personnel endorsed as an instructor by DCF.

### **Eligibility:**

The goal of the training is to teach safe medication administration principles and practices. Facility directors and participants must understand that the course is fast-paced and technical.

- Participants must be employed by a DCF licensed or operated child caring facility or extended day treatment center.
- Participants must be recommended by their facility director or designee as indicated by a completed, signed course registration form.
- Participants must have a high school diploma or equivalent; in the absence of a diploma or equivalent, the director of the employing facility must approve the person's eligibility. A copy of this approval must be placed in the employees file and available upon request.
- Participants must be capable of reading and understanding complex information and be able to perform basic math calculations.

### **Basic Certification Course Components:**

1. **Class time** – Classes are scheduled to take place over several days and will consist of approximately 24 hours of class time.

- Participants may not miss more than **four hours** of class time to remain eligible to take the written exam.
2. **Skills Verification** - Specific skills necessary for safe medication administration will be taught during class. Participants must be able to demonstrate those skills correctly before sitting for the written exam.
  3. **Written Exam** – multiple choice, true/false, matching and fill in the blank questions.
    - A score of 85% or better is required to pass the written exam.
    - Participants who fail the exam on their first attempt may retake the exam one time.
    - Those who fail a second time must retake the entire Basic course before testing for a third time.
    - Those who fail three exams consecutively are not eligible to pursue DCF medication administration certification for 5 years from the date of last failed exam.
  4. **Internship** – *Purpose:* Upon successful completion of the course, skills verification and the written exam, participants must complete an internship under the supervision of the facility director or designee and program nurse. The purpose of the internship is to provide the participants with the opportunity to practice and apply the skills learned in the Basic Medication Class in their own work setting. It also allows them to strengthen those skills and gain the confidence they need to competently and safely administer medications. The facility will provide the staff adequate time to complete this internship.
    - The Internship must progress in the following order and include at a minimum:
      1. A thorough orientation to facility medication policy and procedure.
      2. Observation of experienced medication certified staff or program nurse during at least two complete medication passes
      3. An evaluation by the program nurse of the candidate's medication administration skills. The program nurse will determine if the candidate may progress to the next step of the internship or if further supervision and training is required. (See Checklist B)

4. Performing two complete medication passes with direct, immediate supervision by the program nurse or an experienced medication certified staff person.

*The internship must be successfully completed within 90-days of passing the written exam.*

**a. Candidates who do not successfully complete the internship within the 90-day timeframe must re-take the entire Basic certification course and pass the written exam before attempting the internship again.**

6. Successful completion of the Internship is indicated by the signatures of the candidate, the program nurse and the program director on the Internship Verification Form.
  7. The internship checklist is in the *Forms* section of this handbook. (See Medication Certification Internship Skills Checklist, Medication Administration On-Site Test Checklist B, and Internship Verification Form)
- For the purposes of the internship, a *complete medication pass* refers to the time period during which medications are routinely administered to all the children at a given medication pass - preferably a medication pass that the medication certified staff will routinely be conducting after they become certified.
    - **For example: If, when the employee becomes certified, he/she will be responsible for 7:00 am medication passes, the internship shadowing experiences should be for an entire 7:00 medication pass and include all the children receiving medication during that pass.**
  - The intention of the internship is to provide ample opportunity for medication certification candidates to experience how the activity and responsibilities of medication administration fit into their other child-caring responsibilities.

## **Internship**

### **Basic Certification Internship Learning Objectives**

Medication Certification candidates will:

1. verbalize understanding of basic principles of safe medication administration practices according to DCF Guidelines.
2. demonstrate knowledge of their facility's medication administration systems and location of all necessary equipment.
3. demonstrate knowledge of facility specific medication administration policy and procedure.
4. know the definition of "*dispensing*" and who is legally able to dispense medications
5. demonstrate understanding and follow proper procedure for handling of medication for visits away from the facility.
6. demonstrate ability to document on Medication Administration Record (facility specific) including, but not limited to: transcription of orders, documentation of medication received, refused, missed and/or given on therapeutic visit, and all necessary documentation for PRN medication administration.
7. demonstrate proper and safe techniques for administering medication according to the DCF Medication Administration Guidelines.
8. demonstrate knowledge of when and how to contact Chain of Command.
9. demonstrate proper procedure(s) to follow in the event of a medication related emergency at their facility.
10. describe proper procedure to follow in the event of a medication error or incident.

## **ISSUANCE of a CERTIFICATE –**

Upon receipt of the signed Internship Verification form, the DCF Medication Administration Program will issue a certificate. Only forms that have been signed and dated by the 1) certification candidate 2) the program nurse and 3) the program director or administrator will be processed.

Internship Verification Forms must be signed and dated within 90 days of the date of the passed written exam.

**Newly certified staff may not administer medication until the facility receives the individual's certificate from the DCF medication administration program.**

The original certificate should be given to the staff person after copies are made for the facility records.

***Due to the volume of certificates needing processing, replacements for lost certificates are not available.***

## **Annual Observation of Medication Administration Skills**

Annually, the facility nurse must perform the "Annual observation of Medication Administration skills" This involves visually observing medication certified staff to make sure they are in compliance with the DCF medication administration procedure. The "Checklist B" is used to document this observation. The annual observation is done the month of, but no more than 30 days, of the one year anniversary of the employee's certification. It must then be done yearly thereafter

### **Example:**

1. Employee is certified January 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.
2. Annual onsite must be done in the month of January, 2011 but no later than February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.
3. Facilities may then coincide the next *Annual Observation of Medication Administration Skills* with the employees 2012 recertification.

## Recertification

### **Eligibility:**

Recertification for medication administration is required every two years. Medication certified staff currently employed at a DCF licensed or operated child caring facility *and* whose certification is in good standing may recertify. The recertification exam must be completed before the certificate's expiration date. Staff may recertify any time before the expiration date.

- Staff whose DCF Medication Certification is under suspension may not recertify until the suspension is lifted. If the certificate expires while under suspension, the employee is no longer medication certified and must retake and pass the Basic Medication Administration class. The staff will be required to successfully complete **all** the steps for Basic certification.
- **Staff who allow their certifications to expire may not administer medications until they have become certified again. Exceptions are not made.**
  - See page 32 for options to regain certification following a lapse in recertification

### **Recertification Course Components:**

- **Self Study** – Participants are expected to prepare themselves for the Recertification exam. Materials are available on the DCF Medication Administration webpage. Endorsed instructors and supervising nurses are encouraged to offer comprehensive reviews for their staff needing recertification.
  - ❖ Optional Review Class – A brief review of essential learner objectives is offered every month by the DCF Medication Administration training program. Consult the schedule posted on the program's webpage for dates and locations.
- **Mandatory Written Exam** –
  - ❖ A passing score of 85% or better is required to be recertified in medication administration.
  - ❖ The exam is based on learner objectives and consists of multiple choices, true/false, matching and fill-in-the-blank questions.

- **Issuance of a Certificate** - A new certificate effective for two years will be issued to those who pass the Recertification exam. The original certificate is to be given to the staff person after copies are made for facility records.

### **If a participant fails the DCF Recertification Exam**

Anyone who fails the DCF Recertification exam is no longer DCF medication certified immediately upon failure and notification of the failure is made to the participant's employing facility. He or she may not administer medications.

## **Obtaining DCF Medication Administration Certification after Failing a Recertification Exam or allowing certificate to expire:**

A DCF Medication Certified staff person who fails the Recertification Exam or who allows his or her DCF Medication Certification to expire is no longer certified and has the following options:

1. Attend and complete the entire DCF Basic certification course and skills, pass the written exam with an 85% or better **and** complete the internship.  
**OR**
2. Independently study the Basic DCF Medication Administration curriculum, then pass the written exam with at least an 85% on his or her first attempt and must complete the internship.

Independent preparation for the Basic Exam is an option only if all of the following apply to the individual's situation:

1. He or she remains employed at the DCF licensed or operated program at which he or she was employed at the time of failing the exam or allowing certification to expire.  
**AND**
2. The employing facility's director recommends and registers the individual for a written Basic exam.  
**AND**
3. The individual attempts the Basic Exam by the end of the month immediately after the month the person failed or allowed certification to expire. (Example: Staff fails the Recert exam in February 2011. He must self prepare and pass the written Basic exam on his first attempt before March 31, 2011 or be required to complete a full Basic certification course before testing.)

After passing the Basic written exam with an 85% or better on his or her first attempt, he or she must then complete the internship at the same employing facility to become DCF Medication Certified.

**Persons who have changed employers after failing a Recertification exam must attend and complete the entire DCF Basic certification course. New employer must send in signed registration form recommending employee for certification. Independent preparation for the Basic exam is not an option.**

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURE**

### **For DCF-offered Basic courses, Recertification reviews and Exams**

The current schedule of Basic courses, Recertification reviews and open exams is posted on the DCF Medication Administration webpage. Directors, nurses and prospective students should review this schedule in anticipation of training needs.

Registration forms are accessible for downloading and printing from the Medication Administration webpage.

Registration forms must be completed with the candidate's name, facility name and address, class/exam date and time information, and then be signed by the facility director or designee. The email address of the director or facility contact person should also be included so that confirmation of enrollment can be sent to the appropriate person.

Registration forms may be mailed or faxed to DCF. The mailing address and fax number are on the registration form. (See Forms Section of this Handbook).

### **Registering for a Basic Certification Course Offered by DCF:**

1. Registration for a Basic certification course closes two weeks before the first day of the course.
  - a. State regulation requires that any potential participant in DCF Medication Administration training be employed by a DCF licensed or operated child caring facility or extended day treatment program.
  - b. A registration form must be signed by the program director or designee and submitted to the DCF training program for anyone wishing to register for a DCF Medication Administration training course.
  - c. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Submitting a registration form does not automatically enroll an employee in a class.**
  - d. The DCF Medication Administration program will email a Confirmation of Enrollment notice to the identified facility contact two weeks prior to the start of class.
  - e. Only people whose enrollment in the class has been confirmed should be sent to class. People who are not on the instructor's enrolled participant list will not be admitted to class.

- f. Basic classes reach maximum capacity quickly and waiting lists are created. If the confirmed employee will no longer be attending the class, the facility must contact the DCF Medication Administration Program as soon as possible. Facilities may **not** send another employee in their place without discussing with, and receiving a new confirmation from a DCF Medication Administration representative.
- g. For Basic certification courses, a maximum of two employees per Agency/Program may register for a course. Exceptions will be made if space permits.
- h. Notification of any employee placed on the class wait list will be made to the identified facility contact.

### **Registering for Recertification Review and/or Exam**

1. Medication certified staff must pass the Recertification exam before their certificates expire. Consult the schedule for Reviews and exams on the DCF Medication Administration webpage.
2. No limits are placed on the number of employees from a program who can register for a Recertification review.
3. The Recertification review class is optional; however, medication certified staff is strongly encouraged to attend.
4. Staff wishing to take the Recertification exam without a review may be registered for any exam that is offered before their certificate expires.
5. Confirmations are not sent for exam-only registrations. Programs may contact the Medication Program to confirm that exam registrations have been received and that their staff is on the exam list.
6. Photo ID is required for entrance into exam sites and to verify eligibility for exam.

### **Registering for Exams Only**

#### **Eligibility:**

- Staff who have completed a Basic Medication Certification course with either a DCF Endorsed Instructor, or a facility employed or contracted Endorsed Instructor,

- staff who have failed a Basic exam one time,
- staff who have failed a second time and have re-taken the Basic Medication Certification course with a DCF, facility employed or contracted Endorsed Instructor
- staff who wish to Recertify without attending the Review or
- staff who have independently prepared for the Basic exam after failing the Recertification exam or allowed their certification to expire. The Basic exam must be attempted by the end of the month immediately following the month the Recertification exam was failed or certificate expired.

**Consult the DCF Medication Administration webpage for dates and locations.**

[www.ct.gov/DCF](http://www.ct.gov/DCF)

Click on:

- Programs and Services: *then*
  - Continuous Quality Improvement: *then*
  - **Medication Administration**
1. The registration form must be completed with the necessary information and then signed by the program director or designee and sent to the DCF Medication Administration program.
  2. Registrations for exams must be received by the DCF Medication Administration program at least one full business day before the exam date.
  3. Confirmations are not sent for exam-only registrations. Programs may contact the Medication Program to confirm that exam registrations have been received and that their staff is on the exam list.
  4. Exams will not be corrected for any person who does not have a signed exam registration form on file with the DCF Medication Training Program.
  5. Photo ID is required for entrance into exam sites and to verify eligibility for exam.

## **New Employees with Current DCF Medication Certification**

If a newly hired employee presents a DCF Medication Administration certificate, the facility **MUST** verify the status of that certificate, and provide a thorough orientation to the facility's medication administration policies and procedures before the new employee is permitted to administer medications independently.

Facility Responsibilities:

- Obtain a copy of the employee's current DCF Medication Administration Certificate for facility records.
- Contact the Medication Administration Program to verify the status of the certificate. Written confirmation of the employee's certification status is available from the DCF Medication Program.
- Conduct an internship.
- Maintain documentation at the facility of the orientation and internship. Do not send this documentation to the DCF Medication Administration Training Program.

## **Dress Code**

DCF Classes and exams are held in professional office buildings and other State Agencies. We are asking for employees of DCF licensed child caring facilities who are attending a DCF sponsored class or exam to follow similar guidelines that DCF employees are expected to follow.

...employees shall wear clothing which:

- is neat, clean and appropriate for the type of job;
- is free of rips, tears
- tight, form-fitting, see-through, low-cut or too short.

Blue jeans if they do not establish an unprofessional or recreational appearance.

Some examples of inappropriate attire include, but are not limited to:

- cutoff shorts
- clothing with offensive or suggestive slogans or messages
- tight stretch pants, leggings or any spandex item of clothing
- crop tops or halter tops
- hemlines which are too short or revealing
- gym sweats
- beach or recreational wear

## **Mandatory and Continuing Education Requirements**

DCF regulation requires the facility licensed medical professional (RN, LPN, APRN, PA or MD) to provide specific training for both non-certified and DCF Medication certified staff.

### **Mandatory Training for all staff**

- Annual Emergency Medication Administration - Epi-pens and Asthma Rescue Medication.
  - This training must be provided at least annually and whenever necessary to maintain a safe environment for children.
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### **Continuing Education for Medication Certified Staff**

***DCF Reg: 17a-145-75 (d): "There shall be periodic reviews and updating of staff's knowledge about medications and other treatments and their administration."***

***DCF Reg: 17a-6(g) -16 (c): "Day programs and residential facilities shall provide continuing education on administration of medication to trained person staff members."***

Facility nurses and/or appropriate personnel must offer continuing education opportunities for DCF medication certified staff. The facility nurse must document on a quarterly basis all continued education opportunities offered in the past 3 months. See Forms section for suggested form to document quarterly offerings.

DCF Medication Certified staff has an obligation to maintain their skills and knowledge in safe medication administration and are expected to attend facility sponsored continuing education offerings whenever possible.

Facilities must maintain documentation and attendance of trainings.

### **Continuing Education topics shall include but not be limited to:**

- Medication updates - uses, side effects, precautions
- Safe storage and handling procedures
- Review of medication administration procedure and techniques
- Accessing the Chain of Command: who and when
- Reporting medication incidents
- Documentation
- Policy updates

## **Endorsed Instructor Training**

DCF Nurse Clinical Instructors and Endorsed Instructors (EI) may teach a Medication Administration Certification course.

Licensed nurses (LPNs, RNs, and APRNs), pharmacists, or physicians who have completed the Endorsed Instructor Training Program and have been approved by DCF may teach any certification course at their employing facility or a contracted DCF licensed facility. Endorsed Instructor training is offered periodically through the year by the DCF Medication Training Program. Announcements of upcoming EI training classes are sent via email to nurses and program directors.

## **Description of Endorsed Instructor Training**

Endorsed Instructor (EI) training is a 3-day training for nurses and other medical professionals allowed by Connecticut law to become instructors for the Medication Certification training. The training includes:

- Adult Learning Principles
- Effective presentation and training skills
- Overview of the Learning Objectives, Skills Verification of the Basic Certification Course and strategies to encourage participation and success
- Opportunities to practice effective presentation and training skills
- Opportunities to assess, implement and evaluate the instructor-candidate's training styles and skills

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Department of Children and Families recognizes its legal obligation to meet the learning needs of medication certification candidates who have disabilities including documented learning disabilities or special needs. Participants requesting special accommodations must submit to the Medication Administration Training program appropriate documentation as required by law. Training program representatives will consult with DCF specialists in the requirements and applicable laws regarding the American's with Disabilities Act. Submit requests and documentation as soon as possible so that timely responses can be made.

For further details and information please refer to the following statutes:

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.](#)

[42 U.S.C. Section 12101 et seq. of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.](#)