

## DfE Clarification on medicines in Early Years Settings

This article seeks to clarify the current guidance on administering medicines in early years settings. Paragraph 3.45 of the EYFS states that 'medicines must not usually be administered unless they have been prescribed'. This means that it must not be usual practice for an early years provider to administer medicines without permission to do so and not that all medicines, both prescription and non-prescription have to have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. For example, a provider cannot decide for themselves that a particular child needs to have a pain or fever reliever.

Both prescription and non-prescription medicines can only be administered where written permission has been obtained from the child's parent or carer. Providers should not expect parents to make unnecessary appointments with their child's doctor to obtain prescriptions for medicines (other than for medicines containing aspirin) that can normally be obtained directly from a chemist. When the EYFS is next amended the DfE will use the opportunity to clarify the section on medicines so that this is clear.

### Statutory Framework for the EYFS April 2017

#### Health - Medicines

The provider must promote the good health of children attending the setting. They must have a procedure, discussed with parents and/or carers, for responding to children who are ill or infectious, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action if children are ill.

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, for administering medicines. It must include systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicines, and for keeping this information up-to-date.

Training must be provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge.

Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor).

Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer.

Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child, and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### Staff taking medication/other substances

Practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If practitioners are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, those practitioners should seek medical advice. Providers must ensure that those practitioners only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.