

Nurturing Stability

The Importance of Medication Adherence for Children



The role of foster parents in the lives of children in care is immeasurable. While navigating the complexities of fostering, one aspect that demands careful attention is the adherence to medications of the child. The well-being of children in foster care is dependent on the consistent and proper management of their health, both physically and mentally. In this article, we explore the vital role foster parents play in ensuring medication adherence for children in care.



Understanding the Unique Challenges:

Children in care often are faced with instability, moving from one home to another, and adapting to new environments. These transitions can impact their health, making adherence to medications even more crucial. Many of these children may be dealing with chronic conditions or mental health challenges, requiring a stable and supportive approach to medication management.

The Impact of Medication Adherence:

Physical health:

Children in care may have pre-existing health conditions, and consistent medication adherence is essential for managing these conditions effectively. Whether it's asthma, diabetes or other chronic illnesses, your commitment to ensuring the regular administration of medications contributes directly to their physical well-being.

Mental health:

Emotional and psychological well-being is equally important. Some children in care may be coping with trauma, anxiety or depression, and prescribed medications play a key role in helping them navigate these challenges. By fostering a routine that supports medication adherence, you contribute to their emotional stability and resilience.

Educational stability:

Medication adherence is not just about physical and mental health; it also impacts a child's ability to succeed academically. Regular medication use can help children in care stay focused in school, reducing absences and creating an environment that is helpful for learning.

Overcoming Challenges to Adherence:

Communication is key:

Foster care often involves multiple stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, biological parents and caseworkers. Effective communication is vital to understanding a child's medical history, ensuring consistent care, and addressing any concerns related to medications.

Building trust:

Some children in care may have had negative experiences related to their health or may harbor mistrust. Building a foundation of trust and open communication can help address concerns and resistance, making the process of medication adherence smoother.

Education and empowerment:

As a foster parent, taking the time to understand the medications prescribed to the child in your care is empowering. Education not only equips you with the knowledge needed for proper administration but also allows you to advocate for the child's health within the larger caregiving team.

Practical Tips for Medication Management:

1. Create a routine:

Establishing a consistent daily routine can help integrate medication administration seamlessly into the child's day. Consider tying it to regular activities like meals or bedtime to reduce the likelihood of missed doses.

2. Use reminder tools:

Utilize tools such as alarms, medication organizers or mobile apps to help you stay organized and ensure timely administration of medications. Medication refill reminders from the pharmacy are also helpful to ensure timely refills.

3. Be observant:

Monitor the child for any changes in behavior, mood or physical symptoms. Your observations can provide valuable insights to healthcare professionals and contribute to the ongoing management of their health.

4. Care coordination and continuity:

Ensure continuity in healthcare by maintaining a comprehensive record of a child's medical history. This includes a detailed medication list, dosages and schedules, which should be shared among all involved parties to avoid confusion and ensure consistent care.

5. Positive reinforcement and incentives:

Implement a system of positive reinforcement for adherence. This can involve simple rewards or praise for consistently following their medication regimen. However, be cautious not to make it solely about rewards, as the aim is to foster intrinsic motivation for health management.

6. Age-appropriate engagement:

Involve older children in care in discussions about their medications, explaining the importance and effects. Encouraging their involvement can empower them to take more responsibility for their health.

An obstacle that you might encounter in obtaining a child's medication at the pharmacy is a requirement for prior authorization. If the drug originally prescribed to a child is not covered, you can be assured an alternative medication is available or your doctor can provide information that satisfies the requirement. A prior authorization requirement is in place not only to ensure adherence to a preferred drug list, but also for safety. Your pharmacist and/or the prescriber should be able to assist you in resolving the issue. The drugs included for Medicaid coverage are determined at the state level and can be found here: [Indiana Health Coverage Programs - PBM \(optum.com\)](#).

Foster parents, your dedication to the well-being of the children in your care is truly admirable. By prioritizing medication adherence, you are not only supporting their physical and mental health but also contributing to their overall stability and success. Your role is pivotal in creating a nurturing environment where these resilient young individuals can thrive. Thank you for your commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of children in care.



Help your child take their medications the right way, every day.

Elizabeth McCarty, AVP, Pharmacy
Executive Director-Indiana Market

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