

# Fact Sheets for Families

## Asthma in Child Care Settings

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How can you be sure that your child with asthma will get the care he or she needs while attending child care or preschool? Knowing that your child will be cared for in a safe and appropriate way while attending child care is a comfort for the child, the parent, and the caregiver. Take these steps to ensure your child's safety and well-being.

### Understand your child's asthma management

- Learn to observe your child for asthma symptoms, to give medications, what to do if asthma gets worse, and what to do in emergency situations.
- Help your child learn to describe his or her asthma symptoms, and triggers.
- Meet with your health care provider as needed to update medications. Discuss that your child attends child care and complete an Asthma Action Plan.
- Be diligent about giving your child's controller medications, even if he or she has no symptoms. Asthma is a chronic condition and controller medications prevent episodes!

### Have an Asthma Action Plan

This written individualized plan will include:

- *Medications* that your child takes for asthma.
- *Signs and symptoms* of an asthma episode for your child such as coughing, chest tightness, rapid breathing, wheezing, unusual tiredness, difficulty talking, eating or playing, or a decrease in peak flow meter reading. Include signs and symptoms of a severe episode and how to respond. For example, call 9-1-1 if breathing is so difficult that the child cannot talk.

- *Triggers* that start an asthma episode for your child. Common triggers are allergies to pollen, mold, cockroaches, animal dander or dust mites; food; colds or other viral infections; cigarette smoke, cleaning supplies, air pollutants, or other substances in the air; sudden temperature or weather changes; exercise or very strong emotions and stress.

### Support your child care provider

- Provide a set of equipment and medications. Restock as needed and check expiration dates.
- Provide written instructions and permission for giving medication. Prescription medication must be in its original container, must be given according to the instructions on the container, and have pharmacy labels with the child's name.
- Make sure your child care provider is thoroughly trained to handle an asthma attack, and knows how to use a nebulizer, inhaler, spacer and peak flow meter.

### Communicate with your health and child care professionals

- Keep a record of your child's asthma symptoms and treatment. Share this information with your health and child care providers.
- Ask about your child's asthma at the end of each child care or school day.
- Regularly update your child's Asthma Action Plan and emergency contact phone numbers.

by **Bobbie Rose, RN**

#### References and Resources:

*Asthma Information Packet for Early Care and Education Providers, CCHP*

For more information about caring for a child with asthma in a child care setting and for sample Asthma Action Plans and Medication Authorization forms visit the website at [cchp.ucsf.edu](http://cchp.ucsf.edu)



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