Our Editorial Style

Editorial style refers to the voice and tone that we use in our written communications. This guide is intended to provide principles related to the use of the Children's name along with grammar tips and other key points.

Guiding principles for our writing style:

• Use The Associated Press (the AP) style, with a few modifications as noted below. The examples below show commonly misused AP style for your reference.

• Use an active voice when possible.

• When writing about Children’s National Health System, refer to the health system and patients in the third person rather than first or second person.

• When writing for the general public, aim for a sixth or seventh grade reading level. This is the national standard and will ensure that your message is understood.

Note: Examples appear in blue.
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A

Abbreviations
In general, avoid abbreviations and acronyms, and do not use them in headlines. Abbreviate titles when used before a name: Dr., Gov., Mr., Rep., etc.

Academic Degrees / Titles
Avoid abbreviation and use a phrase instead:

John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology, works at Children’s.

Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, a master’s, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science. Use abbreviations for well-known degrees, such as B.A., M.A., and Ph.D., set off by commas.

John Snow, Ph.D., spoke at the conference.

Spell out abbreviations that aren’t widely known to general readers and aren’t in the dictionary.

Incorrect: Jane Smith, DPT, works at Children’s.
Correct: Jane Smith, doctorate in physical therapy, works at Children’s.
Correct: Dr. Denice Cora-Bramble, M.B.A., trained as a pediatrician.

(see also Doctor and Title entries)

Address Format
Children’s National Health System
Person’s Name
Department Name
111 Michigan Ave NW, #XXXX (room or suite number)
Washington, DC 20010

Ages
Always use figures. Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun and as substitutes for nouns.

The patient is 15 years old. A 5-year-old boy was treated.
The coloring contest is open to 5-year-olds.

B

Bulleted Lists
Use a colon at the end of the sentence that introduces a bulleted list.

Capitalize the first word after each bullet.

Use the same verb tense or noun form for each bulleted item.

Unless a bulleted phrase is a sentence, do not use a period or a comma, even for the last item in the series.

Children with ASD benefit from our multidisciplinary team, which includes specialists in:

- Developmental/Clinical Psychology
- Neuropsychology
- Developmental Neuropsychology
- Psychiatry
- Speech and Language Pathology
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C

Caesarean section
Lowercase the “c,” unless it begins a sentence. C-section is used on second reference.

The doctor performed an emergency cesarean section (C-section). After the C-section, the baby was transported to Children’s National.

Centers of Excellence
For administrative purposes, Children’s National groups its clinical work into Centers of Excellence. Capitalize the Center of Excellence in proper names, but lowercase the word “center” when used alone.

The centers’ official names:
- Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders
- Children’s National Heart Institute
- Center for Hospital-Based Specialties
- Center for Neuroscience and Behavioral Medicine
- Child Health Advocacy Institute
- Diana L. and Stephan A. Goldberg Center for Community Pediatric Health
- Joseph E. Robert Jr., Center for Surgical Care

The research centers’ official names follow:
- Center for Genetic Medicine Research
- Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation
- Center for Clinical and Translational Research
- Center for Cancer and Immunology Research
- Center for Neuroscience Research
- Center for Clinical and Translational Science Institute at Children’s National

See also divisions.

Children’s National Health System
Use the full name Children’s National Health System on first reference, then use Children’s National in subsequent references. Use Children’s when the organization name is used in possessive form. Never use “Children’s National’s” as a possessive.

For external audiences, never use CNHS, CN or CNMC. Do not use “The” in front of “Children’s National Health System.”

You should describe Children’s National as a “multi-campus organization.”

Sheikh Zayed Campus refers to the physical location on Michigan Avenue.

See also Locations.

Children’s Research Institute
Serves as the academic arm of Children’s National and occupies the top floors of the main hospital.

Functions as a separate entity under the Children’s National corporate umbrella.

Children’s Research Institute (CRI) at Children’s National (first reference)
CRI (acceptable for subsequent references in the same text)

Commas
Do not set off the final item in a simple list with a comma.

The 10-year-old boy has sickle cell disease, anemia and asthma.

Conditions
Do not capitalize a condition unless its name includes a proper noun.

The 10-year-old boy has sickle cell disease.

When a condition’s name includes a proper noun, capitalize only the proper noun.

The doctor diagnosed Hodgkin lymphoma.
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**Datelines**
Always use capital letters for cities in datelines. Separate the dateline from the text with a dash.

WASHINGTON, DC -

**Dates**
Always use numbers without st, nd, rd or th.

Oct. 30, 2016

**DC**
Put periods after each letter.

Children's National Health System is based in Washington, D.C.

Do not use D.C. alone; spell it out.

Children living in the District of Columbia have access to swimming pools in the summer.

Okay to use “the District” on second reference.

**Departments at Children's National**
Capitalize non-clinical departments in proper names; lowercase them when they stand alone. (All clinical-related groups are divisions, programs or clinics.)

Public Relations and Marketing Department
Engineering Department
The department

**Divisions**
The Centers of Excellence are made up of clinical divisions. Capitalize clinical divisions in proper names; lowercase them when they stand alone or are used in a series.

Division of Neurology
The division ...
The divisions of Neurology, Genetics and Surgery

**Doctor**
On first reference, use physician's credentials with full name.

John Smith, M.D.

On subsequent references in the same text, use title with surname.

Dr. Smith

Never use a physician's credentials and title together.

Dr. John Smith, MD (incorrect)

See also academic degrees and titles

**E**

**East Inpatient Tower**
Use uppercase letters as indicated.

**Emergency Department**
Emergency Department (first reference)

The Emergency Department (ED) triages patients upon arrival.

E.D. (acceptable for subsequent references)

Doing so ensures that the E.D. treats the most critical patients first.

Never acceptable: Emergency Room or E.R.

See Locations for more information.

**The George Washington University**
Unless at the beginning of a sentence, “the” should not be capitalized in the George Washington University. Correct abbreviation is GW, not GWU.

Proper name is George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences
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H

Headlines
Capitalize only the first word, proper names or abbreviations, and the first letter of a word that follows a colon. Eliminate the italicized subhead in news releases.

Health care
Health care is two words.

  Children's National provides preeminent health care services.
  Children's National is advancing the future of pediatric health care.

I

Institutes
Children's National has several institutes. They are:

  Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation
  Always use the full name in first reference. Use "Sheikh Zayed Institute" on second reference, and if the content clearly refers to this institute, use "the institute" (lowercase) throughout the rest of the publication. Never use the abbreviation "SZI," except in Tweets.

  Obesity Institute
  Gilbert Family Neurofibromatosis Institute
  Brain Tumor Institute
  Children's National Heart Institute
  Urea Cycle Disorders Institute
  Bear Institute for Health Innovation
  Clinical and Translational Science Institute at Children's National

Intensive Care Units
When referring to the group, use "critical care units" or "intensive care units."

  The critical care units at Children's National ensure patients receive the best care in the region.

When referring to individual units, use the following guidelines:

  Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (first reference)
  Cardiac ICU (subsequent references)- (never CICU)
  Neuro Intensive Care Unit (first reference)
  Neuro ICU (not NICU) (subsequent references)
  Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (first reference)
  PICU (subsequent references)
  Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (first reference)
  NICU (subsequent references)

internet and intranet
Lowercase on all references.

L

Locations
Children's National has many locations for clinical services.

Main Campus

  Sheikh Zayed Campus for Advanced Children's Medicine (first reference)
  Sheikh Zayed Campus (subsequent references)

Outpatient Centers
Note: Always refer to each center by listing its city/location first and then the words "Outpatient Center."

Refer to the group of centers as "Children's Regional Outpatient Centers."
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Do not use the abbreviation "ROC" in any public materials. The Regional Outpatient Centers are:
- Annapolis Outpatient Center
- Laurel Outpatient Center
- Upper Marlboro Outpatient Center
- Frederick Outpatient Center
- Montgomery County Outpatient Center
- Children's National Imaging at the Montgomery County Outpatient Center
- Northern Virginia Outpatient Center
- Friendship Heights Outpatient Center

Ambulatory Surgery Center
The Montgomery County Outpatient Center also has an Ambulatory Surgery Center with two operating rooms.
- Montgomery County Ambulatory Surgery Center

ASC (may be used for subsequent references)

Affiliated Practices
Children's National is affiliated with a private physician practice in Northern Virginia, Children's National Specialists of Virginia, LLC. Procedures (not surgeries) are done at this practice.
Always refer to Children's National Specialists of Virginia, LLC, as a private physician practice.
- Children's National Specialists of Virginia, LLC
- Leave off the "LLC" (for subsequent references only)

Note: All materials referring to this location must be approved by PR and Marketing, as most references may need legal review.

Specialty Locations
Children's National has created a joint venture with Inova Health System. Pediatric Specialists of Virginia serves patients in Northern Virginia and has its own branding.
Children's National has several locations where physicians have limited time, including some other hospitals and doctors' offices or complexes. We refer internally to these locations as 'pebbles,' but this term should not be used externally.

We refer collectively to our primary care health centers (located throughout the District of Columbia) as
- Children's Health Centers

Specific references combine 'Children's Health Center' and location, as follows:
- Children's Health Center Anacostia
- Children's Health Center Shaw
- Children's Health Center Adams Morgan
- Children's Health Center THEARC

There also are:
- Children's Health Center at the Sheikh Zayed Campus
- Adolescent Health Center at Children's Sheikh Zayed Campus (first reference)
- Adolescent Health Center (subsequent references)

Mobile Units
Several mobile units provide care to children in the District of Columbia and Prince George's County.
Some provide medical care; one provides dental care.
- Children's Dental Mobile Unit (all references)
- Children's Medical Mobile Unit (all references)

Children's pediatricians & Associates, LLC
Children's National owns several affiliated pediatric practices that provide primary care throughout the region.
- Children's Pediatricians & Associates (first reference)
- CP&B (subsequent references)

Children's National Emergency Department at United Health System
Children's National operates a pediatric emergency department on the campus of United Health System in Southeast Washington, DC.
- Children's National Emergency Department at United Health System (first reference)
- Children's National ED at UMC (acceptable subsequent reference)
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Extended Campuses
Children’s also has non-clinical locations called extended campuses.

- Tech Hill Campus
- Refer to other locations by the street names.
- Roeder Road Campus

M

Months
Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone.

When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.

- January 1972 was a cold month.
- Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month.
- His birthday is May 8.
- The target date was Feb. 14, 1987.
- She was admitted to the hospital on Friday, Dec. 3.

N

Numbers
Always use figures for ages, measurements, and amounts

- 7-year-old boy; 1 percent; size 9; 6-by-8-foot rug; 5 ounces; 68,000-square-foot facility

Always spell out a number if it starts the sentence, except for sentences that begin with a year.

- Two hundred freshmen attended. Five actors took the stage.
- 1776 was an important year.

Spell out numbers below 10 and use figures for numbers 10 and above. When numbers appear in close proximity, you should use one consistent style.

- The man had five children and 11 grandchildren. Their likelihood of success is 1 in 10.

Use Roman numerals to describe wars and to show sequences for people.

- World War II, Pope John Paul II

For ordinal numbers, spell out first through ninth and use figures for 10th and above when describing order in time or location.

- Second base, 10th in a row

Some ordinal numbers, such as those indicating political or geographic order, should use figures in all cases.

- 3rd District Court, 9th ward

When referring to money, use numerals. For cents or amounts of $1 million or more, spell the words cents, million, billion, trillion, etc.

- $26.52, $100, $200, $8 million, 6 cents

O

Organization name abbreviations
On first reference, follow the spelled-out name of an organization with its abbreviation or acronym noted within parentheses if the acronym will be mentioned in future references. You don’t need to list abbreviations if they are not mentioned again.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) developed the guidelines.

Orthopaedics
Never “Orthopedics.”

- The name of the division is Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine.
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**Periods**
Place one space between a period and the beginning of the next sentence.
The nurse and doctor spoke to reporters. They explained how long it would take to recover.

**Prince George's County**
Spell out the county name; do not write "PG County."

**Programs/Clinics**
Specialty programs and clinics exist both within and across divisions.
To be listed as such, a specialty program or clinic must take appointments from patients.
Capitalize clinical programs in proper names; lowercase them when they stand alone.
The Craniofacial Program
The program...

**States**
When the state name stands alone, write it out.
The patient is from Maryland.
Except for the eight states that are not abbreviated, when the state name is preceded by a city, use the abbreviated state initials. Do not use postal code abbreviations.
The patient is from Rockville, Md.

**Subsidiaries**
Children's National has the following subsidiaries:
Children's Hospital
Children's Hospital Foundation
Children's National Health Network
Children's National Specialists of Virginia, LLC
Children's Pediatricians & Associates (CP&A)
Children's Research Institute
Children's School Services
Safe Kids Worldwide

**Time**
Use numerals/figures except for noon and midnight.
Use time zones for embargoed news releases.
Use periods between a.m. and p.m.
For minutes/increments of time, do not use :00
4:30 p.m., 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m., 1–2 p.m.
Use dashes for range of time, instead of the word "to" with no spaces between the dash and numerals
2–5 p.m.

**Titles / Academic Degrees**
Capitalize formal titles when they appear before a person's name, but lowercase titles if they are informal, appear without a person's name, follow a person's name, or are set off before a name by commas.
Lowercase adjectives that designate the status of a title. If a title is long, place it after the person's name, or set it off with commas before the person's name.
President and CEO Kurt Newman, M.D., spoke at Grand Rounds.
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Academic titles: Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, a master’s, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science. Put credentials on first reference. Use periods for credentials such as M.D., Ph.D., R.N., M.P.H.

Dr. Roger Packer is a neurologist.

Dr. Denice Cora-Bramble, M.B.A., trained as a pediatrician.

With the exception of “B.S.N.” (Bachelor of Science in Nursing), do not include bachelor’s degrees in credentials.

Don’t use “Dr.” and “M.D.” in the same instance. The following are correct:

Dr. Roger Packer is a neurologist.

Or

Roger Packer, M.D., is a neurologist.

See also academic degrees and doctor

Uncompensated Care

Do not refer to “charity care.”

Use the term “uncompensated care.”

We provide about $50 million in uncompensated care each year.

Note: Never say we “give” that much or suggest that we are not reimbursed for any of that care.

United Arab Emirates

Do not abbreviate “United Arab Emirates.”

The capital is Abu Dhabi.

There are seven emirates:

Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (HAAD on second reference).

The Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation was made possible by a gift from the Government of Abu Dhabi on behalf of the people of the United Arab Emirates.

W

Websites

One word: write “website,” not “Web site.”

List websites without an underline.


If the website is hyperlinked within a document or online, it should be underlined or bolded so the reader knows it is a link.


“http.” and “www.” are generally not needed when listing a website.

Never use “click here,” “check out,” or “go to,” except for Tweets.

Preferred: “For more information, visit ChildrensNational.org.”