

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.

9.2 Editorial Style |

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.](#)

Ampersand (&)

Do not use an ampersand to replace the word "and," except in Tweets.

[The boys and girls gathered in the atrium.](#)

Use an ampersand only when it is part of a company's formal name.

[U.S. News & World Report](#)

Atrium

When referring to the Atrium at the main campus, always capitalize the word, along with Main or Mini.

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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D

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.

G

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](#)
(first reference)

[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](#)
(first reference)

[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&A](#) (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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P

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...](#)

S

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](#)

T

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

U

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
(ex. www.ChildrensNational.org).

If the website is hyperlinked within a document or online, it should be underlined or bolded so the reader knows it is a link
(ex.: www.ChildrensNational.org).

"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](http://www.ChildrensNational.org)."

Brand Standards and Guidelines



Children's National Health System
Public Relations and Marketing Department
202-476-4500
brand@childrensnational.org
www.ChildrensNational.org