Box 9.8 • • •

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

First step: Ask the following questions:

1. Does the NPA permit delegation?
2. What is the definition of delegation in the state of practice?
3. Does the NPA also authorize specific tasks for delegation?
4. Does the NPA list tasks that cannot be delegated, or does it authorize the RN to delegate based on certain circumstances?
5. Does the NPA include a description of the NAP role?
6. Is there a specific definition of supervision in the NPA?
7. How does the state of practice define supervision or direction when delegating to another healthcare worker?
8. Does the NPA indicate consequences of inappropriate delegation?
9. Does the NPA provide guidelines for reducing delegation risks?
10. Will the patient receive quality nursing care if the task is delegated?
11. How much supervision will the person doing the task require?
12. Is the person to whom the task is being delegated competent to do the task (ANA, 2005)?

If delegation is permitted, the RN should keep the following principles in mind:

1. The RN takes responsibility and accountability for the provision of nursing practice.
2. The RN may delegate elements of care but does not delegate the nursing process itself.

The only component of the nursing process that can be delegated is Intervention, with supervision; Assessment, Diagnosis, Planning, and Evaluation may NOT be delegated.

3. The school nurse validates the necessary physician orders (including emergency orders), parent/guardian authorization, and any other legal documentation necessary for implementing the nursing care.
4. The RN assigns or delegates tasks based on the needs and condition of the patient, potential for harm, stability of the patient’s condition, complexity of the task, predictability of the outcome, and abilities of the staff to whom the task is delegated.
5. The decision of whether to delegate or assign is based upon the RN’s judgment concerning the condition of the patient, the competence of all members of the nursing team, and the degree of supervision that will be required of the RN if a task is delegated.
6. The RN delegates only those tasks for which she or he believes the other healthcare worker has the knowledge and skill to perform, taking into consideration training, cultural competence, experience, and facility/agency policies and procedures.
7. The school nurse conducts the initial nursing assessment of the student (i.e., physiological health status, psychosocial status including developmental stage, family assessment, school environment, resources).
8. The RN directs care and determines the appropriate utilization of an assistant involved in providing direct patient care.

(continued)
9. The RN takes into account the knowledge and skills of any individual to whom the RN may delegate elements of care and determines the amount of training required by the NAP.

10. The RN uses critical thinking and professional judgment when following the Five RIGHTS of Delegation.
   a. Right task
   b. Right circumstances
   c. Right person
   d. Right directions and communication
   e. Right supervision and evaluation