

TITLE:	Infection Control and Hand washing
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Related documentation	
Policy/policies:	Dealing with Infectious Diseases Nutrition, Food, Beverage and Dietary Requirements
Regulation/s/ Standards:	National regulations 77,88,106,109, 110 NQS 2.1, 2.1.2
Other procedures:	Nappy Change Pets
References:	Staying healthy in Child Care 5th Edition
Date effective	August 2019
Date for review	August 2021
Purpose	To prevent the risk of infectious disease or illness by following hand washing guidelines and practicing other infection control strategies.
Responsibility	Staff, Educators, Educators Assistants, Relief Care Educators

Key information:

- Infections can be spread by a person who shows no signs of illness. Hand washing and drying hands thoroughly is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection. Hand washing is effective because it loosens, dilutes and flushes off germs and contaminated matter. *Hand sanitisers are not a substitute for effective hand washing.*
- Two other important ways of preventing the spread of infectious disease are:
 - Exclusion of sick children, Educators and Staff and
 - Immunisation.
- There are four essential steps to the spread of infection. Infection control is aimed at breaking the links between the steps. The steps are:
 1. The person with the infection spreads the germ into their environment.
 2. The germ then lives in the air, in food or water or on objects and surfaces.
 3. Another person then comes into contact with the germ.
 4. This person then becomes infected and so on.

AFDC's Dealing with Infectious Diseases policy details exclusion periods for illnesses as per recommendations in Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Ed.

Procedure/s:

- Staff, Educators and children must develop a routine of regular hand washing and cough etiquette that becomes a habit.
- Staff and Educators should model, demonstrate and supervise hand washing throughout the day.

Use the following method to make sure your hands and the children's hands are as germ free as possible.

- *Wet hands with running water.*
- *Use liquid soap and spread over hands.*
- *Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them.*
- *Wash your hands all over. Pay particular attention to the palms and backs of hands, in between fingers, under finger nails and around wrists.*
- *Rinse your hands thoroughly to remove all suds and germs. Thorough rinsing will help prevent dermatitis from suds.*
- *Turn off the tap using paper towel.*
- *Pat your hands dry with a new paper towel or personal cloth towel which is changed daily.*

When to Wash Hands:

- *At the beginning and end of your working day.*
- *Before handling food, including babies' bottles.*
- *Before and after eating.*
- *After changing a nappy or checking a nappy to see if it is soiled.*
- *After removing gloves.*
- *After going to the toilet.*
- *After cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit.*
- *After wiping a nose and contact with nasal secretions or saliva, either a child's or your own.*
- *Before and after giving medication.*
- *After handling garbage.*
- *After coming in from outside play.*
- *After handling pets (including fish, birds, reptiles).*

Gloves:

Wearing gloves does not replace the need for hand washing as gloves may have very small holes or they may be torn during use. Hands may also become contaminated during the removal of gloves. When nappy changing, gloves should be removed with the soiled nappy and before the clean nappy is put on the child. New gloves should be used for each child. Safe food handling requires gloves to be worn when food is being prepared or distributed.

Dummies:

- Dummies must never be shared by children.
- When not in use, dummies should be stored in individual plastic containers. Each container should have the child's name on it.
- Do not store dummies where they may come in contact with another dummy or toy.
- Store dummies out of children's reach.

Toothbrushes:

- Toothbrushes must never be shared by children. They should be labeled with the child's name.
- Store them out of the reach of children.
- Do not let them drip on one another.
- The bristles should be exposed to the air and allowed to dry.
- Do not store toothbrushes in individual containers because this stops them from drying and bacteria grow on wet toothbrushes.

Linen:

- The Coordination Unit recommends that families supply their own linen which is then taken home at the end of the care week to be laundered.
- Each child's linen should be stored separately in a bag or pillow case.
- In the event that linen is soiled it should be treated the same as a soiled cloth nappy and stored in a plastic bag in the laundry until the family arrives.
- If the Educator has supplied the linen. The linen should be rinsed, then soaked in a nappy treatment. It should then be washed separately in hot water and dried in the sun or on a hot cycle in the clothes dryer.

Sandpits:

Sandpits must be closely covered when the children are not in care, in order to prevent contamination from animal faeces or inappropriately discarded sharp or dangerous objects such as broken glass.

- The sand should be raked over before each use.
- Sandpits should be dug over to a depth of about 25cm each month to reduce the collection of moisture which can turn the sand sour.
- Sand that has been contaminated by animal or human faeces, blood or other body fluid should be removed. Use a shovel and dispose of the sand in a plastic bag.
- The remaining sand should be raked over and left exposed to the sun.
- Where extensive contamination has occurred, all the sand should be replaced.
- Children should wash and dry their hands with soap and water after playing in the sandpit.

Play dough:

Play dough has a high salt content which discourages germs from living and multiplying in it however the following steps will help ensure effective hygiene when using play dough.

- Hand washing is recommended before and after using play dough.
- Dough should be stored in a sealed container in the refrigerator between uses.
- A new batch of play dough should be made each week.
- If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea play dough should be discarded.

Dealing with Blood, Vomit, Faeces or Urine Spills:

- Wear Gloves.
- Clean the spill up using paper towel.
- Place the paper towel and soiled gloves in a plastic bag, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin.
- Put on new gloves and clean the surface with detergent and warm water and fresh paper towel and allow it to dry.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

General Cleaning for Infection Control:

- All frequently touched surfaces such as tables, bench tops, taps, cots, door handles and floors should be cleaned daily.
- Eating areas should be wiped clean with detergent and warm water before and after the children eat.
- Gloves should be worn when cleaning toilets and the nappy change area.

Soaps and towels:

- Liquid soap dispensers and disposable paper towels are the preferred option.
- If cloth towels are used each child must have their individual towel, a clean towel for each day the child is in care must be provided.
- If reusable containers are used for liquid soap, they must be cleaned and dried before refilling with fresh soap.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners have a role **ONLY** if proper hand washing facilities are not available (such as on excursions). They are not a substitute for hand washing with soap and water. Sorbolene cream can be used in place of soap for children with eczema.
- **Babies need to have their hands washed:**
Babies need their hands washed as often and as thoroughly as older children. If the baby is able to stand at a hand basin, their hands need to be washed and dried. If the baby is unable to stand at a hand basin, assist them by holding them near the sink or wash their hands with wet cloths.
- **Cough etiquette** Educators need to encourage children to cough or sneeze into their elbow.