

Infection control / hygiene advice for early childhood education centre staff

We recommend that staff take these precautions both at the centre and at home, to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Illness can be caused by micro-organisms such as bacteria (e.g. salmonella, campylobacter), viruses (e.g. rotavirus, Norwalk-like virus) and protozoa cysts (e.g. cryptosporidium, giardia):

- Staff should wash and dry their hands and children's hands thoroughly before and after changing children's nappies. Children who have soiled themselves should be wiped, and if necessary, washed in a shub, shower or bath with soap.
- Staff and children should wash and dry their hands thoroughly:
 - After going to the toilet.
 - Before eating.
 - Before handling food or food utensils.
 - After handling pets or other animals.
 - After blowing their nose.
 - After arts and crafts particularly when using playdough.
- Children and staff should wash their hands thoroughly with soap, warm water and, preferably, a nailbrush. Hands should be dried thoroughly for 20 seconds, preferably with paper towels, or by some other method which presents a fresh drying surface to each user (e.g. cloths or towels that are laundered between uses).

Illness in Early Childhood Education Centres

- Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should never remain at the childcare centre (except for the time it takes parents to collect the child from the centre). Diarrhoea presents a particular risk, as even if the cause is not a communicable disease, it makes it difficult to maintain normal hygiene.
- Even flora (germs) normally present in the gut can cause health problems if ingested.
- While an ill child is waiting for parents to collect them from the centre, they should be kept isolated, made comfortable, and remain supervised by a staff member at all times.
- In general, if children experience vomiting, diarrhoea, they should not attend childcare until 48 hours after all symptoms have stopped.
- If children experience fever and rash, they shall be excluded from ECEC until family doctor give formal clearance.

Swimming pools as a source of infection

- Because cryptosporidium (the germ that causes cryptosporidiosis) is resistant to swimming pool
- Chlorine, swimming pools can be a source of infection.
- If you have diarrhoea (upset tummy) in the last two weeks- don't go into the water.
- If your child has had diarrhoea (upset tummy) in the last two weeks- don't let them go into the water.
- Take children to the toilet before they swim and wash and dry hands after going to the toilet.
- Where possible, shower yourself and your children before putting togs on. Use soap and warm water (especially in the area around their bottom).
- Babies and toddlers should wear tight-fitting togs to swim - **NOT** nappies. Wash and dry your hands after changing the baby.
- If you think someone has had an accident (you see poo in the pool) tell swimming pool staff.
- They will tell you when you can get back in the water.

For further advice, contact the Environmental Health Team at Auckland

Regional Public Health Service on (09) 623 4600. For general advice please contact Healthline on 0800 611 116

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