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## ILLNESS AND INFECIOUS DISEASES

### POLICY

Building Futures Care aims to protect the general health and wellbeing of children and Educators by minimising the risk and spread of illness and infections within services.

The recommendations within the most current edition of '*Staying Healthy in Childcare*' will guide practices and decisions relating to illnesses and infectious diseases.

### PROCEDURE

Educators must be familiar with any illnesses that have occurred at their service and be aware of symptoms that could be an infectious illness.

Limitations on the attendance of sick children is determined by information contained in the '*Staying Healthy in Childcare*', '*Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Settings*' and other relevant information issued by the Health Department. This is called the exclusion period, this is period is the minimum period to be away from the family day care service. However, a child may need to stay home longer than the exclusion period to recover from an illness.

Should an infectious illness or suspected conditions commence whilst the child is at the service, the parents or emergency contacts will be phoned to collect the child as soon as practicable and the information of the illness will be noted on the Illness log.

Any child who displays signs of an infectious disease will be made comfortable while trying to contain the spread of infection, where possible, until the child can be collected from the service.

If the child is sent home with a suspected illness, they may return the same day if a 'clearance certificate' has been provided by the child's doctor. Otherwise the child must remain away from the service until all risk of cross-infection has ceased.

If any child contracts an infectious disease while not at the service, the Educator is to be notified by the parent immediately and the Educator may request a clearance from the doctor before the child can attend the service again.

The family day care service keeps a record of infectious diseases occurring within the service and will advise parents of any confirmed infections immediately. A notice is placed in a prominent position in the service and this notice may include information such as the date

the infectious disease occurred, what the disease is and/or a copy of the information from the 'Staying Healthy in Childcare' book.

All decisions made in regard to exclusions for an infectious disease or an unwell child will be made by the Educator, in consultation with the Coordination unit, in the best interests of all children at the family day care service and/or by following relevant guidelines.

The family day care service is obliged to report any 'notifiable diseases' (such as Tuberculosis) to the relevant health authorities. The Educator needs to consult with the Coordination Unit before reporting to the relevant authorities.

If children are generally unwell with no signs of an infectious disease present but are unable to cope with the daily routines and activities of the program, the Educator will notify a parent and ask for that child to be picked up from the service.

Parents are requested to collect their child as soon as possible after being notified of a possible illness, or make alternative arrangements. If parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact numbers on the enrolment form will be used.

The areas within the service that a child with a confirmed infectious disease has been in contact with will be disinfected with hot soapy water as soon as possible after confirmation.

The service is cleaned daily. Surfaces, floors, utensils, equipment, and materials will be cleaned and sanitised whenever necessary (e.g. after food preparation, meal times, daily following child attendance, weekly sanitation of toys, daily sanitation of toys if they are placed in a child's mouth etc.). Educators and Educator Assistants must at all times model hygienic practices.

It is encouraged parents ensure that their children are fully protected against infectious diseases by following an appropriate immunisation program. As children receive various immunisations, parents must provide a copy of the documentation from Medicare of such immunisation for the service to keep on record in the child's file.

Young infants and toddlers often will not have received the full course of initial immunisations, and Building Futures Care accept this. In protection of these children, when a related infectious disease has occurred within the service, parents will be informed and advised of their options. In such circumstance, Building Futures Care recommends that these children be removed from the family day care service until it is clear from the infection.

Building Futures Care reserves the right for their Educators to cancel a child's enrolment immediately if it is brought to the Educator's attention that the child is not immunised and will not be immunised in the future. This decision is supported by the amendments made to the Public Health Act 2005, which came into effect from the 1st January 2016.

Basic guidelines for suitability to attend in the event of illness are as follows. Parents should provide alternate care for children exhibiting the following symptoms or others signifying significant illness:

- Temperature of or over 38°C
- Conjunctivitis or consistent 'puss-like' discharge from the eyes
- Persistent, heavy cough (other than asthma).
- Constant runny nose - especially if green (other than diagnosed allergy)
- Vomiting/Diarrhoea within 24 hours prior to attendance at the service.
- Any skin condition including unexplained rash, weepy sores, fungal infection, etc.
- Any known contagious condition (need doctor's clearance before returning to the service)
- Non-contagious but unwell children who are not suited to a stimulating environment.

If a child is required to have paracetamol before arriving at the service, we encourage parents to keep them at home.

If a child has a *temperature* of 38 degrees or higher, parents will be notified and permission will be sought to administer paracetamol to reduce the temperature. If the parents cannot be contacted and they have already given written permission on the enrolment form, the Educator may administer the paracetamol in accordance with the procedure detailed in the medication policy/ procedure. A medication slip will be completed by the Educator and parents will need to sign it on collection of the child.

Parents will need to collect child even if paracetamol is administered. Only one dose of paracetamol will be administered to a child in one day (refer to the medication procedure for exceptions at the Coordination Unit's discretion).

If a child has 1 case or more of vomiting and/ or 2 cases or more of diarrhoea the Educator will inform the parents and they will need to collect the child as soon as possible. It is understood that there are many causes for these illnesses not all of which are infectious. The child will be excluded from the service for a period of 24 hours from the time of the last case of either vomiting and/ or diarrhoea. This is in place for the protection of the other children within the service. As informed by the health department, if there are 2 or more children in the service with vomiting and/or diarrhoea the exclusion period is extended to 48 hours from the time of the last case of either vomiting and/or diarrhoea. Children who return to the service during their exclusion period will not be allowed to stay and will need to be taken home until the exclusion period is over. The Educator can request a clearance from the doctor in order for the child to return to the service.

If your medical practitioner requires medical samples such as a urine or stool sample, parents are requested to keep their children home. Educators are unable to perform these tasks as they are not trained and do not have the resources necessary to comply with strict requirements when taking these samples.

If a child has a suspected case of conjunctivitis and/or where the eyes are red and watery and/or has mucus, the child will be sent home and will need to seek medical attention. If a case of conjunctivitis is confirmed, the child will be excluded until the course of appropriate medication prescribed by a medical professional has been completed.

The Illness log should contain details of any illness which becomes apparent while the child is being educated and cared for by the family day care educator including:

- the name and age of the child; and
- the relevant circumstances surrounding the child becoming ill and any apparent symptoms; and
- the time and date of the apparent onset of the illness;
- details of the action taken by the Educator including any medication administered or first aid provided; and any medical personnel contacted;
- the name of any person whom the education and care service notified or attempted to notify of the illness; and
- the time and date of the notifications or attempted notifications;
- the name and signature of the person making an entry in the record, and the time and date that the entry was made.

#### RELEVANT LAWS, SOURCES AND OTHER PROVISIONS

National Quality Standards

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (85; 86; 88)

Staying Healthy in Childcare (5<sup>th</sup> edn.)

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