



Infectious Diseases

Ensuring the health and safety of children, and staff, and supporting children's ongoing wellbeing, is a core focus of the delivery of an Education and Care Service. Educators in services need to be aware of the likelihood of young children being exposed to an infectious illness whilst in care. Maintaining hygiene practices within the service and teaching young children about health and hygiene will assist in the prevention of infectious diseases. Providing families with timely and current information will further support this process.

As of January 2014, immunisation records for each child must be provided to the preschool at enrolment. A child will not be allowed to attend the preschool until information regarding their immunisation status is provided.

Immunisations must be up to date according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule. (See "Australian Government, Department of Health & Aging" website)

Documentation recording immunisation status must be on an Immunisation Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (1800 653 809) These can also be obtained through Medicare (132 011).

Aims

Children's exposure to infectious diseases will be minimised by:

- our service following all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases;
- promotion of practices that reduce the transmission of infection;
- the exclusion of sick children and staff;
- service support for child immunisation; and
- implementation of effective hand washing procedures.

Strategies:

Approved Provider will:

- ensure that all information regarding the prevention of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority, such as: *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* (5th edition), National Health and Medical Research Council (2012), and the NSW Ministry of Health, or NSW public hospitals websites;
- implement the recommendations from *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at the service;



- Offer flu vaccine to staff each year.
- ensure that children are reasonably protected from harm by working with the Nominated Supervisor and Educators on developing, implementing and reviewing policy that will guide health and safety procedures within the service; and
- collect, maintain, and store appropriately the required enrolment documents including immunisation records, and enrolment information of children in the service.

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Develop procedures for:
 - maintaining a hygienic environment;
 - providing families with relevant infectious diseases, health and hygiene information;
 - guiding children's understanding of health and hygiene throughout the daily program;
 - ensuring staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves; and
 - maintaining relevant records regarding the current status of the immunisation of staff and children at the service, as well as any relevant medical conditions of children at the service.
- Develop an enrolment procedure that captures all required information regarding the children's immunisation status, and any medical conditions.
- Provide relevant sourced materials to families about:
 - the current NSW Immunisation Schedule for children;
 - exclusion guidelines for children that are not immunised or have not yet received all of their immunisations in the event of an infectious illness at the service, upon induction at the service;
 - advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general, and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the service; and
 - providing information on illnesses (as soon as practicable after the occurrence of an infectious disease).



- Provide information to families as soon as practicable of the occurrence of an infectious disease that describe the:
 - nature of illness;
 - incubation period; and
 - infectious and exclusion periods.

This information will be sourced from a reliable source such as, *Staying Healthy in Childcare - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care* (5th Edition), National Health and Medical Research Council (2012).

- Ensuring that an “Accident / Incident” record is completed as soon as practicable or no later than 24 hours of the illness occurring;
- Ensure that processes (such as a “Communications to educators” form) is completed and forwarded to all educators so that they are aware of individual children’s circumstances;
- Maintaining confidentiality with regards to children’s individual medical circumstances, by putting procedures in place to safeguard children and families personal information;
- Devising a routine written process for updating children’s enrolment records with regards to immunisation, ensuring that this occurs as required, (i.e. as children reach age milestones for immunisation), or at least twice a year;
- Advising staff of the recommended immunisations for people working with children as per the *Immunisation Handbook – 9th Edition* (2008);
- Maintaining current records of staff immunisation status and ensuring educators familiarity with written procedures for exclusion of educators as well as children in the event of an infectious illness;
- Providing opportunities for educators to source relevant up to date information on the prevention of infectious diseases, and maintaining health and hygiene from trusted sources;
- Ensuring opportunities for educators and families to be involved in the review of the policies and procedures regarding children’s health and safety
- Inform and implement the advice of the health department, or local health unit regarding Infectious Diseases as required.



Educators will:

- Ensure that any children that are suspected of having an infectious illness are responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times;
- Implement appropriate health and safety procedures, when tending to ill children;
- Ensure that families are aware of the need to collect their children as soon as practicable to ensure the child's comfort;
- Advise families that they will need to alert the service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness;
- Maintain their own immunisation status, and advise the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any updates to their immunisation status;
- Provide varied opportunities for children to engage in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice;
- Take into consideration the grouping of children to reduce the risk of acquiring an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day;
- Implement the services health and hygiene policy including:
 - hand washing – washing and drying thoroughly, and remembering to include babies when hand washing
 - routine and daily cleaning of the service;
 - Nappy changing procedures;
 - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids); and
 - proper handling and preparation of food.
- Maintain currency with regard to Health and Safety by attending appropriate professional development opportunities.

Families will:

- Advise the service of their child's immunisation status, and provide written documentation of this for the service to copy and keep with the child's enrolment records.
- Advise the service when their child's immunisation/medical condition is updated and provide this information to the service to ensure that enrolment records are up to date; and
- Have the opportunity to provide input into the review and effectiveness of policies and procedures of the service via various methods.



Evaluation

Infection control is effectively managed at the service to ensure children remain healthy and transmission of infectious diseases are minimised.

References:

Community Child Care Co operative: Infectious Diseases Sample Policy

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Sources

- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- EYLF – Belonging Being Becoming (2009)
- Health and Safety in Children’s Services Model Policies and Practices – 2nd Edition revised (2003)
- Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care - 5th Edition (2012)
- NSW Ministry of Health: www.health.nsw.gov.au/
- National Health and Medical Research Council: www.nhmrc.gov.au/
- Immunisation Handbook – 9th Edition (2008) Australian Government – Department of Health and Ageing – National Health and Medical Research Council
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (3) (2011)