

Having and encouraging good hygiene practices in early childhood is essential for reducing the risk of cross infection. Helping children to develop appropriate personal hygiene habits will become embedded as they grow and develop. It is important to work with families to ensure children follow simple hygiene rules by incorporating good hygiene methods in both the early childhood centre and home environment.

Our Service is committed to assuring the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, families and children, providing a safe and healthy environment. The importance to reducing the risk of infection is through effective hand hygiene. We aim to perform specific hand washing hygiene practices to minimise the risks associated with cross infection.

Infection can be spread through direct physical contact between people, airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing or from contact with surfaces and objects. Children come into contact with a number of other children and adults, toys, eating utensils and equipment. This high degree of physical contact with people and the environment creates a higher risk of children being exposed to and spread infectious illnesses. Whilst it may not be possible for services to prevent the spread of all infections, we aim to create a hygienic environment to minimise the spread of diseases and infections.

Hand washing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases. Research emphasizes good handwashing as the single most important task you can do to reduce the spread of bacteria, germs, viruses and parasites that infect yourself, other staff and children being cared for.

Micro-organisms such as bacteria, germs, viruses and parasites are present on the hands at all times and live in the oil that is naturally produced on your hands. The use of soap or detergent and water remove most of these organisms and decreases the risk of cross infection.

Our Centre will adhere to National Regulation requirements, standards and tools to support the effectiveness of our hand washing policy. We aim to educate and encourage children to wash their hands effectively which will help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases with reference to the Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition to guide best practice.

Nominated Supervisors/Educators will:

- Educators will role model effective hand washing procedures
- Educators will discuss with children the importance of hand-washing and include hygiene practices in the program
- Educators will supervise children's hand-washing
- Parents are encouraged to practice good hand-washing techniques at home to assist in children's learning
- Children and Educators alike will wash their hands before eating and or serving food.
- Educators are aware that wearing gloves does not replace the necessity of hand-washing
- Children, Educators and visitors should use hand-washing effectively to prevent the spread of infectious disease
- Ensure safe, well maintained age appropriate facilities are available for washing hands with soap and running water in the immediate vicinity of areas where children or staff use toilets, nappies are changed, food is stored, prepared or served, pets handled or kept, near areas of outdoor play or bath tubs
- Ensure effective drying of hands with individual towels, disposable paper towel or automatic hand-dryer
- Ensure children, visitors, staff and persons normally working or visiting the centre, use liquid soap or individual soap sheets in preference to germicidal solution or soap bars as microbial contamination is less likely to occur
- In situations where running water is not available, non-water cleansers or antiseptics such as alcohol based hand rub, gel or foam are adequate, and ensure children do not mouth or inhale fumes from wipe; if hands are visibly soiled, washing with soap and running water should be done if possible



- Use disposable paper towels in preference to cloth towels. If cloth towels are used, only use once, then place in a laundry basket for washing, otherwise each person or child has their own individual towel which is given to the parent at the end of each day for washing. When towels are hung to dry, they should not be in contact with each other; paper towels should be disposed of in a lined pedal bin
- Use where practical a disposable paper towel to turn off taps. Taps, sinks and toilet flush handles should be cleaned daily
- Ensure that staff with cuts, abrasions, dermatitis or open wounds on their hands cover with a water-resistant occlusive dressing, which should be changed each time it is soiled or wet
- Replace liquid soap bottles or re-fill them, and wash out the bottle and the dispenser between refills
- Make available moisturising lotion for centre staff for use after hand washing. Moisturiser lotion should be kept out of children's reach
- Children will be reminded to wash their hands at the appropriate times by Educators such as after going to the toilet, before eating, after handling animals and etc.
- Songs will be used to help children to remember the procedure and to make it a fun part of the routine
- Display a waterproofed poster for hand-washing instructions above all hand washing basins. Translate them into the relevant community languages or display visual charts of the correct hand-washing procedure if needed for families, visitors and volunteer workers to the centre.
- Staff must remember that children learn by watching and then copy what they see adults doing. Therefore, staff must model appropriate hand washing practices. When children are observed to be not washing their hands or are not washing them correctly, staff will:
 - Remind them to wash their hands
 - Show them how to wash their hands effectively, if they do not know how or have forgotten
 - Remind them that washing their hands will stop the spread of germs that cause sickness

When to perform hand hygiene:

	Before	After
Educators and other staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting work, so germs are not introduced into the centre • Eating or handling food • Giving medication • Starting work, so germs are not introduced into the centre • Eating or handling food • Giving medication • Putting on gloves • Applying sunscreen or others lotions to one or more children • Going home, so germs are not taken home with you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking off gloves • After changing a nappy, or checking a nappy to see if it is soiled • Cleaning the nappy change area • Using the toilet • Helping children use the toilet • After wiping nose or contact with nasal or salivary secretions • Before and after administering first Aid • Before and after giving a child medication • Coming in from outside play • Before and after eating or handling food • Handling garbage • After cleaning up or any contact with urine, faeces, vomit, blood or other body fluids. • After using chemicals • Applying sunscreen or other lotions to one or more children • After patting or touching animals or pets (including fish, birds, reptiles)



Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On arrival at the children’s centre (parents can help with this) • Eating or handling foods • Going home, so germs are not taken home with you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating or handling food • Touching nose secretions • Using the toilet • Having their nappy – their hands will become contaminated while they are on the change mat • After playing outside or in a sandpit or wading pool • Touching animals
-----------------	--	---

Hand Washing Method

- Wash hands using running water and soap.
- Use liquid soap and spread over hands, rubbing vigorously all over. Pay particular attention to wash the palms and backs of hands, in between fingers, under nails and around wrists. (Hands should be rubbed together for at least 15 seconds)
- Rinse hands thoroughly to remove all suds and germs
- Turn off the tap using a clean piece of paper towel.
- Dry hands thoroughly with clean towel/paper towel or an automatic dryer.
- This should take about as long as singing “Happy Birthday” twice.

Hands can be dried with paper towel. Supervise children when washing hands their hands, and help them to get into the habit of hand hygiene.

If you are wearing rings or other jewellery on your hands, move the jewellery around your finger while you lather the soap to ensure that the area underneath the jewellery is cleaned.

Strategies Educators will use to encourage effective hand hygiene practice include:

- Talking about the importance of hygiene
- Singing a song or reciting a poem (singing happy birthday twice is a sufficient time frame)
- Using a clear visual poster with a step by step instructions
- Using positive language
- Encouraging and using positive reinforcement
- Ensuring equipment is accessible
- Provide clear simple routines
- Give children sufficient time to practice and develop their skills
- Ensure adequate supervision and assistance is available when required

We believe hygiene practices of children being cared for should be as rigorous as staff and educators. Our hygiene environment supports appropriate practice.

Hand Drying

Effective hand drying is just as important as comprehensive hand washing. Research states that wet hands can pick up and transfer up to 1000 times more bacteria than dry hands. Drying hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been rinsed off. We provide children, staff and educators disposable paper towel/warm air dryers to ensure effective hand hygiene.

How to clean hands with alcohol-based Hand Rub

Only use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty. The hand rub should contain 60-80% alcohol.

There are three steps to using the alcohol-based hand rub:

Apply the amount of hand rub recommended by the manufacturer to palms of dry hands

Rub hands together, making sure you cover between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.

Rub until hands are dry.



Using Gloves

Appropriate use of gloves can also be part of effective hand hygiene. The table below shows when to use disposable gloves and when you could use reusable gloves.

Type of gloves	When to wear them	How to maintain them	Examples
Disposable Gloves	When there is a chance you may come in contact with body fluids, including faeces, urine, saliva, vomit or blood	No maintenance – use them once and throw them away; do not reuse	Changing nappies Managing cuts and abrasions Cleaning spills of body fluids.
Reusable Gloves	When cleaning the education and care centres. When preparing bleach solutions for use after cleaning surface.	Cleaning according to the manufacturer's instructions Store dry between uses Replace when showing signs of wear.	General cleaning duties

Disposable Gloves

Disposable gloves should never be reused or washed for reuse. They must be thrown away as soon as you have finished the activity they requires gloves.

Always wash your hands before and after wearing disposable gloves. Wear gloves on both hands:

- When changing nappies—there are billions of germs in faeces and sometimes in urine;
- When cleaning up faeces, urine, blood, saliva or vomit, including when it is on clothes.

However, note that overuse of gloves can cause skin reactions and sensitivity.

It is important to remember that the outside of the glove is dirty and the inside of the glove is clean. Avoid touching the inside of a glove with the outside of another glove, and avoid touching bare skin or clean surfaces while wearing contaminated gloves.

How to remove disposable gloves

- Pinch the outside of one glove near the wrist and peel the glove off so it ends up inside out.
- Keep hold of the peeled-off glove in your gloved hand while you take off the other glove—put one or two fingers of your un-gloved hand inside the wrist of the other glove. Peel off the second glove from the inside, and over the first glove, so you end up with the two gloves inside out, one inside the other.
- Put the gloves in a plastic-lined, hands-free lidded rubbish bin, and wash your hands. If a hands-free lidded rubbish bin is not available, put the gloves in a bucket or container lined with a plastic bag, then tie up the bag and take it to the outside garbage bin.

Source: Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2011, Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standard, Guidelines for Health Workers Endorsed 10 April 2003, National Health and Medical Research Council. (2005), Staying Healthy in Child Care (5th Edition), Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2001

Date Implemented: 16/04/2012

Review Completed: 15/04/2019

Schedule for Review: 15/04/2020

National Quality Standard – NQS

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
-----	--------	---



2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
Education and Care Service National Regulations		
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices	

