

Early Childhood Education Centres

Advice on Illness Policy

Below is some information on how to design your illness policy so that the transmission of infectious illnesses such as gastroenteritis is significantly reduced within your centre.

- If children have experienced vomiting and/or diarrhoea they should not attend the centre until 48 hours after all symptoms have stopped.
- Children (and staff) with diarrhoea, vomiting, fever and/or undiagnosed skin rashes should not remain at the childcare centre (except for the time it takes parents/caregivers to collect the child from the centre).

Diarrhoea or loose stools present a particular risk, even if the cause is not an infectious disease, as it makes it difficult to maintain normal hygiene. Even micro-organisms (germs) that are normally present in the gut can cause health problems to other children or staff if exposed (e.g. passed into the mouth by contaminated hands or objects).

- Parents/caregivers are expected to collect their child without delay if he/she is ill.
- While an ill child is waiting for parents to collect them from the centre, they should be made comfortable and kept isolated from other children and staff, and a staff member remain with them at all times.
- Children and Staff who are unwell should otherwise stay at home as per medical advice or current Auckland Regional Public Health Service recommendations.
- If in doubt, contact the Auckland regional Public Health Service, Ph (09) 623 4600 (24 hours/ 7 days).
- If the centre becomes aware of two or more cases of vomiting and/or diarrhoea within the centre inform Auckland Regional Public Health Service so they can support you in preventing further spread of the illness.

Isolation Area

We suggest that an isolation area has the following characteristics:

- A well-ventilated, warm, quiet area where sick babies and children can be looked after *away from other children*.
- Separate from all food preparation and sleeping areas.
- Sleeping facilities appropriate to the ages of children enrolled are available (including a cot/bed/stretchers/nursing chair fitted with a waterproof cover, and clean bedding and linen).
- A bucket with a lid is available for use if the child needs to vomit or to carry any contaminated material from the isolation area.

Regular Reminders to Parents

We suggest that the following messages be included in enrolment information and brought to parent's attention regularly through newsletters, notice boards, etc:

- Parents are expected to collect their child without delay if he/she becomes ill.
- The centre is required by law to exclude your child until well and of a sufficiently low infection risk to other children (Please see infectious illnesses information sheet).
- If children experience vomiting and/or diarrhoea they should not attend the centre until 48 hours after all symptoms have stopped.
- Children should otherwise be kept away from centre as per advice from your doctor, or as the centre has been advised by Auckland Regional Public Health Service.
- Encourage parents to obtain full vaccination for their child as per the current NZ immunisation schedule. The schedule can be viewed here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/immunisation/new-zealand-immunisation-schedule>
- If there are two or more cases of an infectious illness such as gastroenteritis at the centre, the centre will inform Auckland Regional Public Health Service to support them in preventing further spread of the illness.

Regulation 56 (2) & 57 (2), Education (Early Childhood Service) Regulation 2008

For further information contact the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on 09 623 4600

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