

Hand Washing Policy

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 service and home environment.

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 Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities

PURPOSE

To ensure that all children families, Educators, staff, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service perform specific hand washing hygiene practices required, in order to minimise the risks associated with cross infection.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, Educators, staff, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

RELATED POLICIES

Control of Infectious Disease Policy
Nappy Change & Toileting Policy
Sick Children Policy

Health and Safety Policy
Nutrition & Food Safety Policy

IMPLEMENTATION

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 the Service 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 emphasises 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 Service 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.

To ensure the greatest level of personal hygiene, it is a requirement of the service to wash your hands:

- On arrival at the Service;
- Before and after toileting or changing nappies;
- After going to the toilet;
- After wiping a runny nose or blowing your own nose;
- Before and after administering first aid;
- Before and after administering medication;
- After using chemicals;
- Before eating, preparing and serving food;
- Before and after making bottles;
- After cleaning up bodily fluids;
- After removing protective gloves;
- Before going home.

Children will be encouraged to follow Educators modelling and washing their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Educators will ensure that all required equipment is easily accessible and appropriate for use.

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 Educators and staff. 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 with disposable paper towel and warm air dryers to ensure effective hand hygiene.

Sources

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority 2014.
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services. National Regulations 2015.
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition.
- Revised National Quality Standard.

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
June 2017	Minor changes made to policy including reasons as to why handwashing is vital in the early childhood environment.	June 2018
October 2017	Updated references to comply with the Revised National Quality Standard.	June 2018