

HEALTH & SAFETY

“In sickness and health”... To develop a relationship with an early learning centre brings the true meaning of this statement alive! Young children have behavioural habits that easily promote the spread of germs- simply because so many things end up in their mouths. We are committed to providing a healthy environment for all our children and staff. Every effort will be made to reduce the risk of illness and infection spreading.

We are guided in our decisions by the Public Health Nurse and the EC regulations 2008 which require us to take the following action when a child is unwell. Children with the following symptoms are deemed to be unwell and required to stay away from the centre:

- ❖ Elevated temperature- exclude till temperature normal
- ❖ Diarrhoea/loose bowel motions: exclude for 45 hours.
- ❖ Vomiting: excluded for 24 hours once symptoms have stopped- ie/ at least 48 hours
- ❖ Continual streaming of discoloured mucous from the nose- exclude till clear
- ❖ Hot, cold, clammy, moist or cyanosed skin (blue tinge to lips, fingers and toes) excluded until cleared by doctor
- ❖ Respiratory difficulties- extreme coughing, high pitched wheezy laboured breathing- exclude until breathing normal
- ❖ Rash- exclude until clear or until clearance given by a doctor
- ❖ Headaches/ Stiff Neck- exclude until clearance given by Doctor
- ❖ Head lice- exclude until treatment has been given- it is essential to follow the instructions for follow up treatment
- ❖ Conjunctivitis- If any child has a discharge from the eye, the parent will be required to take them home. The child is excluded until there is no discharge visible in the eye, and they have had 24 hours medication, or a written clearance from your doctor.
- ❖ Antibiotics: children who are prescribed antibiotics for a transmittable infection must stay away from the centre for the first 24 hours of taking the antibiotic.

Medication

Parents must complete a form at the centre to give written authority for staff to administer medication. Prescription medications are those used for a period of time to treat specific conditions or symptoms, including antibiotics, Paracetamol and eardrops. Medication should be handed into teachers- for safety reasons we ask you not to leave it in children's bags.

These medications can only be administered by our staff if the medication has a pharmacy label stating the following: Child's Name, frequency, use by date and dosage. If the medication is not labelled or is expired, our staff members are not allowed to administer it.

Parents must complete the paperwork in their child's room. The Ministry of Education requires us to have specific instructions- it is not suitable to write as required.

Prevention

In the early days of your relationship with the centre, your child is likely to succumb to many illnesses as they have not yet developed immunity and are exposed in closer proximity to a larger group of people, (particularly in winter, when we have the windows and doors shut.) It is impossible to stop your child from catching germs and becoming ill, but the centre follows good hygiene practices to help reduce the chances of children getting sick.

- 1 Once the child is out of the “exploring the mouth” stage, discourage toys and fingers in the mouth
- 2 Teach your child to always wash their hands after toileting, and before and after eating
- 3 Show your child how to blow their nose effectively and to dispose of tissues immediately
- 4 Teach your child to cover their mouth with their ELBOW when they cough or sneeze to prevent blasting their germs around.
- 5 Hand washing. Wash vigorously with soap and water for twenty seconds. (Sing 2 verses of Happy Birthday). Dry with an individual towel for 20 seconds. If you do not dry hands, it can be worse than if they were not washed in the first place

It is vital to err on the side of caution if your child has had vomiting or diarrhoea. Keep them away for at least 48 hours after all symptoms of illness have finished. If your child becomes sick it is very important to give them as much time as possible to recover. Research shows if children are not at their best, they are probably infecting a lot of other children and teachers, and if they do not recover fully, will be more susceptible to the next bout of illnesses. Time away from the centre will allow the child to recover and will also protect the health of other children, families and teachers.

In the interests of children’s health, the centre has a firm policy that when children become sick at the centre, the teachers will contact parents immediately to arrange an early pick-up. It is important that you have discussed this policy with your employer. We understand how challenging it is for parents who are working as they have to cope with work demands and children as well, but a bit of “nipping in the bud” may prevent longer bouts of illness.

Teachers will administer pain relief for children in accordance with our medicine statement. However paracetamol /pamol etc. will only be administered for a 24 hour period before a clearance from the doctor is requested. This will rule out the possibility that such pain relief could be masking the symptoms more severe

So as you begin this relationship with the centre, please be aware that you may end up going through seemingly endless bouts of illness. Please take the time to keep your child at home so that they get the opportunity to recover completely, and be less susceptible to viruses, and also reduce the chances of infecting others.

Please discuss with the teachers on enrolment any chronic illness/condition that the child has, and any implications or actions that the centre may need to follow to ensure your child’s needs are met. This also allows the centre to put in place any special training they are required to administer.

The good thing is that most children will develop strong immune systems and will have resistance for the bugs that many get when they enter school, so hang in there, things will get better.

New Parents

Please be aware that if your children have only been in a close community, they will probably catch lots of infections when exposed to the wider community such as a childcare environment.

Sick children are best kept at home with one to one care. These measures are to protect not only your child but the other children at the centre and our staff.

Antibiotics

When your child needs to go to the Doctor, **please ask whether your child is fit enough to return to a childcare.** A note/certificate from the doctor is always useful for the centre as it gives us guidance on how we should be dealing with the particular outbreak/illness. **If your child is prescribed antibiotics, please keep him/her at home for the first 24 hours to ensure there are no adverse reactions.**