

# Infection Control Policy (Example)

To limit the spread of germs that cause illness, keep the child care center clean and make sure that supplies are available. It's also important to provide ongoing education and support to staff, children, and families on limiting the spread of infection, such as how to keep the center clean, proper hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and watching for signs of illness in children.

For example:

Give special attention to teaching staff, children, and their families about respiratory and hand hygiene (hand washing and keeping coughs and sneezes covered) and cleaning toys and surfaces frequently.

Keep a list and supply of things you will need to help control the spread of infection, such as soap, bleach, paper towels, and tissues. Store the supplies where they are easy to find, but in places that are safe from children.

Teach staff a standard set of steps for checking children and adults each day as they arrive to see if they are sick. Children and adults who are sick should stay home and away from others.

In general, encourage staff, children, and families to:

- Get a flu vaccine every year.
- Wash their hands often with soap and water.
- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or sleeve—*not* into their hands.
- Cover their coughs and sneezes with tissue.
- Make sure that tissues are available in all nurseries, child care rooms, and common areas (such as reading rooms, classrooms, and rooms where meals are provided).
- Encourage care providers and children to wash their hands as soon as possible, if they have sneezed or coughed on their hands.
- Remind staff and children to keep their hands away from their nose, eyes, and mouths.
- Teach children to wash their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes.
- Check all children for signs of illness, especially when there is an increase in flu in the community.

## Staff

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- Observe closely all infants and children for symptoms of illness. Notify the parent if a child develops a fever, chill, cough, sore throat, headache, or muscle aches. Send the child home, if possible, and advise the parent to contact the child's doctor.
- Remind parents to keep children home when they are sick and to keep a list of symptoms.
  - To prevent the spread of illness to others, parents should keep sick children home and away from the child care setting until they have been without symptoms, such as fever, for 24 hours.
- Encourage all staff to stay home, if they are sick.

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## Hand Washing

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Hand washing is the best way to help prevent the spread of germs that cause flu and other illnesses!



When you wash, use warm water and soap. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds, making sure to scrub the backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails. Rinse well under warm water and use a paper towel to dry your hands. (Germs can live for hours on fabric, so do not use cloth towels to dry your hands.) Use hand lotion to prevent drying and cracking of skin. Wash your hands regularly and often.

<b>Wash Your Hands</b>	
<b>Before ...</b>	<b>After ...</b>
starting work	eating or drinking
preparing food	preparing food
serving food	visiting the restroom
eating	helping a child in restroom
putting on a Band-aid	putting on a Band-aid
taking a medication	coughing or sneezing
	wiping a child's nose
	changing diapers

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleaning and sanitizing toys, frequently used objects, and surfaces is an important way to prevent and control the spread of illness. Use an approved sanitizer, such as diluted bleach, to kill germs. Always follow label instructions.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items at least daily and when visibly soiled.
- Use a household disinfectant registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and labeled for use against bacteria and viruses, a hospital disinfectant registered by the EPA, or a chlorine bleach/hypochlorite solution registered by the EPA.
- If chlorine bleach registered by the EPA is not available and a generic (store brand) chlorine bleach is used, mix  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of cool water to use as a sanitizer. Label container, “sanitizer.” **Do not** use this water for drinking.
- Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children.
- Always wear gloves to protect skin from bleach or other chemicals.
- Dispose of gloves and rags that were used and wash hands.



## Toys and Equipment

In general, soft, cuddly toys should be avoided because washing is more difficult. Infants should play with washable toys that are disinfected before and after use by another infant.

When cleaning non-absorbent toys, such as blocks or plastic toys, wash them with soap and water. Rinse in a sanitizing solution. Air dry.

When cleaning fabric toys such as stuffed animals or play clothes, wash them in a washing machine. Air dry or machine dry.

