7.22 Cleaning and Maintaining Hygiene Policy

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Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
Family Day Care/Venue Care/In Home Child Care	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	

Purpose

The service endeavours to ensure that educators, families, children and staff all have a clean and hygienic environment, while minimising exposure to toxic products.

Policy

The service follows the Staying Healthy guide with regards to maintaining a clean and hygienic environment while minimising exposure to toxic chemicals. Educators are required to ensure their service meets hygiene requirements at all times.

It is recommended that educators:

- Vacuum or sweep floors daily to ensure they are kept fee of debris;
- Regularly sanitise benches and surfaces using hot soapy water;
- Clean & sanitise bathroom floors & nappy change areas at regular, scheduled intervals daily using hot soapy water;
- Clean toilets at regular, scheduled intervals daily;
- Empty and sanitise garbage bins at regular intervals daily using hot soapy water and dry them with paper towel before replacing plastic liners;
- Empty and sanitise nappy change bins at regular intervals daily using hot soapy water and dry them with paper towel before replacing plastic liners;
- Clean & sanitise tables and eating areas between each mealtime experience using hot soapy water;
- Clear food scraps promptly & encourage children to actively participate in food waste recycling routines;

- Clean and sanitise outdoor areas and equipment at regular, scheduled intervals with hot soapy water;
- Maintain compliance with Food Safety requirements;
- Wash and sanitise all toys on a regular, scheduled and rotating roster after use each day by washing with hot soapy water or placing through the dishwasher as appropriate;
- Ensure that all spills are cleared immediately;
- Ensure cushion covers are laundered at least once per week, or more regularly if soiled;
- Clean & sanitise chairs, cots, beds, window sills, light switches and walls on a regular, scheduled basis using hot soapy water;
- Sanitise sandpits weekly to protect against animal secretions using a rake and hot soapy water;
- Encourage children to be proactive in effective hygiene routines.

For most general cleaning through the day, the best method is:

(1) Use detergent and warm water. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how much detergent to use;

(2) Vigorously rub the surface to physically remove germs;

(3) Rinse the surface with clean water;

(4) Dry the surface.

It can be useful to have colour-coded cloths or sponges for each area (e.g. blue in the bathroom, yellow in the kitchen) so that it is easier to keep them separate. Wear utility gloves when cleaning and hang them outside to dry. Wash your hands after removing the gloves. When choosing cleaning products, it is important to consider the product's effectiveness against germs and the length of time the product must be in contact with a surface to properly clean it.

Disinfectants are only necessary if a surface is known to be contaminated with potentially infectious material. Remember, if the surface is not clean, the disinfectants cannot kill germs, so you should always clean first, then (if required) disinfect.

Handwashing

Hand hygiene is one of the simplest ways to break the chain of infection. The most effective method of hand washing is using soap and water, and this is the best option when your hands are visibly dirty. For further information and full procedure please refer to 7.8 (b) Hygiene Practices – Handwashing Policy.

Using Gloves

If there is a chance that you may come in contact with faeces, urine, saliva, vomit or blood, you should wear disposable gloves. If you are not likely to come in contact with these body fluids, there is no need to wear gloves. If you do come in contact with body fluids but gloves are not available, it is important to thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you finish the activity.

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

(1) Pinch the outside of one glove near the wrist and peel the glove off so it ends up inside out;

(2) 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;

(3) 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.

Nappy Changing

Faeces (and sometimes urine) contain billions of germs. Hygienic nappy changing and toileting is important to prevent these germs from spreading disease.

An area should be specifically set aside for changing nappies. Ensure that the nappy change mat or surface is not torn and can be easily cleaned. Take extra care to ensure that the change mat is thoroughly cleaned after each nappy change, especially if a child is known to have an infection.

How to Clean the Nappy Change Area

(1) After each nappy change and at the end of each day, wash the surface well with detergent and warm water, rubbing with paper towel or a cloth as you wash. Put the paper towel in the bin, and leave the change surface to dry;

(2) If faeces or urine spill onto the change surface, clean the surface with detergent and warm water and leave it to dry;

(3) Always wash your hands after cleaning the nappy change area.

For further information and full procedure please refer to 7.8 (c) Hygiene Practices – Nappy Changing Policy.

Toilet Training

Good hygiene is important when children are toilet training, as they are likely to have accidents.

If a child does have an accident, place soiled clothes in a plastic bag or alternative, and keep these bags in a designated place until parents can take them home. Help the child use the toilet. It is better for the child to use the toilet rather than a potty chair, which increases the risk of spreading disease. If the child must use a potty, empty the contents into the toilet and wash the chair with detergent and warm water. Do not wash the potty in a sink used for washing hands.

How to Clean Up Faeces or Urine Spills

(1) Wear gloves;

(2) Place paper towel over the spill and allow the spill to soak in. Carefully remove the paper towel and any solid matter. Place it in a plastic bag or alternative, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin;

(3) Clean the surface with warm water and detergent, and allow to dry;

(4) If the spill came from a person who is known or suspected to have an infectious disease (e.g. diarrhoea or vomit from a child with gastroenteritis), use a disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water;

(5) Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water (preferably warm water).

Blood

Children must be supervised at all times, and it is important to ensure that they play safely. If a child is bleeding, through either an injury, bites from other children or a nosebleed, you need to look after the child, dress the wound (if appropriate), check that no-one else has come in contact with the blood and then clean up the blood.

How to Clean Up Blood Spills

When cleaning or treating a child's face that has blood on it, do not put yourself at eye level with the child—their blood could enter your eyes or mouth if the child is crying or coughing.

The best way to clean a blood spill depends on the size of the spill. The table below will help educators and other staff decide on the most appropriate cleaning strategy.

Recommended Methods for Cleaning Blood Spills

Spot (e.g. drop of blood less than the size of a 50-cent coin)

- Wear gloves;
- Wipe up blood immediately with a damp cloth, tissue or paper towel;

- Place the cloth, tissue or paper towel in a plastic bag or alternative, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin;
- Remove gloves and put them in the rubbish bin;
- Wash surface with detergent and warm water;
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

Small (up to the size of the palm of your hand)

- Wear gloves;
- Place paper towel over the spill and allow the blood to soak in;
- Carefully lift the paper towel and place it in a plastic bag or alternative, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin;
- Remove gloves and put them in the rubbish bin;
- Clean the area with warm water and detergent using a disposable cloth or sponge, place the cloth in the rubbish bin;
- Wipe the area with diluted bleach and allow to dry;
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

Large (more than the size of the palm of your hand)

- Wear gloves;
- Cover the area with an absorbent agent (e.g. kitty litter or sand) and allow the blood to soak in;
- Use a disposable scraper and pan to scoop up the absorbent material and any unabsorbed blood or body fluids;
- Place the absorbent agent, the scraper and the pan into a plastic bag or alternative, seal the bag and put in the rubbish bin;
- Remove gloves and put them in the rubbish bin;
- Mop the area with warm water and detergent, wash the mop after use;
- Wipe the area with diluted bleach and allow to dry;
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

Preparing Bleach Solution

Always prepare bleach solutions according to the manufacturer's instructions. Because bleach loses strength over time, always make up new dilutions of bleach every day. Any diluted bleach that is not used within 24 hours of preparation should be discarded.

Safe Use of Bleach

Always:

- Read and follow the safety and handling instructions on the label;
- Dilute bleach according to directions;
- Wear gloves when handling and preparing bleach;
- Check the use-by date before using bleach, because it can lose effectiveness during storage;
- Make up a new batch of bleach each time you disinfect—it loses its effectiveness quickly once it has been diluted.

Never:

- Use bleach in a spray bottle;
- Use hot water to dilute bleach;
- Mix bleach with any other chemicals;
- Use bleach on metals other than stainless steel—bleach is corrosive.

Bathrooms and toilets

Bathrooms and toilets should be cleaned at least once a day, and more often if they are visibly dirty. Ensure that the education and care service has bathrooms and toilets that are appropriate for staff and visitors as well as children; these should include appropriate disposal bins for sanitary products.

Linen

Wash linen in detergent and hot water. Do not carry used linen against your own clothing, take it to the laundry in a basket, plastic bag or alternative. Treat soiled linen as you would a soiled nappy, and wear gloves. If washed at the service, soiled linen should be:

- Soaked to remove the bulk of the contamination;
- Washed separately in warm to hot water with detergent;
- Dried in the sun or on a hot cycle in the clothes dryer.

All children must have individual sheets for rest time. If the educator provides sheets, each child must have their own set of sheets, and the sheets should be washed at least once a week.

Toys

Washing toys effectively is very important to reduce spread of disease. Toys need to be washed at the end of each day, especially those in rooms with younger children. Wash toys in warm water and detergent, and rinse them well—many toys can be cleaned in a dishwasher (but not at the same time as dishes). All toys, including cloth toys and books, can be dried by sunlight.

Remove toys for washing during the day. Start a 'Toys to wash' box and place toys in it during the day if you see a child sneeze on a toy or put a toy in their mouth, or if the toy has been used by a child who is unwell.

Key Resources

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995
www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/index.htm
www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/documents/showDoc.html?WHS%20Fast%20Facts/healthcommunity%20-%20childcare%20worker
www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/hazardousmaterials/definition/msds/index.htm
Staying Healthy (2012) Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services Fifth edition
Kid safe
www.kidsafeqld.com.au
Educational Resource Centre The Royal Children's Hospital
www.rch.org.au/poisons
Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26
www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/
www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/Documents/hpu/15448.pdf
University of New South Wales Medicine: *Health & Safety in Family Day Care Model Policies, 2003*
www.med.unsw.edu.au/
www.med.unsw.edu.au/SPHCMWeb.nsf/resources/FDCModelPolicies.pdf/$file/FDCModelPolicies.pdf