

Hand Washing

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 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 NSW	
77	Health, Hygiene and safe food practices
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities

RELATED POLICIES

Nappy Change and Toileting Policy
 Incident, Illness, Accident & Trauma Policy
 Administration of Medication Policy
 Supervision Policy
 Control of Infectious Disease Policy
 Sick Children Policy
 Work Health and Safety Policy
 Health & Safety Policy
 Animal and Pet Policy

PURPOSE

Our Service is committed to assuring the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, families and children, providing a safe and healthy environment. The importance to reducing the risk of infection is through effective hand hygiene. We aim to perform specific hand washing hygiene practices to minimise the risks associated with cross infection.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

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 services 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 with reference to the Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition to guide best practice.

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
- Making bottles
- After cleaning up bodily fluids
- After removing protective gloves
- Before going home

Children will be encouraged to follow educators modelling and wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Educators will ensure 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 (signing 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 as staff and educators. 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 disposable paper towel/warm air dryers to ensure effective hand hygiene.

Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority.
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- 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 the references to comply with revised National Quality Standard	June 2018
June 2018	Included the ‘Related Policies’ section and updated the ‘Purpose’ statement.	June 2019

Hand washing steps on the next page:

Wash Your Hands!



Wet your hands with running water



Cover your hands with soap and rub your hands vigorously for at least 15 seconds.



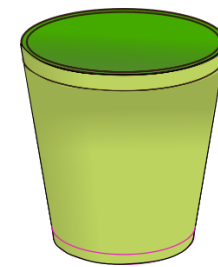
Wash your hands all over, being sure to clean in between fingers, under fingernails, around wrists and both the palms and backs of hands



Rinse your hands thoroughly to remove all soap and germs. The water turns off automatically.



Use a paper towel to dry hands



Place paper towel into the recycling bin