

Children come into contact with many other children and adults in the Family Day Care environment increasing their exposure to others who may be sick or carrying an infectious illness. We acknowledge the difficulty of keeping children at home or away from childcare when they are sick and the pressures this causes for parents, however our Service aims to minimise the transmission of infectious diseases by adhering to regulations and policies protecting the health of all children, educators, staff, families and visitors.

### **PURPOSE**

We aim to maintain the health and wellbeing of all children, staff and their families, ensuring a healthy environment and minimising cross contamination and the spread of infectious illnesses by implementing best practice and high standards of personal hygiene within all our approved Family Day Care residences and/or venues.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to children, families, coordinators, staff, educators, educator assistants, families and visitors of Clarence Family Day Care.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Clarence Family Day Care has adopted the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*) publication recommendations, developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council to guide our practices to help limit the spread of illness and disease. We aim to provide families with up to date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infections and illnesses.

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the Australian Government- Department of Health and local public health units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act.

This policy must be read in conjunction with our other policies especially those related to health, safety and wellbeing.

*Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (2013) explains how infections are spread as '*The Chain of Infection*'.

There are three steps in the chain:

- The germ has a source

Germs can be picked up directly from an infected person or from the environment. It is important to understand that an infected person may not show any signs or symptoms of illness.

- The germ spreads from the source

Germs can spread in several ways, including through the air by droplets, through contact with faeces and then contact with mouths, through direct contact with skin, and through contact with other body secretions (such as urine, saliva, discharges or blood).

Some germs can spread directly from person to person; others can spread from the infected person to the environment. Many germs can survive on hands, and on objects such as toys, door handles and bench tops. The length of time a germ can survive on a surface (including the skin) depends on the germ itself, the type of surface it has contaminated and how often the surface is cleaned. Washing hands and surfaces regularly with detergent and water is a very effective way of removing germs and preventing them spreading through the environment

- The germ infects another person

When the germ has reached the next person, it may enter the body through the mouth, respiratory tract, eyes, genitals, or broken or abraded skin. Whether a person becomes ill after the germ has entered the body depends on both the germ and the person's immunity. Illness can be prevented at this stage by stopping the germ from entering the body (for example, by making sure that all toys that children put in their mouths are clean, by washing children's hands, by covering wounds), and by prior immunisation against the germ.

The chain of infection can be broken at any stage to help prevent and control the spread of diseases

### **MINIMISING THE SPREAD OF INFECTIONS AND DISEASES IN EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES**

We understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can contribute to negative attitudes in the workplace which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to care who is not well.

However, it is imperative that families maintain a focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also upon the well-being of other children, our FDC educators and families.

To protect the health of children and educators, it is important that children and educators/educator assistants who are ill are kept away from the Family Day Care Service for the recommended period.

At times, an outbreak of a new or 'novel' virus or infection, such as COVID-19, may require exclusion from the FDC Service that is not specified in general exclusion periods for common infectious illnesses. Information, education and recommendations regarding any 'novel' virus will be provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and/or local public health unit. (see Excluding Children from the Service section)

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded depends on:

- how easily the infection can spread
- how long the person is likely to be infectious and
- the severity of the infectious disease or illness.

Our FDC educators are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, our FDC educators may ask the family to collect their child from care as soon as possible or return when they are well enough to participate in the programmed activities and experiences.

Management and FDC educators *may* request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to Family Day Care. Please note it is not always possible to obtain a doctor's certificate or clearance for suspected cases of an illness. The decision to approve a child's return is up to the Approved Provider/Nominated supervisor

To help minimise the spread of illness and infectious diseases our FDC Service requests FDC educators to implement rigorous hygiene and infection control procedures and cleaning routines including:

- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- use of protective gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective cleaning of the environment, toys and resources (including bedding)
- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the FDC Service
- physical distancing (when recommended by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee [AHPPC] and/or Safe Work Australia)

## **CHILDREN ARRIVING AT THE FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE WHO ARE UNWELL**

FDC educators will not accept a child into their residence or venue if they:

- have a contagious illness or infectious disease
- have been in close contact with someone who has a positive confirmed case of COVID-19
- have a temperature above 37.5°C when assessed prior to entry to the service (effective during a pandemic or outbreak of an infectious disease)
- are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- have had a temperature, vomiting in the last 24 hours
- have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours
- have started a course of anti-biotics in the last 24 hours

## **CHILDREN WHO BECOME ILL AT THE FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE**

Children may become unwell throughout the day, in which case educators will respond to children's individual symptoms of illness and provide immediate comfort and care.

- FDC educators will closely monitor and document the child's symptoms on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- Children who are unwell at the FDC Service will be able to rest in a supervised area away from other children (where available) until parents or the emergency contact person is able to collect them
- A child who has passed runny stools/vomited whilst at the Family Day Care Service will be sent home and may only return once a certificate from a General Practitioner has been produced
- FDC educators will take the child's temperature. If the child's temperature is 38°C or higher, the FDC educator will contact the child's parents/guardian/emergency contacts as soon as possible to have the child collected (within 30 minutes).
- For infants under three months old with a temperature/fever over 38°C parents will be immediately notified and requested to seek medical assistance. If the parent cannot take the child to a GP immediately, permission will be required for the FDC Service to seek medical assistance urgently.
- FDC educators will monitor the child closely and be alerted to vomiting, coughing or convulsions
- FDC educators will check that written parental permission to administer paracetamol or ibuprofen has been provided during enrolment and filed in the child's individual record
- FDC educators will check the medical history of the child to ensure there are no allergies before administering Panadol or Nurofen
- Accurate records will be kept of the child's temperature, time taken, medication administered, dosage,
- FDC educators will attempt to lower the child's temperature by:
  - removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers etc).
  - encouraging the child to take small sips of water
- FDC educators will continue to document any progressing symptoms
- FDC educators will complete the *Incident, Injury, Trauma or Illness Record* ensuring the form has been completed correctly and signed by the parent/guardian/emergency contact
- FDC educators will thoroughly clean and disinfect any toys, resources or equipment that may be contaminated by a sick child.

## **Common colds and flu**

The common cold (viral upper respiratory tract infections) is very common in children occurring 6-10 times a year on average with the highest number usually being during the first 2 years in childcare, kindergarten or school. Symptoms may include coughing, runny nose and a slight temperature. In

circumstances where a child appears to have cold or flu symptoms, the educator will determine if the child is well enough to continue at the Family Day Care Service or if the child requires parental care.

Our Family Day Care Service aims to support the family's need for childcare however, families should understand that a child who is unwell will need one-on-one attention which places additional pressure on the FDC educator and the needs of other children. Educators have a duty of care to all children in their care. Children who are generally healthy, will recover from a common cold in a few days. Keeping a child home and away from childcare, helps to prevent the spread of germs.

Influenza is a highly contagious illness and can spread to others for 24 hours before symptoms start.

### **Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit**

Management is required to notify the local Public Health Unit (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Family Day Care Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases any confirmed case of COVID-19 or outbreak of gastroenteritis.

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ("German measles")
- Measles
- Pertussis ("whooping cough")
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak such as coronavirus- COVID-19.

### **Excluding children from the Family Day Care Service**

When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the educator will refer to *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* to establish the recommended exclusion period.

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, Clarence Family Day Care will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period to be displayed at the approved residence or venue. (This information can be obtained from *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care*.)
- If a vaccine preventable disease occurs at a FDC residence or venue, children who have not been fully immunised will be excluded from care.
- Management will check all children's Immunisation records and alert parents as required.
- Children that have had diarrhoea and vomiting will be asked to stay away from the Family Day Care Service for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances.
- Children who have a suspected case of COVID-19 and meet the criteria for testing (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) are required to contact their GP or be tested at a COVID-19 testing clinic. Exclusion periods will apply if they have a confirmed case.

## **Notifying families and Emergency Contact**

- It is a requirement of Clarence Family Day Care that emergency contacts can pick up an ill child within a 30-minute timeframe.
- In the event that the ill child is not collected in a timely manner or should parents refuse to collect the child a warning letter may be sent to the families outlining the Family Day Care Service policies and requirements. The letter of warning will specify that if there is a future breach of this nature, the child's position may be terminated.

## **FDC EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE**

- effective hygiene policies and procedures are adhered to at all times to prevent the spread of illnesses
- they promote effective hand hygiene and cough etiquette
- effective environmental cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to all times
- all families are provided access to relevant policies .families are provided with relevant information from a trusted source about preventing the spread of illnesses
- that any child who registers a temperature of 38°C or above is collected from the Family Day Care Service and excluded for 24 hours since the last elevated temperature *or* until the FDC Service receives a doctor's clearance letter stating that the child is cleared of any infection and able to return to childcare
- a child who has not been immunised will be excluded from the FDC Service if an infectious disease is reported within the service community and that child is deemed to be in danger of contracting the illness. Please refer to our *Control of Infectious Diseases Policy*
- families of a child with complex and chronic medical conditions will be notified in the event of an outbreak of an illness or infectious disease that could compromise their health
- families are notified to pick up their child if they have vomited or had diarrhoea whilst at an approved FDC residence or venue.

## **THE MANAGER OR NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE**

- notification is made to the Regulatory Authorities within 24 hours of any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an Education and Care Service, which:
  - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner or
  - for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital. For example: whooping cough, broken limb and anaphylaxis reaction
  - any incident or emergency where the attendance of emergency services at the Education and Care Service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought (eg: severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis)
- notification is made to the Public Health Unit on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed cases of COVID-19
- notification is made to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of any confirmed cases of COVID-19

## **PARENT/FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY**

In order to prevent the spread of disease, families are required to monitor their child's health and not allow them to attend the FDC Service if they have an infectious illness or display symptoms of an illness.

For children who have ongoing medical needs such as asthma or anaphylaxis, parents should regularly review their child's health care action plans to ensure the FDC educator is able to manage their individual needs as required.

Families should implement effective hygiene routines at home such as regular handwashing and sneeze and cough routines (use of tissues, covering their mouth with coughing, sneezing into a tissue or elbow) as this will help prevent the spread of illnesses and is a continuation of what children learn whilst they are in the care of their FDC educator.

Families should notify their FDC educator if their child has been unwell in the past 24 hours or someone in the family is/has been sick. This is particularly critical during a pandemic such as COVID-19.

Signs of illness in young children may include:

- runny, green nasal discharge
- high temperature
- diarrhoea
- red, swollen or discharging eyes (bacterial conjunctivitis)
- vomiting
- rashes (red/purple)
- irritability, unusually tired or lethargic
- drowsiness
- poor circulation
- poor feeding
- poor urine output
- a stiff neck or sensitivity to light
- pain
- mouth sores that cause drooling
- impetigo

Parents should seek medical attention should their child develop symptoms such as:

- high fever
- uncontrolled coughing or breathing difficulties

Families are required to keep up to date with their child's immunisation, providing a copy of the updated AIR Immunisation History Statement to the Clarence Family Day Care office (admin@cfdc.com.au) following each immunisation on the National Immunisation Schedule.

## **RETURNING TO CARE AFTER SURGERY**

Children who have undergone any type of surgery will need to take advice from their doctor/surgeon as to when it is appropriate and safe to return to childcare.

A medical clearance statement will be required to ensure the child is fit and able to return to the FDC Service and participate in daily activities.

## **NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK**

### **National ECEC Regulations**

77 – Health, hygiene and safe food practices	85 – Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86 – Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness	87 – Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88 – Infectious diseases	90 – Medical conditions policy
92 – Medication record	93 – Administration of medication
96 – Self-administration of medication	

## **National Quality Standards**

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
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.

## **REFERENCE & RELATED INFORMATION**

- NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>
- Education and Care NSW Regulations
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority.
- Safe Work Australia
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.
- Australian Government- Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/>
- Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)
- NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/pages/phus.aspx>
- Raising Children Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/fever>
- The Sydney Children's Hospitals network  
<https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/search/site?query=fever>
- NSW Health Gastro Pack NSW Health