

### **PURPOSE**

The spread of infections in the early childhood environment is facilitated by microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the greater exposure to young children who are still developing hygienic behaviours and habits. Educators will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by following the recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and educators, supporting child immunisation, and implementing effective hygiene practices.

Our FDC Service will provide up-to-date information and advice to parents, families and educators sourced from the Australian Government Department of Health, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and state Ministry of Health about infectious diseases as required. Recommendations from the Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Children encounter many other children and adults within the Family Day Care Service environment which can result in the contraction of infectious illnesses. We have a duty of care to ensure that children, families, educators and visitors of the Service are provided with a high level of protection during the hours FDC educators provide education and care to children. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the Family Day Care Service.

### **SCOPE**

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

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

We are committed to minimising the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (Fifth Edition)* developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

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*.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the Service 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Sick Children Policy
- Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy and
- Medical Conditions Policy and

### **Preventing Infectious Diseases**

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in early childhood and care, it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities.

Our Service implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases including:

- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- use of gloves
- exclusion of children when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective environmental cleaning including 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 family day care residence
- physical distancing (if recommended)
- restricting parents and visitors from entering our service to reduce threat of spread of a community disease (eg: COVID-19)

### **Immunisation requirements**

As of January 2018, unvaccinated children due to their parent's conscientious objection are no longer able to be enrolled in approved early childcare services. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule may still be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner who meets the criteria stated by the Australian Government. For further information on this please visit NSW Health website.

Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Family Tax Benefit Part A end of year supplement.

The relevant vaccinations are those under the *National Immunisation Program (NIP)*, which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

### **Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority**

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. Both the NSW and Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Family Day Care educators must notify the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor of any incidence of an infectious disease. This must be also be documented on an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*.

The Approved Provider 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 or any confirmed case of:

- COVID-19
- 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.

The Manager/Nominated Supervisor 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.

The Manager/Nominated Supervisor must also notify the Regulatory Authority of any incidence of a notifiable Infectious disease or illness.

### **THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/MANAGER/COORDINATOR WILL ENSURE:**

- that all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised health authority Australian Government Department of Health
- exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all educators, children, parents, families and visitors
- the Service implements recommendations from Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services to maintain a healthy environment
- advice and recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible
- children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within each family day care residence/or venue
- required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored
- a staff immunisation record that documents each staff member's previous infection or immunisations (including dates) is developed and maintained
- the Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea or vomiting in a 2-day period. (NSW Government- Health 2019)
- infection control measures are implemented in each FDC residence
- an Immunisation History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment and maintained regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions
- families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including:
  - the current NSW Immunisation Schedule
  - exclusion guidelines in the event of a vaccine preventable illness at a FDC Service for children that are not immunised or have not yet received all their immunisations
  - advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the approved residence/venue or FDC principal office.
- families are provided with information about an infectious disease verbally and by displaying and emailing the Infectious Diseases Notification Form and details
- information or factsheets related to the disease/infection and the necessary precautions/ exclusions required will be provided to families

#### **FDC EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:**

- a hygienic environment is promoted and maintained
- children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette)
- they are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves
- families are advised that they must alert the FDC Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness
- after confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child must be notified whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child. Communication may be:
  - verbally
  - through a letter from the educator or Approved Provider
  - posting a note or sign at the entry of the residence
  - via electronic message- text message or email
- the Manager/Nominated Supervisor must approve the content of the message before this is sent to families
- information or factsheets related to the disease/infection and the necessary precautions/exclusions required will be provided to families
- their own immunisation status is maintained, and the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor is advised of any updates to their immunisation status.

- opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette.
- families are advised that they must alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness
- all FDC educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances
- that they to source pertinent up to date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided
- families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24 hours\* before returning to the FDC Service. For example, if a child is absent due to illness or is sent home due to illness, they will be unable to attend the next day as a minimum. The Coordinator may approve the child's return to care if families provide a doctor's certificate/clearance certifying that the child is no longer contagious and is in good health. 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 Coordinator/Family Day Care educator.
- to complete the register of *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness* and/or document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the Service
- FDC educators who have diarrhoea or an infectious disease must not provide education and care to children for at least 48 hours. Alternative arrangements endeavour to be made for a relief educator during this period.
- any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimised in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time

### **Infection Control Measures – Managing the outbreak**

In the event of an outbreak of gastroenteritis or any other infectious illness, the FDC educator will:

- isolate a sick child/ren where possible in the residence
- contact parents/guardian to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable
- depending on the symptoms of the illness, request the child has a COVID-19 test
- immediately clean up any vomit/ faeces with paper towel
- respond to the child's needs and ensure their health and emotional needs are supported at all times
- ensure appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children- wear disposable gloves, face mask or other PPE if needed
- clean the child using disposable paper towels and change of clothes
- put clothing in a leak proof plastic bag for parent to take home
- remove disposable gloves
- put on new disposable gloves and clean all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness. Once cleaned, disinfect (see *Staying Healthy: Preventing diseases in early childhood and care services*)
- wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and alcohol rub
- alert all children to participate in hygiene practices, including hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette
- ensure consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of attaining an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day
- ensure sick children are excluded from the FDC residence for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop (gastro) or they are no longer considered infectious (see exclusion periods)
- complete the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness* record and ensure parents acknowledge the details contained in the record to be true with their signature and date. A copy of this record must be given to the Approved Provider as part of the notification to the Regulatory Authority, Public Health Unit and other government agencies as required.

### **Prevention strategies for minimising the spread of disease within our Family Day Care Service include all educators, educator assistants and coordinators ensuring:**

- they adhere to the Family Day Care Service's health and hygiene policy including:
  - hand washing
  - daily cleaning of the Family Day Care Service
  - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids- nappy changing and toileting)

- appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
- they maintain up to date knowledge with respect to Health and Safety through on-going professional development opportunities
- they clean surfaces first with detergent and water before using disinfectants. [Disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean]
- bedding is cleaned using detergent and water after each use and if the surface is known to be contaminated with a potential infectious disease, disinfectant is also used to clean beds
- all play dough is freshly made every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is to be discarded at the end of each day and a new batch made each day for the duration of the outbreak.
- children are to wash their hands before and after using the play dough.
- mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried
- that a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch objects including doorknobs, tables, light switches, handles, remotes, play gyms, low shelving, etc. This will be increased if an outbreak has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19
- that if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it. The plastic bag will be stored in a sealed container labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home.
- cloths are colour coded so that a separate cloth is used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces
- that any toy that is mouthed by a child is placed in the 'toys to be washed' basket located on the top shelf in the nappy change area and washed with warm soapy water at the end of the day. All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination and recorded with the date and a signature as evidence.
- toys and equipment (that are difficult to wash) will be washed with detergent (or soap and water) and air-dried in sunlight
- washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water or the dishwasher and aired to dry (toys will not be washed in the dishwasher at the same time as dishes). All toys and equipment that have been cleaned will be recorded on the toy cleaning register.
- all children that use a dummy to place the dummy in the basket in an individual container, small zip locked plastic bag, or a protector with the child's name clearly stated to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis
- toilets/bathrooms are to be cleaned in the end of the day and whenever needed throughout the day using disinfectant and paper towel.
- when cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine off beds, floors, bathrooms etc. FDC educators will use disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water
- pregnant FDC educators must minimise their exposure to changing nappies, toilet training, cleaning up body fluids due to the risk of contracting Cytomegalovirus (CMV). The occupational risks of CMV infection must be discussed with management of the FDC Service. (*see Pregnancy in Early Childhood Policy*)

#### **FAMILIES WILL:**

- adhere to the Service's policies regarding *Control of Infectious Diseases, Immunisation and Sick Children* and adhere to exclusion requirements
- adhere to the FDC Service's restrictions of entry into approved FDC residences and/or venues in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- adhere to the FDC Service's policy regarding *Hand Washing*
- exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the residence/venue where their child is educated and cared for and their child is not immunised fully
- advise the educator of their child's immunisation status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for the service to copy and place in the child's file.
- advise the educator when their child's medical action plan is updated
- provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training

- adhere to the FDC Service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test if their child is tested for the virus

### **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	93 – Administration of medication
90 – Medical conditions policy	162 – Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures	172 (2) (g) – a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises

### **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.

### **SOURCE**

- Gastro Pack NSW Health
- Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services
- Australian Government Department of Health Health Topics <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics>
- Australian Government. Department of Health (2019). National Immunisation Strategy for Australia 2019-2024 [https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024\\_0.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-immunisation-strategy-for-australia-2019-2024_0.pdf)
- Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)
- Department of Human Resources: National Immunisation Program Schedule: <https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program>
- Medicare Australia (Department of Human Services): <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.
- NSW Government Department of Health. Vaccination requirements for child care. [https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/childcare\\_qa.aspx](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/childcare_qa.aspx)
- NSW Public Health Unit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>
- Public Health Act 2010
- Public Health Amendment Act 2017
- Public Health Regulation 2012
- Education and Care NSW Regulations