

# Letter to Families

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Dear Families,

## Infectious Disease

Spending time in Childcare Service's and being exposed to many children provides an opportunity for infectious diseases to be spread. In order to prevent infectious diseases being spread in our Service, we believe it's crucial that families understand how this occurs as well as how to stop them being spread.

**Essentially, there are three steps to spreading infection.** These are:

1. The germ has a source (e.g. a person has the infection).
2. The infection spreads.
3. The germ infects another person.

**The following things can stop infection spreading:**

- Effective hand washing
- Excluding ill children and adults from our Service
- Immunisation
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Appropriate use of gloves (e.g. when there is a chance you may come into contact with faeces, urine, saliva, vomit or blood)
- Effective environmental cleaning

**Hand washing** is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of disease. Staff have been trained in the correct way of washing hands and also ensure that the children wash their hands in the correct method:

- \* Wet hands with running water.
- \* Use liquid soap and spread over hands.
- \* Rub hands vigorously for about 15 seconds, ensuring that the back of hands, palms, underneath fingernails and around wrists are washed.
- \* Rinse hands under running water to remove all soap suds.
- \* Turn tap off with a piece of paper towel
- \* Dry hands thoroughly with a fresh piece of paper towel.

### **Exclusion of sick staff and children:**

While we realise that families have work and family commitments of their own exclusion periods are essential to ensure the health and safety of the ill child or staff member, and other children at the Service and staff. The length of the exclusion period will vary depending on the infection or illness concerned. For a list of these, please see our Infectious Diseases Policy or speak to an educator or the Nominated Supervisor.

### **Immunisation**

Immunisation is the most effective way of preventing the outbreak of infectious diseases. The immunisation process enables the body to quickly recognise the relevant disease if ever exposed to it in the future, and to effectively get rid of the disease at that time. We require a copy of your child's immunisation records at enrolment. Please assist us with keeping these records up to date. If your child has not been vaccinated, we may exclude your child during outbreaks of diseases even if your child is well.

If these preventative measures are not carried out effectively then other health and hygiene measures like safe food preparation will not stop the spread of infection. If you have any questions on this issue please do not hesitate to contact staff or speak confidentially to the Director. Our Infectious Diseases Policy contains a full list of the exclusion periods for diseases and also extensive information about immunisation. If you would like a copy of this please do not hesitate to contact staff.

### **Sources**

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (5th Edition)*.