

Care of Unwell Children Policy

Purpose

This policy describes Sturt Street Children's Centre required standards for recognising and managing unwell children.

Sturt Street Children's Centre is committed to providing a healthy environment and reducing the possibility of transfer of infection between children at the Centre. Infants and toddlers have a high rate of illness, particularly fever, respiratory problems and diarrhoea. These illnesses often happen to occur at the same time as teething and are easily overlooked and in fact blamed on teething.

A persistently-elevated temperature often implies the body's immune system is fighting an infection. In addition a variety of symptoms which may accompany the fever, such as being in pain, can result in the child feeling fear or anxiety, and therefore wanting to be at home with their parents.

It is difficult for educators to give the necessary time and attention that a sick child requires. Additionally, the Centre is usually busy and full of activity, making it difficult for children to be able to rest quietly. Educators at the Centre, although able to provide first aid and comfort, are not trained health care professionals and therefore are not qualified or able to provide ongoing personal health care to a sick child.

Aim

- To promote healthy practices in child care and preschool
- To ensure that the symptoms of children who are unwell are identified and appropriate action taken.
- To minimise the spread of infection.
- To provide up-to-date information about the management of childhood illnesses.
- To follow current advice from the South Australian Health Authority when there is a local outbreak of an infectious disease.

Policy Statement

- Parents are asked not to bring a child to the Centre who is unwell or has during the previous 12 hours demonstrated the above symptoms.
- Educators are aware of symptoms of childhood illness and attend workshops in order to identify and manage a child who becomes unwell. Staff refer to *Staying Healthy* as a guide.
- Parents are asked to come to the Centre to collect their child within half an hour of being contacted.
- Parents are requested to be contactable and/or have alternative contacts while their child is at the Centre.
- Educators ensure good infection control procedures are used in Centre, emphasising the importance of good hand-washing.
- The Centre provides parents with up to date information regarding the management of childhood illness through newsletters, health alert emails, brochures from health authorities, handouts and notices are displayed regarding illnesses and the recommended management of them.

- If a child is unwell in the Centre, a primary carer in consultation with a qualified educator will:
 - assess the overall symptoms (as above),
 - inform Director and parent if the child is unwell.
 - ask parent to collect a child who might be infectious as described and/or unwell and is unable to cope with a day at child care/preschool,
 - make the child feel as comfortable as possible and offer them reassurance
 - isolate the child if necessary until parents can arrange pick-up,
 - record illness and details of care in child's folder and/or incident report
 - inform parents of Centre policy on exclusion and readmission,
 - notify other parents if the illness is infectious by placing a notice at front entry and via a health alert email,
 - including information from *Staying Healthy* as appropriate,
 - wash and disinfect toys etc if necessary.
 - call an ambulance if necessary. Refer to Accident and Emergency policy.

Paracetamol

If children require or have paracetamol in the morning, they are not to attend child care/preschool. Paracetamol masks symptoms and children may still be infectious to other children and staff. Paracetamol will not be administered unless there is a medication authority form filled out by a suitably qualified health practitioner. There would still be an expectation that the child would need to be collected.

Anaesthetic

Parents are asked to keep children at home for at least 48 hours after anaesthetic.

Antibiotics

Parents are asked to keep children at home for the first 24 hours of antibiotics and to ensure the first dose is given at home in case of reaction.

Exclusion

Staff at the Centre follows the recommendations from *Staying Healthy* for exclusion periods i.e. after children have had diarrhoea, children should be excluded from child care until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours.

In the event there is an outbreak of an infectious disease such as viral gastroenteritis, the Centre will follow the current health advice from the South Australian Health Authority who may recommend a longer exclusion period to break the cycle of infection.

Definition of 'Unwell'

A child with any of the following symptoms may be unwell:

- fretful and listless
- seems uncomfortable/unwell
- cry readily but not comforted easily
- abnormally quiet and inactive and no interest in playing
- breathing trouble
- irritable (when disturbed)
- feverish appearance and feels hot
- looks tired and flushed
- feels cold and looks pale



- vomiting and/or diarrhoea (chn should not attend for at least 24 hours after)
- fewer than four wet nappies in 24 hours
- coughing
- sticky eyes

Source

- *Staying Healthy – preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* 5th Edition NHMRC, 2012
(http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_edition_0.pdf)

Related Documents

Medication policy
Medication Authority
Child Accident and Emergency policy and procedure

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