



**Keeping children
healthy in
Family Day Care**

**Great spaces,
Safe spaces**



Keeping children healthy

Everybody wants to keep children healthy in Family Day Care (FDC).

- Parents don't want their child to get sick while they are at FDC.
- You don't want children to get sick while they are with you.

While you have children in your home as a Family Day Care educator, it's your role to keep them healthy. (Keeping them healthy will also keep you healthy!)

You also need to make sure that children who have special medical conditions such as allergies or asthma have their needs taken care of.

Because children's bodies are not yet very good at fighting germs they get sicker more often when they come into contact with those germs. Because you will be caring for children from different families, children will come into contact to different germs from the ones they are used to.

Children are also good at spreading germs! They play and crawl on the ground, they touch each other and they are not very good at wiping their noses. They also put things into their mouth.

Because of this there are more chances of a child becoming sick at a FDC and then other children catching that illness.

As FDC educators you need to do extra things to make sure that the children we care for don't become sick. If they do, we need to make sure that the illness doesn't spread – that all of the other children we care for don't also get sick.



Stopping germs from spreading

We know how germs get into Family Day Care.

For someone to get sick from a germ (such as bacteria or viruses) they have to catch it from another person who has that germ or from somewhere that a person with that germ has been or touched. Because there is a group of children in Family Day Care we need to be extra careful otherwise the germs can easily spread amongst the children and to their educator. Children are always touching things and each other and because you have to change their nappies or help them go to the toilet or wipe their noses, germs can easily spread from one child to another.



- 1 The germ has a source.
- 2 The germ spreads from the source.
- 3 The germ infects another person.

This is what we call the chain of infection. You can break the chain at any stage.

We know how germs spread.

From sneezing and coughing. Tiny bits of fluid go into the air and land on things when children or adults sneeze or cough. If other people breath this in or touch something that the fluid from a sneeze has landed on they can catch the germs.

From breathing germs in. Some germs are very tiny and stay in the air for a long time. When you breath you may get some of these germs inside of you.



By touching the germs. Some things like head lice or some skin germs can be caught by touching them or by the germs moving directly from one body to another.

By touching bodily fluids. Think of every fluid a body makes. All of these can spread germs – especially if someone touches somebody else’s body fluids then touches their own mouth or nose without thinking about it.

From animals. Animals can have germs on their skin, hair and feather and this can cause us to get sick. Mosquitos and fleas can also spread germs.

From food. If food isn’t cooked or stored properly germs can grow in it which can make us sick.

We know how to stop germs from spreading.

1. **Wash hands.** Wash hands well and wash them often. Your own hands and the children’s hands.
2. **Don’t care for sick children.** Make sure children don’t come to your FDC when they are sick. Don’t care for children when you are sick, or one of your family members is home sick and requires one-on-one care from you.
3. **Get immunised.** Make sure everyone has been immunised. (Your FDC Provider will check that the children you care for have been immunised. Ask your doctor whether you need any immunisations to stop you from getting sick. You need a ‘flu shot’ from the chemist or doctor every year.)



4. **Cover coughs and sneezes.**

Get children to cover their mouth and nose with their elbow when they cough or sneeze.



5. **Use gloves.** Use gloves when you might touch a child's poo, wee, spit, vomit or blood or when they have a runny nose. Always wear gloves for nappy changes or when you wipe a child's bottom. Gloves protect you from germs.
6. **Clean well and often.** Because you use your house to care for children you need to clean some places more often and really well. You need to clean your bathroom, toys, door knobs, floors, things that children put in their mouth and places they touch often, daily.

The best way to wash hands

Children should wash their hands before a meal, after going to the toilet or having their nappy changed, after playing outside, and after touching pets. You should wash your hands all these times and before and after you cook, change a nappy or help a child go to the toilet or wipe their nose.

1. Wet your hands with warm water and then lather with soap.
2. Wash all the parts of your hands – palms, back of hands, fingers, and fingernails.
3. Rub lathered hands together for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands well with running water.
5. Dry them really well.

Cleaning

Cleaning the parts of our home where children are cared for is an important way to keep children healthy. Think of this as washing germs away. Using detergents helps loosen the germs so they can be washed away as does rubbing them hard. Reducing the numbers of germs in our homes means there is less chance children will catch them. We only need to use special cleaners like bleach or disinfectants when we know there is actual germs somewhere like if someone has had a runny poo or vomits. Normally a detergent is enough.

The best way to clean surfaces in your home

1. Use detergent and warm water.
2. Rub hard to remove germs.
3. Rinse with clean water.
4. Dry well (germs like wet places).

Sick children can spread germs to other children.

When children have certain illnesses they can't come to Family Day Care. Parents may find this hard to accept and you may be tempted to look after their child – but this can cause another child to get sick. Check with your FDC Provider if a child has runny poos, or has a fever or is vomiting, or has a rash or a bad cough. They may have one of the illnesses that means they need to stay home.



Changing nappies and helping a child toilet

Did you know that a poo can contain billions of germs? It's therefore really important to make sure that you are careful when you change nappies and help older children go to the toilet.

1. Always have one set place you change nappies. Don't do it on the floor or on a bed where children may later sleep or play. (Even if you did that with your own children if you have them, you need to take special care as a Family Day Care educator!)
2. Always wash your hands before and after a nappy change and always wash the baby's hands.
3. Always wear gloves when you change a nappy even though you are washing your hands.
4. Put paper on the change pad before you change a nappy. Take the paper off the table and put it in the bin before you put a child's clean clothes on. That way you are getting rid of most of the germs.
5. Use disposable wipes – they help make sure germs don't stay.
6. Never change another baby before you have washed the change pad. After each nappy change wash the change pad with detergent and warm water, rubbing it well, then drying it.
7. Dispose of dirty nappies very carefully. It's best to use disposables in FDC if a parent is ok with this. Make sure you put them into a bin with a very good lid.

When children are learning to use the toilet they will have accidents and they will need help. Make sure you clean any accidents very well and put the dirty clothes in a bag for parents. Help children to wipe themselves and to wash their hands well each time they go to the toilet.

When a child gets sick

In order to prevent some illnesses (infectious ones – the ones spread by germs) spreading, the Government requires children with some illnesses to stay at home and not attend FDC for certain periods of time. (This is called an exclusion period.) The less contact there is between people who have an infectious disease and others the less chance the disease has of spreading. By making one ill child stay at home other children won't get ill.

To find out which illnesses a child may have that mean that have to stay at home check the book *Staying Healthy at Childcare* at www.nswfdc.org.au/stayinghealthy You also need to tell all families if a child you look after gets one of these illnesses.

When a child in your care gets sick at Family Day Care and isn't well enough to join in activities you need to contact their family. They need to be looked after by their family when they are sick.

If a child shows any of these symptoms they need to see a doctor urgently:

- high fever
- drowsiness
- lethargy (extreme tiredness)
- breathing problems (quick breaths, noisy ones or if the child is blue around the mouth)
- very cold hands or feet
- if they are a baby – not eating or drinking at all
- dry nappies
- some red or purple rashes (if they do not turn white when pressed with a finger)
- stiff neck or disliking the light
- pain

When a child has an illness

When a child has an ongoing illness or health care need like asthma, diabetes or a serious food allergy (anaphylaxis) some special things need to be put in place at Family Day Care.

- They need to have a special plan about how you will try and make sure they don't get sick at Family Day Care. (This is called a *Risk Management Plan* and your FDC service will help work out this plan with the child's parents and doctor.) You may need to do some special things to make sure they don't get sick while at your house – like making sure any foods they are allergic to are not served – even to other children.
- You also need to have a plan about what to do if the child gets sick at your home – if they have an asthma attack for example. (This is called a *Medical Management Plan* and again your FDC Provider will help to draw it up.)

- You also need to have a *Communication Plan* so that you and the parents talk about any changes to how you look after a child's illness.
- You need to follow the *Risk Management Plan* all the time the child is being cared for and you need to check that the child is ok regularly. If the child isn't ok you need to act as required under the *Medical Management Plan* – this may mean giving them emergency medicine and calling an ambulance.
- Talk to your Approved Provider about how you should give a child medication if it is in their medical management plan.

Have you done a first aid course and a course in anaphylaxis and emergency asthma management? All FDC educators must do these every 3 years.

If you ever have any doubts about a child that has an ongoing illness call the child's parents or in an emergency call an Ambulance on Triple Zero (000).

When a child needs to take medicine

As a Family Day Care educator you **can only** give a child medicine if:

- the parents have filled out a form (a *Medication Authorisation* form) giving you permission to do it. (Your FDC Provider will give you these forms for families to fill in.)
- it is prescribed by a doctor; and
- is in the original bottle with the doctors instructions on it.

You need to fill out a form (*a Medication Record*) for the child, every time you give them the medication. (Again your FDC Provider will give you this form). You need to keep these filled out records and give them back to your FDC Provider to keep once you no longer care for the child, or when you stop being an educator.

You **can** let a child who is of school age give themselves the medication if that is what the parent has written on their *Medication Authorisation* form.

You **cannot** give a child any sort of medication that the parents have bought at a chemist or that has been given to them by an alternative medical practitioner – only a proper medical doctor – even if the parents ask you to.

You **can only** give a child painkillers such as Panadol or Nurofen:

- if the parents have said you can on their enrolment form
- if the child has a letter from a doctor saying why it is to be given, at what dose and for how long

You cannot give a child Panadol/Nurofen for a child who has a fever alone. They must also be in pain or upset and it will be a while if their parents cannot come quickly.

Sleep

Children need to have sleep and rest time when their bodies need it.

You can tell when a child needs to rest or sleep – they may yawn, rub their eyes, stop playing, cry, act out or need a lot of comfort from you.

In Family Day Care you need to allow children to choose to be more or less active according to their needs. They need to be able to rest or sleep whenever they need to. Talk to families about each child's sleep and rest routines.

Not all children require rest or sleep all the time. A child's age, what they have done during the day, what is happening at home and their health will all influence how much sleep or rest they need.

Make sure you provide a range of active and more restful activities for children to choose from.

It is good to have places for children to nap in the main play area – you can have special sleeping mats or mattresses in a corner. Also have areas with cushions

and books so a child can rest away from other children if they don't need a full sleep.

Make sure sheets and blankets and cushion covers are washed regularly. It is good for each child to have their own sheets.



Food and exercise

Food is an important part of keeping children healthy. They need good food, not too much, and lots of exercise and running around. But food that is not cooked or stored properly can grow germs in it, so it can also make children very sick.

To keep germs out of food

- Clean anywhere that food will touch – chopping boards, benches, plates, cutlery.
- Wash your hands before touching food.

- Food can get germs in it when it is not kept very hot or very cold. When you reheat cooked food it can kill the germs that grow in the food after it is cooked. When you keep cooked food cold it stops germs growing.
- Only reheat food once. If it cools and then you reheat it again germs can grow. It's important to throw out left over food because you don't want germs to grow in it.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separately at all times. Use different chopping boards and knives for raw and cooked foods.

Formula or breast milk is also a food

- It can grow germs if it is not kept cold or not heated up.



- Make fresh formula for each feed or if a parent gives you bottles for their baby use a new one for each feed. When they give you the bottles for the day put them in the refrigerator and just take out one for reheating.
- Only heat milk or formula for babies' bottles once. If it cools and then you reheat it again germs can grow. It's important to throw out left over milk because you don't want germs to grow in it.
- Make sure milk is not too hot for the baby by testing it on the inside of your wrist and ensure you shake the bottle to get rid of any hot pockets, particularly when the bottle is warmed up in a microwave.

Meals and snack times

- get children to wash their hands
- don't let children touch food that is being shared – get them to use tongs or spoons
- don't let children share plates or food
- use a separate spoon to feed each baby

Healthy Eating

Eating well helps children to become healthy and stay healthy.

As an FDC educator you should:

- Support breastfeeding – help mothers of the children you care for breastfeed for at least 6 months. Once breastfeeding stops a baby should have formula till 12 months.
- A child should start being fed some solids at 6 months– when they show an interest and show they are hungry. Did you know children need to be shown a new food about 15 times before they become familiar with it?
- Never give a baby a food they might choke on. Give them soft easy to swallow foods. Show babies the food they are going to eat. Don't feed them from pouches. Let them touch and smell their food.

The 5 food groups

There are 5 food groups:

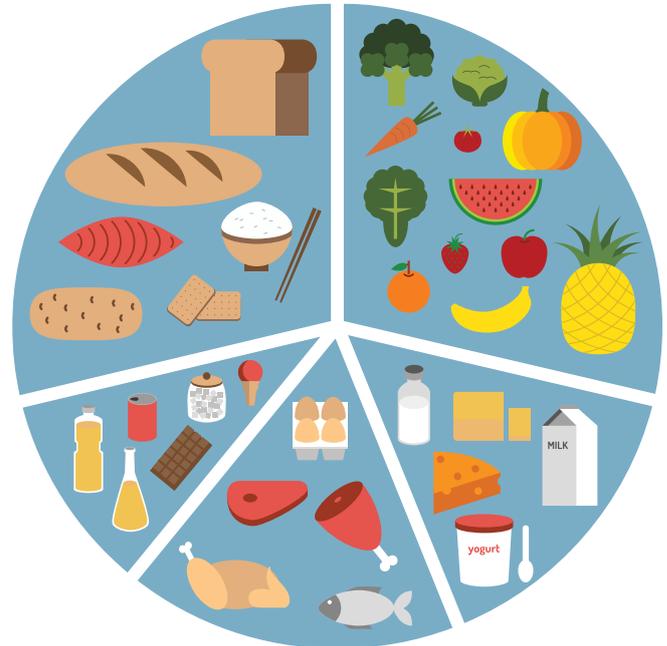
- vegetables
- fruit
- grain
- lean meats/chicken/fish/eggs/tofu/ beans/lentils
- milk/yogurt/cheese

Children need food from all of these groups each day but the food they should eat the most is vegetables. Don't push a baby or child to eat more food than they want to. Feeding children too much food is not good for them. Children that are overweight can become overweight adults. Some diseases occur more in people who are overweight.

Children should not be offered unhealthy food in FDC such as lollies, ice cream, soft drink, chips or pies.

- Give children water to drink. Do not give them soft drink or juice.

- Be careful of allergic reactions. Do not give children peanuts or peanut butter. Foods that children are most likely to have severe, life threatening allergic reactions to are milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, shellfish, wheat and soy (such as tofu).



Don't Break The Law

As a Family Day Care educator you have to follow special laws to look after children's health at Family Day Care. The main laws are the ***Education and Care Services Law***, and the ***Education and Care Services Regulations***.

The best way to get an understanding of the law and regulations is to talk to your FDC Provider. They will help you to understand the law.

The other way is to read the *Guide to the NQF*. You can find it at www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide



GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK



The most important parts of the law and regulations in regards to children's health require a FDC educator to:

- follow good health, hygiene and safe food practices (*Regulation 77*)
- make sure children can always get a drink of water and are offered food and drinks regularly (*Regulation 78*)
- make sure children can rest or sleep when they need to (*Regulation 81*)
- only give a child medicine or tablets when their parent has filled out a form (*Regulation 93*). You must also keep a record of when you give it to them (*Regulation 92*). (Your FDC Provider will give you the forms.)

- give a child asthma medication or use their epipen if you think they are having an asthma attack or an allergic reaction. Call their parents and an ambulance if you have to do this this (*Regulation 94*)
- hold a current approved first aid qualification and anaphylaxis and asthma management training. Tell your FDC Provider if yours is about to expire (*Regulation 136*)

If you break these laws and you are charged and found guilty by a court you can face fines. Not knowing what the law is does not excuse you.

The laws and regulations are designed to keep children safe while in your care.

Where to find out more

Want to know more about keeping children healthy in Family Day Care?



Ask

The NSW Department of Education Information and Enquiries Line. The Department is the Regulatory Authority for FDC services. Call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Read

Staying Healthy Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services

www.nswfdc.org.au/stayinghealthy

Read

The other booklets in these series

www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces

Guide to the National Quality Framework

www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide



Watch videos

www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces

Look at websites

www.fdcsupport.org.au

www.familydaycare.com.au

www.nswfdc.org.au



Read the curriculum

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (the curriculum for FDC and other early education and care services) has been translated into 11 different languages.

www.nswfdc.org.au/EYLF

The Framework for School Aged Care (the curriculum for FDC for school aged children) is available in English only.

www.nswfdc.org.au/MTOP





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