

# Birth to 3 hygiene resource

## Education – Prevention – Protection

High standards of hygiene are fundamental to protecting babies and young children in your care. The spread of infection and cross-contamination can be prevented through good hygiene practice and by maintaining a clean environment. The revised Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education, 2012) makes requirements for suitable hygienic changing facilities and safe and hygienic storage, preparation and serving of food for babies and young children. It also states:

*'Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so [and] all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene' (p22).*

To book a course go to <http://learning.myoxfordshire.gov.uk> and search using the keyword 'catering'.

Here is some guiding information for raising awareness of hygiene issues and improving practice amongst all staff caring for babies and young children in Oxfordshire early years settings.

### Cleaning

#### Cleaning materials

- Use cleaning materials properly by following the manufacturer's instructions and choosing the right materials for the job:
- **Detergents**, such as washing up liquids are designed to dissolve grease, oil and dirt
- **Disinfectants**, such as bleach, are designed to kill germs. These are very strong agents and should be used with care.
- **Anti-bacterial cleaners** are types of disinfectant and can kill germs. They often come in spray form.
- Always clean surfaces first with detergent to remove any grease and dirt, then apply disinfectant to kill any remaining germs.

### **Cleaning cloths**

- It is good practice to use disposable cloths or paper towels.
- Where this is not practicable, use separate colour-coded cloths or sponges for different tasks.
- Wash cloths in hot water and soap after each use, then place in a suitable disinfectant, rinse thoroughly and allow to dry.
- Change cloths at least once a week.
- Always use clean or freshly washed dishcloths and tea towels.

### **Nappy changing mats**

- Use antibacterial wipes or antibacterial spray to clean the mat after each use.
- If the mat gets soiled then it should first be washed in detergent and hot water and dried thoroughly.
- Throw away the mat if damaged or cracked.
- Always adhere to your setting's nappy changing procedure which should reflect an up-to-date Health and Safety policy and legislation.

### **Toilets and potties**

- Toilets should be cleaned and disinfected every day. Wipe the toilet handles.
- Toilets should be flushed after each use and the seats cleaned as needed.
- Potties should be rinsed and disinfected after each use.
- Always empty the potty down the toilet, not the sink.

### **Rubbish**

- Rubbish bins should be emptied daily.
- Use a lidded bin and a bin liner.
- Clean the lids and bins, inside and out, with hot water and disinfectant - they get dirty even with the use of a bin liner.

### **Food preparation and eating areas**

- Wipe high chairs, bibs and all eating areas with a suitable detergent and disinfectant, before and after each meal.
- Sweep the floor in the eating area after each meal.
- Clean kitchen surfaces after each use; be prepared to 'clean as you go'.
- Disinfect taps, fridge and door handles daily.
- Sweep and wash floors at the end of each day.
- A sink used for food preparation should not be used for any other purpose.

### Feeding equipment

- Infant feeding bottles and teats must be cleaned between uses.
- If the child is 12 months or less, or prone to infection, bottles and teats must be cleaned in detergent and hot water and then sterilised.
- Use a bottle brush for thorough cleaning. Ensure that bottle brushes are disinfected daily in sterilising solution or in the top rack of a dishwasher.

### Dummies\*

- Always wash and sterilise a baby's dummy that has fallen onto the floor before putting it back into the baby's mouth.
- Once babies are weaned onto solids, washing dummies in hot water and detergent is safe enough.
- Using a dummy clip can help avoid repeated drops on the floor.
- \*See [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk) website for advice on advantages and disadvantages of using dummies.

### Toys and play equipment

- Toys should be cleaned and disinfected once a week if they are shared with other children.
- If any toys are soiled, then they must be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
- Mouthed toys should be washed daily.
- Plastic toys can be wiped using a sterilising solution or a food safe antibacterial spray.
- Soft toys can usually be cleaned in a washing machine (check manufacturer instructions).
- Damaged, worn or dirty toys that cannot be washed should be thrown away.

### The environment

- Check how well the cleaners do the cleaning throughout the environment. Make a list of tasks and create a cleaning schedule to be followed.
- Check that all the floor and carpeted areas are swept and washed daily.
- Ensure different mops and buckets are used for cleaning toilet, kitchen and play area floors.
- Ensure stains are removed from carpets.
- Keep all areas where babies like to crawl extra clean.
- Keep play surfaces, creative areas and interest displays clean and well presented.
- Remove paint and pen marks from tables.
- Water trays should be emptied, washed and dried at the end of each session.

## Blood and body fluid spillages

- All spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, nasal and eye discharges should be cleaned up immediately with detergent and disinfectant.
- Use disposable paper towels for mopping up the spills and discard as clinical waste.
- Disposable gloves and aprons must be worn when dealing with the spillages.
- Soiled children's clothing should be put into a disposable bag to go home.
- Soiled linen should be washed separately on the hottest cycle.
- In cases of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, the recommended exclusion is 48 hours from the last episode.

## Personal hygiene: hand washing

### Did you know?

- Some germs can stay alive on our hands for up to three hours and in that time they can be spread to other things we touch - including food and other people.
- The number of germs on your fingertips doubles after using the toilet.
- Millions of germs live under watches, bracelets and rings.
- There can be 50,000 germs living on a 1mm hair follicle
- 1000 times as many germs spread from damp hands than dry hands.

### Washing hands

#### The simplest way to minimise the spread of infection is hand washing.

- The recommended method is to use liquid soap, water and paper towels.
- Use of gloves does not eliminate the need for staff to wash their hands.
- **It is important to wash and dry your hands throughout a day and especially**
  - **before:** preparing food, helping children to eat, looking after babies, caring for the sick, changing dressings, giving medicines, starting work;
  - **between:** handling raw foods, such as meat, fish, eggs, fruit and vegetables and touching any other food or kitchen utensils;
  - **after:** preparing and serving food and drinks, handling waste/emptying rubbish bins, going to the toilet, changing nappies, helping children with toileting, caring for the sick, especially those with gastro-intestinal problems, coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose while preparing food, wiping children's noses/faces, handling toys that have been mouthed, handling or stroking pets or farm animals, cleaning cat litter, gardening.

## Teaching children about hygiene and how to wash their hands helps prevent the spread of infection and protects children in your care.

- It is important to get all children into a good habit of washing their hands and to teach them about hand-washing from the earliest age.
- Children should be helped to wash their hands with soap and running water for 5-10 seconds (sing 'Row, row, row your boat' once).
- It is recommended to use individual paper towels for drying hands.
- **Children must wash and dry their hands**
- **before:** eating or handling food
- **after:** using the toilet, having their nappy changed, coughing and sneezing, using or disposing of tissues, eating if feeding themselves, touching pets, playing in the garden, messy activities.

Follow the link for a free 'Healthy Teddy Says Wash Your Hands' poster  
<http://www.comiccompany.co.uk/?category=21&collection=309&code=888>

Toy Guard website: <http://www.toyguard.co.uk> provides a range of downloadable fact sheets and guides that contain valuable tips and advice on best hygiene practice, common ailments and children's resources.

## Food safety and hygiene

### Storage and food preparation

- Always follow instructions on storage, preparation and cooking times and temperatures for all foods.
- Check date marks and safety seals on ready-made foods, discard as necessary.
- Defrost frozen foods thoroughly in the fridge or microwave, unless the label states otherwise.
- Do not leave perishable food at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Keep perishable foods, including those brought from home, in a fridge or cool place below 8C.
- If food is to be eaten warm it should be re-heated until piping hot (70C) for 2 minutes and then cooled down before serving.
- Store any extra food prepared (but not served) in a clean and covered container in the coldest part of the fridge (0-5 degrees) and use within 48 hours.
- Never leave food in open tins.

## Food preparation hygiene

- Wash and dry your hands before any food preparation.
- Avoid preparing food if you are unwell.
- Do not sneeze or cough near foods.
- Use waterproof dressings to cover up cuts and sores (blue plasters are advisable).
- Do not change nappies while in the process of preparing food.

## Mealtimes

- Fruits and vegetables to be eaten raw should be well washed before eating.
- Fruit and vegetables should be peeled for younger children.
- Throw away any unfinished drinks and food scraps left by the child.
- Any uneaten food which parents have brought in should be returned to them at the end of the day.
- Children must never be left alone while they are eating, in case they choke.
- Do not allow children to share cups, eating utensils or food.
- Utensils, not hands, should be used to cut up food or feed a child.

## Extra care for babies

### Wellbeing

- Babies who are bottled-fed should be held and have warm physical contact with an attentive adult while being fed.
- Babies should never be left propped up with bottles as this is both dangerous and inappropriate to babies' emotional needs.

### Feeding

- Bottle feeds should be made up using boiled water that is hotter than 70C. (This means water that has been boiled and left to cool for about 30 minutes).
- Artificial milk feeds should be made up fresh for each feed and left-over milk should be thrown away.
- The kettle should be filled with fresh tap water before boiling water for making up infant formula.
- When adding water to baby foods, milks and other drinks, always use cooled, boiled water.

**The Caroline Walker Trust** website: [www.cwt.org.uk](http://www.cwt.org.uk) is an excellent source of information on practical and nutritional guidelines for children under 5's in childcare ('Eating Well for Under-5s in Child Care' by Dr Helen Crawley) while [www.cwt-chew.org.uk](http://www.cwt-chew.org.uk) provides a great practical guide 'Eating well : first year of life', with lots of photographs of sample menus, information on portion sizes and a nutrition policy sample.

## References:

Department for Education (2012) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. London: Department for Education.

Harms T, Cryer D, Clifford R (2006) *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale*. (Revised Edition) New York: Teachers College Press.