

NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE HEALTH AND SAFETY BULLETIN

NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCE CENTER

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The NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center promotes safe and healthy environments for children in child care settings. Project Director: Dr. Jonathan Kotch, MD, MPH, FAAP.

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The Great, Great Outdoors



Most young children enjoy interacting with nature. They jump in puddles, climb rocks and inspect objects that interest them. They can discover plants and animals, get needed exercise, learn new skills and build friendships while playing outside. North Carolina has four distinct seasons and almost any weather provides opportunities for learning. Fortunately, most North Carolina days are perfectly suited for outdoor play, with good outdoor air quality as well as a temperate climate.

No one is too young or too old to enjoy the outdoors, although sometimes adults get too busy and preoccupied to connect with nature. Spending time outdoors, sitting still, doing breathing exercises or simply looking around helps bring focus to the present moment. The natural world is full of wonders that can feed all the senses.

Use outdoor time to experience life from a different perspective. Take time to learn from the children in addition to teaching them. Feel the sunshine, wind and rain. Hear the birds chirping. Notice shapes in the clouds and colors in the sky. Some of the best childhood memories are created

outdoors, whether finding a ladybug, building an imaginary world, tossing a ball around, or just wandering in the fresh air. Think back on time spent outdoors as a child. Mud was cool, squishy, a perfect medium for sculpting or making stew. Grass tickled toes. Swings became airplanes soaring in the sky.

Give children time and space to build their own childhood memories, time to explore for themselves. Share discoveries together, seeing the world from each other's view. When questions arise, provide answers or research the topic, engaging children in the process. When a group of children are very interested in a topic such as ant life or where water goes, follow their interests. Observe and record what is seen. Build or draw what is observed. Provide resources and support research.

New places and ideas add an element of adventure. If there is an open outdoor area like a creek or a park near the facility, investigate it. Walk the children over to experience the area. Supervise well. Offer guidance to maintain children's safety. Sometimes observing is best, sometimes touching and wandering are both safe and thrilling.

When children have a favorite game or activity inside, bring it outside and see what happens. Note how room for movement and loud voices can make a difference. Loose parts, such small tables and chairs, mats to sit on, art supplies, large blocks, cardboard boxes, dishes, trucks, dolls and toy animals make it easy to play anywhere.

This issue of the Bulletin offers ideas for getting out into the great outdoors: from improving infant play space to planning outdoor activities and active physical play. Let it be a starting a point, encouraging examination of current outdoor curriculum and excitement about integrating new ideas.



Planning Out

Being Prepared Makes for Safe Play

Safety A safe outdoor learning environment is one where all children can be easily supervised by early educators who are nearby, listening and watching children at play. It must have age appropriate toys and equipment. Infants and toddlers should have their own separate play area, away from equipment designed for preschool children. What is safe for preschoolers can be dangerous for infants and toddlers.

Check the outdoor environment daily for debris, vandalism, and broken equipment, as required by NC Child Care Rule .0604(n). Discard debris and immediately remove any hazards. A monthly, in-depth inspection is required by NC Child Care Rules .0605 (n) and .1721(b)(5). Eliminate all hazards and plan to repair or replace damaged toys or equipment.

Outdoor Clothes Check the forecast the day before to let families know how children should dress the next day. Consider keeping some extra outdoor clothes and rain gear on hand for both children and adults. Be sure that all children are dressed properly for the weather. Remember to use sunscreen year round for children 6 months and older.

Weather Infants and toddlers need to spend shorter periods of time outside in cold or hot weather (under 30° or over 90° degrees Fahrenheit.) Watch infants and non-verbal children closely for signs of cold or overheating. Children with asthma also need to be watched closely during extreme temperatures and when the air is too dry or humid. These conditions can trigger asthma attacks. Bring drinking water outside to keep children hydrated, especially when warmer weather arrives.

Air Quality Check the outdoor air quality. The air quality index (AQI) is usually available with the weather forecast. It can also be found by zip code at www.airnow.gov. When the air quality forecast is code orange or red, limit physical activity to the recommended times of day and shorter lengths of time. Code purple indicates very unhealthy air and code brown indicates hazardous air quality, which means staying indoors. Keep in mind that children are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution than adults. Their lungs are developing and they breathe more air per pound of body weight.



Planning Outdoor Activities

Plan activities appropriate for the seasonal weather. When planning major outdoor activities, have preschoolers help get materials ready ahead of time. Learning to help with preparation and clean-up provides children ways to be responsible for their environment.

Most indoor activities can be done outside. Sometimes all it takes is bringing a few things from the classroom outdoors. Sometimes just minds and bodies are enough. Here are a few examples.

I See... I Hear...

Help infants and toddlers learn about the outdoor environment by pointing things out to them. Say "I see--" and look around dramatically. Name and point out a tree, a flower, a squirrel or anything else in the surroundings. Toddlers may begin to play along and point things out themselves.

Encourage children to notice sounds.

Ask toddlers, "Can you make a sound like that car horn?" Look together for the sources of hidden sounds, like dripping water or a bird perched high up in a tree. Ask children to close their eyes and name the sounds they hear.

Nature Walk/Treasure Hunt

Go on a nature walk or treasure hunt to see how many interesting things young explorers can find. Ask toddlers and preschoolers open ended questions like, "What did you find? How does it feel when you touch it?" Describing what they see and feel helps build language skills. Educators can help children explore by providing simple tools such as shovels, magnifying glasses, and buckets or bags for collecting treasures. Preschoolers may enjoy using pencils and paper to draw or take pictures of what they see. On a stormy day, put together a list of items for children to find inside.



Reading Outside

Try having story time out under a tree. It may be easier and more fun for children to experience stories about animals and nature if they are outside themselves. Read *Birds*

by Kevin Henkes, *The Bears Picnic* by Stan and Jan Berenstain or one of the children's favorite books. Bring out resource books to help with activities such as bird watching, plant identification or applied math problems like, "One toy for each child. How many toys will we need?"



door Activities



Picnic Art!

Following lunch, try a picnic art activity. Repurpose empty and cleaned ketchup and mustard bottles by filling them with yellow and red paint. Let children squeeze the bottles with their fingers and drop paint onto construction paper. The children can enjoy "making a mess" on construction paper. With different color paper and scissors, educators can help make a paper sandwich, hot dog or salad. Children can also try tearing the paper to make different food combinations on their own.

Food for the Birds

Make a bird feeder out of a milk or juice carton that has been emptied and cleaned. Cut out two opposite sides and fold them down for the birds and birdseed to rest on. Have children decorate the carton. Hang the bird feeder next to a window so that children can see birds from outside or inside. Let the children refill the seeds as necessary. The act of feeding or caring for another living thing strengthens children's connection to nature. Use this opportunity to learn some simple, interesting facts about different types of birds. What do they eat? Where do they live? How do they survive in the wild?

Spish Splash

To help children become comfortable with self-care, try a bathing and dressing activity. Bring three or four dolls and basins outside. Fill a small basin with bath water for each doll. Have children carefully bathe and dress the dolls as they would bathe and dress themselves.

Look for doll clothes or old baby clothes with buttons, zippers and snaps so that children who are developmentally ready can learn how to use them. Some children may need clothes that are easier to put on, such as pants and skirts with elastic waist or shirts with Velcro closures. Encourage all children to take their time and go slowly if they get frustrated. If a child has too much trouble with a particular piece of clothing, give the child another clothing option.

This activity can be done inside as well, but taking it outside means that children are freer to splash and play. Set activity up



on a non-slippery surface. This way spills do not become slipping hazards. Have the children wash their hands when finished with the activity. Clean and sanitize each tub after it has been used by one child.

Active Play

The outdoor learning environment should have plenty of safe places for active physical play and exploration. Infants are required to have a minimum of 30 minutes outside each day. Toddlers and preschoolers should have at least sixty minutes of outdoor play each day. A portion of that time should be spent on active physical play to help build and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Being active also warms children in chilly weather. If a child is disabled and cannot do a particular activity, think of other ways for that child to participate and keep moving. For example, use a beach ball to play ball with children who have trouble controlling arm movements. Try having an Olympic event with several different activities to choose from or any of the suggestions below.



Rolling balls

Sit an infant on the ground. Roll a ball toward the infant. Encourage her/him to reach out and push the ball back. Roll the ball back and forth. Sing "This is the way we roll the ball, roll the ball, roll the ball..."

Obstacle course

Use objects in the outdoor environment, like piles of leaves, a climbing structure or a big tree to create an obstacle course.

If more obstacles are needed, bring some from inside. Have children go around one obstacle, jump over another, hop on one foot, etc. Take this opportunity to be creative and let children contribute their own ideas. Time each child and see how long it takes for everyone to get through the course.

Long jump

Draw a starting line in the dirt or on the blacktop with chalk. Have children jump far as they can. Mark the place where each child lands and measure the distance. Keep the totals so children can see if they jump further on another day.

References for pages 2-3:

- Childcare Lounge. *Let's Have a Preschool Picnic*. Retrieved January 27, 2014 from www.childcarelounge.com/activity/picnic.php
- Children's Environmental Health Network. *Eco Healthy Childcare. Air Quality*. Retrieved Thursday February 27, 2014 from www.cehn.org/files/Air_Quality_7_12.pdf
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- Mississippi State University. Early Childhood Institute. *Outdoor Activities*. Retrieved January 27 from www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/resources/pdfs/outdoor.pdf
- Penn State Extension. Better Kid Care. *101+ Ways to Keep Kids Busy* retrieved January 27, 2014 www.4shared.com/office/jOXsmplS/101_Ways_to_Keep_Kids_Busy.html
- Penn State Extension. Better Kid Care. *Children and Nature: Are we supporting the connection?* Retrieved December 10, 2013 from <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare/early-care/our-resources/tips/children-and-nature-are-we-supporting-the-connection>



I Love to Laugh.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

A sense of humor is learned behavior. Infants cannot fully understand humor, but they do begin to notice when adults are smiling and happy. When an early educator makes a funny face and laughs, an infant may sense that joy and imitate it. Most infants enjoy sensations and stimuli. Silly noises or gentle bouncing may bring a chuckle.

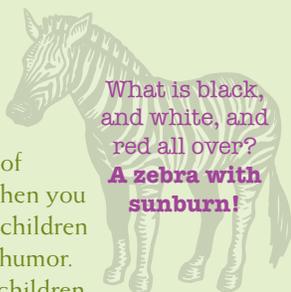


What's a cow's favorite place?
A moo-seum.

Toddlers appreciate physical humor. They often like to be surprised, as with a game of peek-a-boo, a funny noise,

or a puppet sneaking into view. As they learn new language skills, they enjoy nonsense words, rhymes, and simple jokes. Hold up a doll. Ask “Is he a bear? An alligator? A flower?” Then respond, “No, he’s a boy!”

Have preschoolers share a funny story or joke. Ask them, “Why was that so funny?” “What part of your body moves when you laugh?” Laugh with children when they attempt humor.



What is black, and white, and red all over?
A zebra with sunburn!

Take photos of the children being silly and create a “This is funny” book. Read humorous children’s books, such as *Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein.

While exploring humor, explain that some things are not funny. It is not okay to laugh

when someone is hurt or uncomfortable.

If a child makes fun of another child, explain why that is not funny. Offer other words for the child to try.



Knock knock
Who's there?

Boo

Boo who?

Why are you crying?

Kidshealth.org. Encouraging Your Child's Sense of Humor. Retrieved January 6 2014 from http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/child_humor.html#

Peveteaux, April. 7 Toddler Friendly Jokes to Make Them Squeal. Retrieved January 9, 2014 from http://thestir.cafemom.com/toddler/128084/7_toddler_friendly_jokes_to

March was

Bell Peppers and Broccoli Month

National Kite Month (3/29-5/23)

Optimism Month



7-13: National Public Health Week

26: Save the Frogs Day



May is

Clean Air Month

Employee Health and Fitness Month

National Mental Health Month

4-10: Be Kind to Animals Week

4-10: Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

23: Heat Safety Awareness Day

31: World No Tobacco Day



April is

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Global Child Nutrition Month

National Autism Awareness Month

National Minority Health Month

6-12: Week of the Young Child



Bulletin Board

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

The phrase “developmentally disabled” covers a very diverse group of people. Early educators help raise awareness by creating an inclusive, welcoming environment for children with any disabilities. Encourage children to ask questions about disabilities. Answer their questions simply and honestly. Too much information can overwhelm the children. In an inclusive classroom, early educators help children understand and appreciate differences as well as similarities. Celebrate the strengths and abilities of every child.



April 22, 2014 is Earth Day



Focus on the health of the planet. Early educators can help young children develop “green” attitudes and habits that benefit the environment. Talk with children about what they love about the planet Earth. Explore ways to keep it healthy.

- ♥ Have children name and draw their favorite animal and where the animal lives. Ask questions like, “How will a squirrel find nuts if they are covered with trash?” “What do you do with your trash?” “What is your favorite outdoor place? Why?” Explore the idea of children taking care of the earth.
- ♥ Read *The Three R's: Reuse, Reduce, Recycle* by Nuria Roca.
- ♥ Start simple by recycling paper in the classroom. Suggest that families try reusable containers such as cloth bags instead of disposable plastic ones.

Come Out and Play!!



During outdoor play children engage their minds, bodies, and imaginations. They use large muscles for scooting, crawling, climbing, running, swatting, and throwing. This helps build strength, endurance and coordination. Outdoors,

children can experiment freely with their voices. They can be messy, digging in sand and dirt, creating exciting adventures. They can be scientists learning about bugs, plants, stars, and weather. Remember being outdoors as a child?

When children are outside they can observe and explore. They might watch the water flow in a creek and then experiment by building a dam of rocks. Did it change the way the water flowed? Infants might like to listen to the sound of the water running. Toddlers can throw leaves, twigs, and stones into the creek and see what happens.

Children and adults can engage in imaginary play. They might climb into a fairy home under the low branches of a tree. Tree stumps, bushes, puddles and other natural "props" enhance play. Active physical play outdoors. It helps maintain a healthy body weight and system, the body's defense against illness. Children often reduce stress during active free play. Adults may find their moods improved. "Race you to the top of the hill!"



Some days it might seem too hot or cold to play outside. Sometimes it might seem inconvenient or even worrisome. Questions arise. Is it worth it? Are there real advantages to being outdoors? It is safe to spend time outdoors most days in North Carolina. On days when the temperature is colder than 30°F or above 90°F, or when the air quality is poor, limit time outdoors. Go out when the temperature or air quality is most favorable. Try spending 15 minutes of family time outdoors each day for three weeks. Think about the effects that time together outdoors had on everyone. Try it for another three weeks. Soon it will become an enjoyable habit.

Family Support for Getting Outside in Child Care

NC Child Care Rules .0508 and .1718 specify that preschool children in child care should have a minimum an hour of time outdoors every day, weather permitting. Children less than 2 years of age and children in care for less than four hours in a day should have a minimum 30 minutes outdoors each day. "Weather permitting" refers to appropriate temperature, air quality, and precipitation for outdoor learning activities and play. Families can help early care and education programs get outdoors in the following ways.

- Leave an extra set of clothes, a jacket, and rain boots in your child's cubby.
- Donate outgrown coats, raincoats, and boots so the program has extras available.
- Check the weather and dress your child in the appropriate clothes.
- Sign written permission slips for sunscreen and insect repellents. See NC Child Care Rules .0803(7) and .1720(c)(7). Bring sunscreen and insect repellent.



Reference:
American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition*. Retrieved March 21, 2014 from <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/3.1.3.2>.

Open the Door to Outdoor Learning: One Center's Story

A Day Outside

The sun is shining, birds are singing.
The sounds of laughter, children playing.
C'mon kids, it's a beautiful morning.
Let's go outside and play.

~ Deborah Ashdown



Many infant educators are looking for ways to make outdoor play more accessible in the daily curriculum. The benefits of fresh air and exposure to the natural world contribute to infant physical development and learning. Because routine care often takes much staff time and attention, the challenges of getting children outside can seem overwhelming at first.

Take another look at the schedule and space to find simple ways to support outdoor play. Arrange the schedule so that infants can be taken outdoors in small groups rather than all at once. Examine all entrances and exits for ways to promote access. For example, try replacing even small sets of stairs with a ramp or creating play areas adjacent to the classroom. Store equipment and materials in areas that teachers can easily access when supervising outdoor activity.

Director Vonda Krueger talks here about the steps her center took to make the outdoor environment easier to get to and better suited to developmentally appropriate play for infants. This is how her center made their dream a reality.



Creating an appropriate outdoor learning environment for the infants in our care required thoughtful planning, much trial and error, and more planning. The result was worth all the effort. Our new infant outdoor learning environment better supports

the work of the early educators on staff and the development of the children in care.

Initially, our playground for infants consisted of four infant swings. We had no active play area and no materials to stimulate active play. When it rained, the infant outdoor area would stay wet for days.

We needed a way to make a smooth transition from indoors to outside. We needed appropriate equipment and toys. Our initial goals were:

- 1) easy access
- 2) shaded space
- 3) safety
- 4) stimulation and
- 5) storage



For easy access we built a ramp that leads directly from the classroom to the outdoor learning environment. Infants are generally rolled out in the evacuation crib. Crawling and toddling infants sometimes use this ramp independently, with no need to

navigate stairs. To provide shade we installed an awning over a large cement slab covered with outdoor carpet. By adding wooden railings infants can pull up to a stand and practice cruising. We attached toys to the railings which younger infants also enjoy.

Infant teachers love the fact that the area under the awning is large enough to spread quilts for non-mobile infants to be on while enjoying outdoor play. Mobile children have the freedom to crawl or walk in the grassy areas. A bench under the awning provides space for mothers to nurse on their lunch breaks. Teachers use it to bring bottle feeding outside.



Because we understand infants need freedom to move and toys to stimulate play, we removed the infant swings. The swing frame now supports beach balls, wind chimes, and wind socks. Children can pull up or toddle to these toys.



A shed opens directly into the fenced area. It provides storage space for the equipment and toys needed to meet all the developmental domains – from books to push toys. Toys that are typically used inside (musical instruments, dramatic play, storybooks) can easily be brought outside to enrich play.

Response from parents, staff and children has been very positive and rewarding!

Vonda Krueger, Director
KLINGSPOR Sandbox Childcare Center
Hickory NC



SCRUB-A-DUB-DUB! WASH YOUR HANDS!



Wash, wash, wash your hands
 Get them nice and clean
 Wash them on top
 Wash them on bottom and fingers in between

Handwashing helps prevent the spread of germs that cause illness. Repeat the message often. Encourage children to develop this healthy habit. Model handwashing every time and make it fun!

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Help infants and young toddlers explore their hands. Games such as “pat-a-cake” develop hand-eye coordination. Fingerplays delight toddlers over and over again. Try: *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*, *Open-Shut Them*, and *Where is Thumbkin?*
- Toddlers can finger paint on a table top, tray or cookie sheet. Help young artists scribble with their fingertips or move their hands and arms in big circular motions.
- Older toddlers take pleasure in flattening play dough with a rolling pin. Cut hand shapes using cookie cutters or make a hand print in the play dough and cut around it with a plastic play knife.
- Post a handwashing poster. Talk about each step. Do the steps together. Scrub-a-dub! Watch the bubbles go down the drain. Even little hands can throw a used paper towel away.

PRESCHOOLERS

- Let children dot the backs of their hands with washable markers. The dots represent dirt and germs. The more marks, the better! Have children wash their hands with soap and water, scrubbing for 20 seconds. Wash wrists, under nails and between fingers. They can check for “germs” with a magnifying glass. Who has the cleanest hands?
- How long is 20 seconds? Involve children in choosing or creating a “handwashing song.” Using a timer, sing the song together for exactly 20 seconds while washing. Then rinse. Try a new song each month. Fa la la!
- Take a picture of one child doing a messy activity. Next, photograph the child washing his/her messy hands. Do this with several children. In an album, arrange the photos with the child doing an activity followed by the picture of the child handwashing. Before and after! Together, add words to tell the story. Read *The Handwashing Book* often!



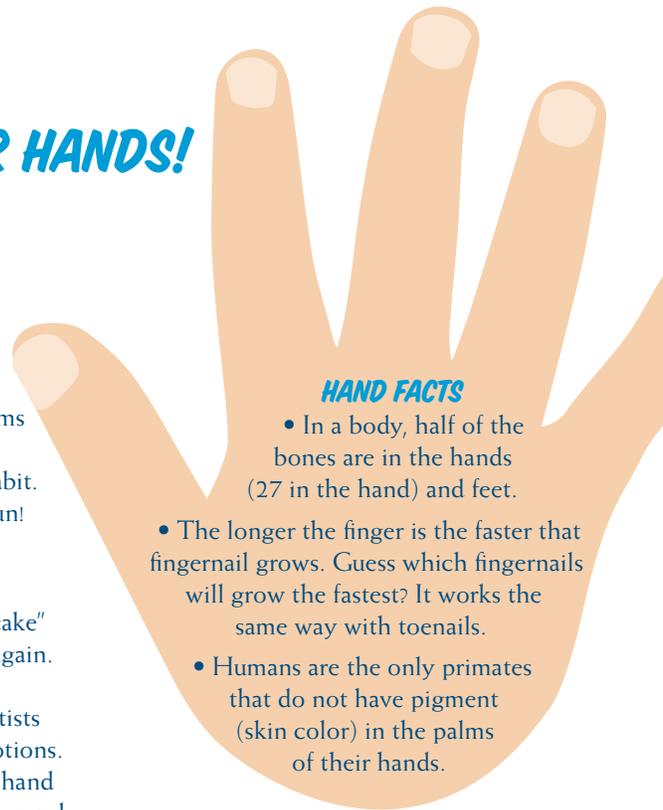
WHY DOES HANDWASHING WORK?

People spread germs if they have not washed them off their hands.

- Touching eyes, nose, or mouth gives germs an easy route into the body.
- Touching objects, food, and each other passes the germs along to others.

Handwashing prevents the spread of infections such as diarrhea, flu, and pink eye.

1. Turn on the water and wet hands. - *Running water washes germs away.*
Warm water is more comfortable.
2. Use soap. - *Soap lifts dirt and germs from the skin.*
3. Scrub for 20 seconds. - *Removes more germs. Scrub both sides of hands, wrist, between fingers, and under fingernails.*
4. Rinse for 10 seconds under running water. - *Sends germs down the drain.*
5. Dry hands. - *Keeps the hands from getting chapped.*
6. Turn off the water with a paper towel and discard the towel. - *Prevents contamination from germs on the faucet.*



HAND FACTS

- In a body, half of the bones are in the hands (27 in the hand) and feet.
- The longer the finger is the faster that fingernail grows. Guess which fingernails will grow the fastest? It works the same way with toenails.
- Humans are the only primates that do not have pigment (skin color) in the palms of their hands.



Children's Books on Handwashing

Clean Hands, Dirty Hands
(Sing and Read: Healthy Habits)
 by Jo Cleland 2012



Germs Are Not for Sharing
 by Elizabeth Verdick 2006



Hands Can
 by Cheryl Willis Hudson 2007



Show Jo How to Wash Your Hands
 by Charlie Buckley 2007



Infant/Toddler



Preschool – School-age

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Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Show Me the Science - How to Wash Your Hands*. Retrieved March 17, 2014 from www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-handwashing.html.

Kids Health. *Why is Handwashing So Important*. Retrieved February 17, 2014 from http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sick/hand_washing.html



Healthy
Child Care
North Carolina

POSTMASTER: Please deliver as soon as possible – time dated material enclosed

Ask the Resource Center

Q. *Three children in my center have Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease. Two local doctors sent notes saying the children can attend my center while they have symptoms. I would prefer that children stay home until their symptoms are gone. Why are children allowed to come to the center when they are contagious?*



A. Excluding children with Hand, Foot and Mouth disease (HFMD) will not reduce the spread of the disease. Some children with HFMD do not have symptoms but can spread the virus. Others shed the virus in their stool for weeks after symptoms disappear. Only exclude a child with HFMD when

- The child has a fever greater than 100°F (taken under the arm)
- The child is too sick to participate and staff cannot meet the child's needs while caring for other children.

Children excluded for these reasons may need to be seen by their health care provider.

HFMD is generally a mild viral infection that can occur at any time. It is caused by coxsackievirus A16 and enterovirus 71. While some children with HFMD have no symptoms, most have one or more of the following symptoms.

- Tiny, sometimes painful, blisters in the mouth and throat
- Blister or red rash on the fingers, palm of hands, soles of the feet
- Children who are preverbal may stop eating and drinking or eat or drink less often
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough
- More rarely, vomiting and diarrhea

HFMD incubates in the body for 3-6 days. After symptoms begin, it spreads in respiratory droplets for 1-3 weeks and in stool for weeks to months.

The best way to reduce the spread of HFMD is to have children and adults consistently use good coughing, sneezing, and hand hygiene. Take special care with handwashing after diapering, toileting, and handling tissues soiled with nasal secretions. Families of all children in the affected classrooms should know what symptoms to look for and when to seek medical advice.

Reference: Editors Aronson, Susan and Shope, Timothy. *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools*, 3rd Edition. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2013.

HEALTH BULLETIN

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