



Links

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 77, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 162
National Quality Standard: 2.2.2

Policy statement

Tropics Early Learning aims to ensure that all children, employees and families are provided with a high level of protection while they are at the service. We understand that in care and education services there is a higher contact with other people, and therefore children, staff and families are more likely to come into contact with infectious illnesses.

We also understand that at times families may find balancing the challenges of children's illnesses and work/study commitments very difficult, however, our aim is to minimise the spread of infectious illnesses and protect all people within the service environment. We will make every effort to accommodate children in the event that they become ill while in our care, however will also endeavour to help minimise infection by asking families to keep sick children at home.

Implementation

Identifying symptoms of illness

Our educators will be on alert for signs and symptoms that may suggest that a child is unwell, and may need medical attention. Some of these symptoms may include:

- High fever
- Drowsiness or lethargy, and decreased activity
- Breathing difficulties
- Poor circulation – pale looking, hands and feet cold/or blue
- Poor appetite
- Poor urine output
- Red or purple rash
- A stiff neck or sensitivity to light
- Pain

Responding to a child who seems unwell

Children may become sick while attending the service, in these cases the following procedures will be followed:

- If a child complains about feeling ill, or an educator suspects a child is ill, the child will be encouraged to sit down with a drink of water, for a period of 15 – 30 minutes, while being monitored by an educator.
- If, after this time, the child still displays symptoms of illness, the child's guardian will be contacted, and advised to collect their child from the service.
- The child's guardian will also be contacted, and advised to collect their child from the service if:
 - the child has two or more loose bowel movements
 - the child has developed a temperature of 38°C or higher, and displays other symptoms of illness, such as lethargy.
 - the child has vomited

- Educators will keep the child comfortable, eg, give them a cushion or mattress to lie on, away from the main group of children, while they wait to be collected.
- Record the child's symptoms on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness form, giving a copy to the child's family/medical practitioner if required.
- If the child appears very unwell and needs urgent medical attention an ambulance will be called.
- If a parent/guardian has been asked to collect their child, and the child is not collected in a timely manner or the parent/guardian has refused to collect the child, the family will receive a notice that the child's enrolment may be cancelled if this policy is breached again.
- The Nominated Supervisor may request that a medical certificate be provided stating that the child is no longer infectious, if there are concerns that the child had not yet recovered from the infectious disease. The decision to approve a child's return is made by the Director or, in the Director's absence, the Responsible Person in day to day charge of the service.

Managing a child with fever

- A fever is usually caused by an infection somewhere in the body, either viral or bacterial. Fever is not harmful, and helps the child's body fight the infection.
- If the child's temperature is greater than 38°C, it is considered to be a fever.
- If a child has a fever, and appears unwell, the child's parent/guardian, or an authorised nominee, will be contacted and asked to collect the child from the Service.
- If a child has a fever, and shows no other symptoms, the child's parent/guardian will be notified, and the child's temperature monitored. If symptoms begin to appear, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted again, and asked to collect their child.
- Steps that will be taken to help cool a child include:
 - remove excess clothing and shoes
 - give clear cool fluids to drink
 - lay the child quietly in a cool place
- Paracetamol, or over the counter medications will not be administered without written advice from a medical practitioner, as these can mask the child's symptoms, and may cause adverse health problems if used over time, or incorrectly.
- If paracetamol is to be administered, the Administration of Authorised Medication Policy will be followed. Educators will administer the dose according to either the instruction on the bottle, the advice of the doctor, or according to the child's Management of Medical Conditions Action and Minimisation Plan.
- Monitor the child's temperature every 15 minutes, recording the readings on the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness form.

Exclusion of ill children and staff

The aim of exclusion is to reduce the spread of infectious disease. The less contact there is between people who are infectious, and those that are at risk of catching the disease, the less chance there is of the disease spreading. The exclusion of ill children and staff is an effective way to limit the spread of infection in the Service.

- If a child is unwell at home, families should keep them at home. Do not bring them to the service.
- Unwell staff members should not report for work. If unwell, they should contact the Nominated Supervisor at the earliest possible time to advise of their inability to come to work.
- We will follow the exclusion recommendations as set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council (refer to Staying Healthy 5th ed), and the Northern Territory department of Health.
- A notice will be sent via the Xplor communication platform, notifying all families of any incidences of infectious diseases in the service, the symptoms, and exclusion periods. If necessary, we will also notify families via email, or another communication platform.

- Children who are not fully immunised will be excluded from the service during an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease.
- Upon being notified that a child in the Service has a vaccine preventable disease, we will contact the Northern Territory Department of Health – Disease Control on 8922 8044 to obtain specialist advice on what should be done, exclusion periods, and possible exclusion of contacts.

Sources: *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011; National Quality Standard; NHMRC – Staying Healthy, Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, Department of Health NT; Work Health and Safety Act 2011; <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/fever-and-high-temperature-in-children>*

Policy Redeveloped January 2023 (this policy replaces the Sick Children Policy, see archived policies for previous versions)

Date of review	Modifications made	Approved
January 2023	Redeveloped policy	February 2023