

Proper Hygiene Procedures in Nurseries

Small children can be an inexhaustible source of germs—whatever they do, wherever they go, they attract germs. Because children have an exceptional affinity for getting dirty, germs run rampant in nurseries.

As a nursery owner or manager, you are responsible for managing the serious threat of germs and the infections they cause in your facility. And the endless cycle of children entering and exiting your nursery guarantees that this threat will never completely subside.

To combat germs in such an environment, you and your staff must adopt a suitable and consistent approach to ensuring hygiene. Even one lapse in proper hygiene procedures by just one employee can unleash an infection on the whole nursery. To keep your nursery hygienic and your employees consistent, heed the following guidance.

Hygiene Procedures You Need to Know

Hygiene procedures are practices that reduce germs to a level that does not threaten health. This does not include routine cleaning such as sweeping or vacuuming.

Routine cleaning, like hygiene procedures, is required to meet your legal obligation of keeping nursery premises and equipment clean. But hygiene procedures go beyond routine cleaning, which only removes dirt and debris, in order to significantly reduce or eliminate germ levels. Especially during an outbreak of an infection, hygiene procedures are essential. Hygiene procedures are generally sorted into the following three categories:

1. **Cleaning** – Using a cleaning product and hot water is usually sufficient to remove germs from small items such as cooking utensils, cutlery and crockery. However, you must wash all surfaces of items and rinse them thoroughly with running water. Cleaning is only effective for disinfecting smaller items and not for large, fixed surfaces because you cannot rinse them properly.

You must manage the threat of germs in your facility. And the endless cycle of children in your nursery guarantees this threat will never completely subside.

2. **Heating** – Washing items such as clothes, cleaning cloths and other fabrics at a high temperature is an effective way to decontaminate. Heating also applies to thorough cooking, which reduces food contamination to levels that are safe for human consumption. A good rule of thumb: the higher the temperature, the more germs are killed.
3. **Disinfecting** – Disinfecting the entire nursery is not necessary—resort to disinfecting methods when there is a risk that a surface could become a source of infection and heating or cleaning methods are inadequate or impractical. This could include using disinfectants on large or fixed surfaces that cannot be rinsed properly with running water and surfaces contaminated by potentially infectious fluids. During an outbreak of infection, it may be prudent to use disinfectant on

Provided by Pound Gates

The content of this Risk Insights is of general interest and is not intended to apply to specific circumstances. It does not purport to be a comprehensive analysis of all matters relevant to its subject matter. The content should not, therefore, be regarded as constituting legal advice and not be relied upon as such. In relation to any particular problem which they may have, readers are advised to seek specific advice. Further, the law may have changed since first publication and the reader is cautioned accordingly. © 2014 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.

Proper Hygiene Procedures in Nurseries

other potentially contaminated surfaces. When using disinfectants, remember that their germ-killing strength varies—choose products that rapidly kill a wide range of germs and work on the contaminated surface. Follow the manufacturer's directions carefully to get the product's full germ-killing power.

What Your Nursery Needs to Do

Nursery owners or managers should know and apply the most effective hygiene procedures and routinely remind employees to do the same. Require employees to record the hygiene procedures they perform. This helps you make sure employees are applying hygiene procedures correctly and provides written proof that you are complying with childcare hygiene requirements.

To comply with the relevant childcare regulatory authority (The Office of Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in England, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales, the Care Inspectorate in Scotland and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in Scotland), accomplish the following:

- Obtain information from your area's public health authority, and stay up to date on current recommendations.
- Train new and old employees on proper hygiene procedures.
- Use notices, posters and staff meetings to promote good hygiene.
- Display addresses and telephone numbers of crucial health contacts, such as the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- Keep a record of any children or employees who become ill at the nursery and the actions taken.
- Maintain a list of notifiable diseases, and ensure that all employees know how to alert the relevant authority in the event of a disease outbreak.

- Alert the relevant authority if any notifiable diseases pop up in your nursery.
- Consult the relevant regulatory authority promptly if two or more children develop food poisoning.
- Check that the premises are clean and safe before the children arrive every single day.
- Establish daily routines and checklists for cleaning the premises, toilets, kitchens and nappy-changing areas.
- Devise a system for routine cleaning of toys, furnishings, sand, ball pits and other equipment.
- Include hygiene, cleanliness and infection risks in your risk assessments and review them regularly.

Safety Requires Hygiene

Hygiene is an indispensable part of safety—you cannot operate a safe nursery without making sure it is hygienic. But hygiene is not a requirement managed with a single action. Hygiene is an everyday responsibility—one that never goes away. To fulfil your responsibility, trust the insurance professionals at Pound Gates to provide you with the latest and most thorough resources on workplace health, safety and hygiene.