

## University Child Development Center

### Illness Policy

The need to send an ill child home during the day does arise and it is best to think about a backup plan for care. The Center and parents share responsibility for the health of children enrolled. Illness policies are in place to ensure that children who are unable to participate in group care due to illness get the medical attention or parent interaction that they need. They also limit the spread of illness and germs and support a safe and healthy environment for the many different individuals that come into our building.

#### **Center's responsibilities include:**

- Identifying an ill child or staff person
- Informing the child's parents/guardians
- Reporting exposures to other parents and staff as well as the proper health agencies if the type of illness necessitates this

#### **Parents/guardian's responsibilities include:**

- Assuming the responsibility of keeping a child home if there is any doubt about the child's fitness to participate in activities in the Center
- Reporting exposure to a communicable disease (chicken pox, strep throat, lice, etc.) to classroom teachers or the Director
- Providing any information that will help classroom teachers make adequate decisions regarding children's health
- Arriving promptly after receiving a phone call about a child's need to be excluded from care

***In the interest of other children and adults, the following symptoms will be designated as symptoms of impending or existing illness and children will need to be excluded from care.***

- **Vomiting**- once with an additional symptom, or two times without an additional symptom
- **Uncontrolled diarrhea**- frequent loose or watery stools compared to child's normal pattern. (Excluding breastfed infants who normally have frequent unformed and somewhat water stools) Stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for a child. Loose bowels could be accompanied by abdominal cramps, fever and generally not feeling well
- **Severe coughing**- rapid and/or difficult breathing, wheezing
- **Fever**- flushing, tired, irritable behavior, noticeable changes in child's behavior, children are unable to participate in typical activities
  - Children under 4 months of age - 100 degrees axillary (armpit)
  - Children over 4 months of age - 100 with an additional symptom (rash, vomiting, diarrhea, glandular swelling, severe cold symptoms, unusual fatigue or irritability, inability to participate, not eating)
  - Children over 4 months of age - 101 with no additional symptom
- **Mouth sores**- with drooling, unless a health professional determines the child's condition is not from a communicable disease

- **Unidentified skin rash** - until a health professional determines the child's condition is not from a communicable disease
- **Pink eye** with white or yellow discharge
- **Glandular swelling/severe sore throat** with fever
- Scabies, head lice or other **parasitic infestation** until child is treated and the child is nit-free
- **Contagious illnesses** that can easily be spread from one child to another
- Extreme **lethargy, inability to participate** in group activities because of irritability or the necessity for increased individualized attention beyond what caregivers typically provide.

The state of Pennsylvania requires that a child with symptoms of a communicable disease or infection, that can be transmitted directly or indirectly and which may threaten the health of children in care, **shall be excluded from attending a childcare center until the center receives notification from a physician or nurse practitioner that the child is no longer considered a threat to the health of others.**

Therefore, each child must come back to school with a note from the doctor documenting the illness and stating that the child is no longer contagious and is able to return to child care.

In the event that an antibiotic treatment is required, the child must have received the treatment for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Children should also be symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of OTC (over the counter) medications or fever reducing medication before returning to the Center (5.A.05. 10.D.01)

### **How to help your child feel better:**

**Diarrhea:** Bacterial or viral infections, parasites, food borne illnesses, and taking antibiotics are some of the reasons that your child may develop symptoms of a stomach illness which includes diarrhea.

- Begin by drinking clear liquids like water, ginger ale, broth or Pedialyte. Make sure that you are getting enough fluids to prevent dehydration
- When liquids are well tolerated begin to include bananas, rice, applesauce, toast and yogurt. These foods are typically well tolerated by someone who is managing an intestinal illness

**Fever:** Fever is thought to help interfere with the growth of some infections and help boost the body's immune system response. The American Academy of Pediatrics describes fever as "a positive sign that the body is fighting infection."

- Giving your child extra fluids to drink, a lukewarm sponge bath, and dressing your child in less clothing.
- Common fever reducers that you can give to children include acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil), although ibuprofen is usually only given to infants over six months of age. Remember that aspirin should not be given to children and teens because of the risk of Reye's syndrome.

**What to do while your child recovers:**

- Coloring on different types of paper and different shapes of paper
- Looking at photo albums or family pictures
- Puzzles
- Magna doodles
- A small tray with a few blocks or Legos
- Keep a small basket or bin that includes items that your child may not have seen or used. Including age appropriate magazines, new books, a new set of markers or pencils, small tablets or note cards, stickers, and other assorted items. Use this only when your child isn't feeling well. Rotate materials as necessary.
- Read stories out loud to your child. If your child is older you can begin to read small chapter books
- A small chalk board or white board
- Busy boards for younger children
- Stringing beads
- Sorting activities for older children
- Simple to more complex board games
- Concentration and memory games