

Illness Guidelines

Day Nursery's responsibilities for providing group childcare include taking care to limit the spread of illness. While the staff members cannot prevent all illnesses, they can reduce incidences of illness and severity, and families can help by encouraging good health and hygiene habits, as well as keeping children at home when he or she shows signs of possible illness. It is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; sick children may not be brought to the center. The center staff members have the right to refuse a child who appears ill.

Daily Health Check

Upon entering the center each day, Day Nursery staff will make an informal "well child check" of each child. Staff members will assess each child for obvious illness such as drainage from eyes or nose, rash, fever, cough, or general lethargy, which could signal illness. Parents will generally be the first ones to observe signs of illness in their child, and are encouraged to help look out for the welfare of ALL the children by keeping children home at the signs of illness. Parents and guardians are asked to let the staff know of any changes in their child's behavior, eating or sleeping habits. In accordance with PA OCDEL requirements, children cannot be accepted into our center if they exhibit obvious signs or symptoms of illness.

How to Decide When to Keep Your Child At Home

Although everyone tries their best to prevent children from becoming ill, it is not uncommon for children to share illnesses. The center is for well children. Children who are sick have a difficult time functioning because they do not have the energy to cope with other children and the activities of the program, and the staff cannot care for the sick child without interfering with the needs of the other children. The Day Nursery staff members realize that parents do not want to miss work or school, but expect that parents make their children their main priority, and remember that it is important for an ill child to stay home, rest, and get well.

If a child becomes ill during the day, parents/guardians will be contacted and must immediately make arrangements to pick up their child, within an hour. Listed below are the guidelines that Day Nursery uses for the exclusion of ill children. Parents/guardians are asked to follow these guidelines when determining when to keep a child at home. Please note this is not an all-inclusive list, simply guidelines.

- Illness that prevents a child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than staff members can provide
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms; child may return when fever-free for 24 hours
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet; child may return when stool returns to normal
- Vomiting – 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours; child may return when he or she has not vomited in 24 hours

- Mouth sores caused by drooling; child may return when his/her physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious
- Persistent abdominal pain; child may return when pain-free
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease; child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless the child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to the center is required.

Sending Children Home for Illness

Families will be contacted by the center staff members to pick up their child when he or she exhibits any of the above signs during the day. The parent will have one hour to pick up the child. In order to protect the health of all of our children, it is appreciated when parents cooperate in picking their child up quickly. When a child is sent home, he or she must remain at home for at least one full day to rest and recover, or until symptoms resolve with or without the assistance of a health care professional. Children must be illness- and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of pain relievers or fever-reducers.

Notice of Communicable Disease

When the center staff learns that a child or staff member has a communicable disease, it is Day Nursery's legal responsibility to notify the Department of Health. The center staff will also notify families about exposure as appropriate.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to inform Day Nursery staff regarding any allergies that children may have, food allergies as well as any environmental allergies such as pollen or dust. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide Day Nursery with documentation from the health care professional regarding the allergy. A list of all children's allergies is posted in each classroom so that all staff members are aware of them. Day Nursery staff is trained to familiarize themselves with potential allergens to avoid the potential risks to children.