**Staff working with children in childcare settings have a ‘duty of care’ to provide a safe environment for children.**

Infection prevention and control in childcare settings involves carrying out risk assessments and putting measures in place to manage any risks identified these should be reviewed and updated regularly. For more information on risk assessments, visit www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/raindex.htm.

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 legislates that employers must provide adequate protection against the risks associated with the task undertaken (for example, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be provided for dealing with blood or bodily fluids). For details of this visit www.hse.gov.uk/

legislation/hswa.htm.

**Infection Risk**

Infection risk in the childcare setting can be reduced by;

• Training all staff in Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs)

• Supervising children when exposed to pets. Pets must be clean and healthy. Exotic (non-domestic and unusual) animals, such as reptiles should not be kept as nursery pets due to high risk of salmonella which they carry. Rodents are also not recommended (if in a childminding setting, they should be excluded from the area children are cared for). Pet living quarters must be kept clean and away from food areas.

• Planning ahead when arranging special days out or activities

• Ensuring Staff and/or children with symptoms of an infectious disease do not attend the childcare setting.

• Seeking advice from your local Health Prevention Team on infection prevention and control issues e.g. exclusion criteria if an outbreak of infection is suspected.

Excluding a child from a childcare setting when not necessary can be a burden on parents or guardians. However, failing to exclude a child (with signs or symptoms of infection) could lead to an outbreak of infection in the childcare setting

**What is infection prevention and control?**

* Preventing and controlling infection in an early years setting
* The importance of hand washing before and after regular activities
* Good practice for hand washing and a range of other ways of preventing the spread of germs in an early years setting
* Understanding effective procedures for cleaning toys, equipment and the environment:

It is important that staff understand and follow:

* Guidance for managing illness and infections
* Exclusion times

**How do germs spread?**



**4.**

**Spread**

**of**

**germs**

**These**

**harmful**

**germs**

**now**

**need**

**to**

**spread**

**to the next person they are going to infect.**

**Germs can spread on hands, from surfaces,**

**shared food, toys and so on.**

**Some germs**

**can survive on surfaces for a long time.**

**Glossary**

* Blood and body fluids: Blood and body fluids such as urine, faeces (bowel movements), vomit or diarrhoea can all cause infection. You should only handle them when wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) (for example, disposable gloves).
* Chain of infection: A series of steps that describes how infection spreads.
* Vulnerable children: Some medical conditions make children more vulnerable to infections that to infection would not usually be serious in most children. Children vulnerable to infection include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers, on high doses of steroids by mouth, and with conditions which seriously reduce their immunity.
* Communicable disease: A disease that can be spread from one person to another.
* COSHH Regulations: Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people’s health at risk. By law, employers must have controls in place to prevent their staff from becoming exposed to hazardous substances, including infectious agents. (for example, germs). See www.hse.gov.uk/coshh.
* Diarrhoea: Three or more loose or liquid bowel movements in 24 hours or more often than is normal for the individual (usually at least three times in a 24-hour period).
* Disinfectant: A chemical that will reduce the numbers of germs to a level at which they are not harmful.
* Exclusion period: The period of time that a person with an infectious disease must be excluded from, for example childcare settings, to limit the risk of the infection being passed on to other people.
* Food handler: Someone who directly touches food or surfaces that will come into direct contact with food.
* Hand hygiene: The process of cleaning your hands by washing them thoroughly with liquid soap and warm water and then drying them thoroughly or using alcohol based hand-rub solutions.
* Outbreak: When there are two or more linked cases of the same illness or when there are more cases than the number expected. Outbreaks can happen anywhere, including in nurseries, in hospitals, on cruise ships and so on.
* Personal Protective Equipment: Equipment a person wears to protect themselves against one or more risks (PPE) to their health or safety, including exposure to infections. In a nursery setting this would include single-use disposable gloves and disposable aprons.
* Respiratory droplets: Small particles of fluids expelled during coughing, talking, sneezing etc. Germs for example flu, can be transferred from one person to another by droplets travelling small distances and landing on the mouth, nose or eyes of others or in their environment.