

Personal Care Guidelines for Early Years Settings in Orkney

The purpose of these guidelines is:

- To safeguard the rights of children
- To ensure children are consulted and treated with sensitivity and respect
- To support adults required to operate in sensitive situations
- To raise awareness and provide clear guidance for personal care
- To inform parents/carers and ensure they are consulted about the care of their children

Principles

Personal care can provide opportunities to support children to develop a positive image of their own body, develop their self-help skills and enhance their self-esteem. It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be encouraged to exercise choice and the child's right to privacy and dignity should be maintained at all times.

Personal care includes:

- Supporting a child with dressing/undressing
- Providing comfort or support for a distressed child
- Cleaning a child who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or been unwell

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to help a child get dressed or undressed particularly in the Early Years. Staff should always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided, and where needed should scaffold the process for children and look for ways to support the learning of new skills.

Providing comfort or support

It is normal for young children to seek physical comfort, cuddles and assurance from staff. Where children need physical support and comfort, this must be child initiated and should be only as much as the child needs (minimal sufficiency). When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff's hands should be visible and the child should not be positioned close to a member of staff's body in a way that could be regarded as unacceptable/intimate. Staff should provide the right kind of comfort and care which is suitable to the age, gender and situation of the child.

Soiling/Changing

All early years staff are responsible for personal care, including cleaning and changing children.

Parents should be consulted and approaches explained before the child starts nursery. This may be through the nursery/school brochure or handbook or induction pack. Parents can sign an initial consent form at enrolment (see end of guidance), so that the Early Years staff can promptly clean and change the child in the event of the child soiling themselves.

If a child needs to be cleaned/changed, staff will make sure that:

- Infection Control Guidelines are followed, including wearing disposable protective gloves, flushing away body fluids and bagging all wipes etc
- The process is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout
- Thought is given to the age of the child and how the child is changed (eg an older child may be changed standing up, rather than on a mat that is designed for a younger child)
- The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible and be involved in the cleaning process as appropriate for their developmental stage
- Physical contact is kept to the minimum appropriate to clean and change the child
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation (there is no requirement that two members of staff should be present- this would contravene a child's right to privacy)
- Soiled clothing is put in a double-sealed plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child
- Nappies are bagged and disposed of in a nappy bin

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

There is a presumption that early years staff will change children if required. It is neither practical nor fair for parents to have to come to the setting to change their child. It is also not appropriate for a child to have to wait for these physical needs to be met.

Lack of parental consent for changing

If for any reason, parents are not happy for nursery staff to change their child, and no negotiated agreement can be reached, then the following procedures are suggested:

- The school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the need for cleaning/changing the child.
- If the parent/carer or emergency contact is able to come within a few minutes, the child will be comforted until the parent arrives.
- If a parent/carer or emergency contact cannot attend promptly, the school will seek to gain verbal consent from parents/carers for staff to clean and change the child.
- If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted the Head Teacher will be consulted. Staff will act appropriately and in the best interests of the child. This may include cleaning and changing.

Staff will work towards developing trusting relationships with parents/carers so that parents feel confident about staff changing children.

NB No child should be offered shorter or fewer sessions because they are not yet toilet trained.

Hygiene/ Infection Control

All staff must be familiar with and understand the Infection Control Guidelines and must follow hygiene procedures. Infection control procedures should be available in appropriate areas (eg on the wall) as a reminder.

<http://www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/hai/infection-control/guidelines/infection-prevention-control-childcare.pdf>

From time to time, the Care Inspectorate update changing procedures. Please check their website and the Orkney Glow Early Years site for new information.

Protection for staff and children

When changing children, members of staff should ensure that they

- Where possible gain a verbal acknowledgement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- Allow the child, where possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and listen if they say if they find a carer to be

unacceptable

- Give the child a choice in the sequence of care
- Encourage the child to take care of themselves as far as is possible
- Are aware of and responsive to the child's reactions
- Where practicable, staff should ideally not change a child behind a full height closed or locked door with no 'vision panel'

Further safeguards for children

In addition to the above, as part of every day practice, staff will listen to children, involve them in consultation about a wide range of issues and take their views and opinions seriously. This creates a climate that protects children.

All staff working with children will have a Disclosure or PVG check.

Students

It is not appropriate for volunteers or work experience students to carry out personal care routines.

Students on HNC Early Education and Child Care courses at the college should be given the opportunity to take part in personal care routines under the supervision of a trained member of the school staff. Schools and settings should also check that parents and carers are happy for a student to change their child. This could be included as part of the changing consent form, or in information given to parents about the role of students.

Consent form: Changing Children

It is normal for young children to have toilet accidents from time to time and need changing. Our Early Years staff are experienced at changing children and can do this to make sure that your child is happy and comfortable while they are at nursery.

To help us with this, please send a change of clothes (and a spare nappy/baby wipes if needed) to nursery with your child.

If you do not want staff to change your child, or would like to have more information or discuss this further, please come in and see us.

Yours sincerely

Name of child

I give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned by Early Years' staff if they wet/soil themselves.

Signature of Parent/Carer..... Date.....

Please let us know if there are any routines that you would like us to follow if we need to change your child.