



<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>Child, Parent/Carer and Staff Illness &amp; Infectious Disease Policy</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>ELP-004</b>
Date Approved:	13 <sup>th</sup> December, 2018	Approved By:	Management Committee
Date Issued:	14 <sup>th</sup> December, 2018	Review Date:	13 <sup>th</sup> December, 2020

## 1. Aim

The purpose of this policy is to outline Early Links' approach to:

- assist in reducing illness and preventing the spread of infectious disease;
- responding to children and staff involved in an Early Links service who experience an illness and/or develop an infectious disease; and
- supporting families to understand when and why they and/or their child/Young Person will not receive a visit due to illness

Early Links aims to follow transparent and fair procedures in line with the requirements set out by the NSW Department of Health and in accordance with the best practice approaches outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Procedures in managing illness and infectious disease within our service are in line with the Early Links Philosophy and guided by the principles of:

- Transparency
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Inclusion
- Flexibility
- Strength Based Approach
- Adherence to funding body requirements

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to families who participate in an Early Links service and all Early Links staff and volunteers.

## 3. Policy

Early Links believes that children/Young People, parent/carers and staff who are unwell should avoid contact with others. This approach assists in reducing illness and preventing infectious disease in services and also in the general community.

Early Links understands that being in children's services/Schools, in contact with a large number of children/Young People for some time provides an opportunity for infectious diseases

to be spread and that whilst it is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and illnesses within schools/early childhood services, a lot of illnesses from infectious disease can be prevented.

Early Links will abide by the requirements of the Regulations for Education and Care Services (2011). Early Links will:

- (1) Ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease at the service.
- (2) Ensure that all families or an authorised emergency contact of each child/young person participating in an Early Links program is contacted and notified if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable.
- (3) Ensure that all staff are contacted and notified if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable.

### **3.1 Procedures for preventing the spread of infectious disease**

Medical evidence recommends that the three most important ways of preventing the spread of infectious disease are:

- Effective hand washing;
- Exclusion of sick children, parent/carers or staff; and
- Immunisation.

Early Links will also support the above methods with procedures for effective hand washing, cleaning and food safety procedures. All toys and equipment in contact with a sick child/young person will be washed according to health and hygiene procedures.

#### **3.1.1 Responding to a child who seems unwell**

Where staff are concerned that a child/young person appears unwell they will:

- Discuss the situation with the parent/carer describing the specific symptoms that can be observed.
- Notify the Nominated/Certified Supervisor of the situation if at a childcare service or school.

Where the illness occurs during the course of a home visit staff will leave the child's home and contact the family as soon as practicable to follow up on the child's well-being and confirm a time for another visit.

Where the child/young person who is unwell is in another early childhood service/school and Early Links staff are working in that setting, staff should communicate any concerns to the Director/Authorised Supervisor/Teacher or person responsible for that setting. Where concerns remain staff will contact the Program Manager.

#### **3.1.2 Excluding sick children and staff**

The spread of certain infectious diseases can be reduced by excluding a person who is known to be infectious, from contact with others who are at risk of catching the infection.

Early Links will follow the recommended minimum periods of exclusion set by the National Health and Medical Research Council based on risk of infection. Early Links is also aware that some children/young people, parent/carers or staff members may need to stay at home longer than the exclusion period to recover from an illness.

In the case of a staff member having symptoms or a medical diagnosis that fit a condition with an exclusion period according to the National Health and Medical Research Council the General Manager will:

- Support the staff member to access medical treatment, including contacting an ambulance if required.
- Phone the staff member's emergency contact.
- Advise the staff member when they may return to the service.

Early Links will take the opportunity to review infection control techniques with all staff when a person has been excluded due to illness.

### **3.1.3 Infectious Diseases requiring Notification to the local Public Health Unit**

Infectious Diseases notification will be directed by telephone to the local Public Health Unit, and will be initiated within twenty-four hours of diagnosis.

NSW local Public Health unit directory and contact details are available on the following NSW Health website – <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>

As outlined under Section 42D, Public Health Act 1991 (NSW), the Nominated Supervisor of a service is required to notify the local Public Health Unit of the following infectious disease occurrences at the service –

- Diphtheria
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping cough)
- Poliomyelitis
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus
- Haemophilus Influenza Type B (HIB)
- Meningococcal disease

### **3.1.4 Immunisation**

#### **3.1.4.1 Staff**

Staff are encouraged to be aware of the immunisations recommended for people working in settings such as Early Links and take proactive steps to access these. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend that educators should be immunised against –

- Hepatitis A.
- Influenza.
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR). (Educators born during or since 1966, who do not have vaccination records of two doses of MMR, or do not have antibodies for rubella, require vaccination).
- Varicella - if they have not previously been infected with chickenpox.
- Pertussis - An adult booster dose is especially important for those educators caring for the youngest children who are not fully vaccinated.

Although the risk is low, educators who care for children with intellectual disabilities should seek advice about Hepatitis B immunisation if the children are unimmunised.

Staff members that choose not to be immunised will be treated with the same respect as families. For their own safety and the safety of others they may be required to:

- stay away from any locations where an infectious disease (for which they are not immunised) has occurred for the required exclusion period.
- be restricted to working with children over 12 months old.

#### **3.1.4.2 Staff who are pregnant**

Staff who are pregnant need to be aware of how some infections can affect their unborn child.

All staff will have access to the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication and are encouraged to consult their medical practitioner to consider the facts and risks of working in an education and care service.

All staff will follow good infection control and hygiene procedures.

Pregnant staff members may be reassigned within the service to reduce their risk of exposure to diseases that can harm an unborn baby. This will be determined following consultation with the staff member's physician.

### **3.2 Medication**

Parents/carers are responsible for administering any medication to their own children/young people and for keeping this medication safely away from others.

Where the child is in a Transition to School program and the parents/carers are not present with the child, the provisions of the School policies will apply.

### **3.3 Keeping records**

Health and medical records (including accidents) will be kept by Early Links until a child/young person is 25 years of age.

Staff declarations of their immunisation records will be kept on their personnel file.

## 4. References

### Disability Service Standards

Standard 6 - Service Management	
Practice Requirement 1	Each person receives quality services which are effectively and efficiently governed
Practice Requirement 2	Each person receives quality services that are well managed and delivered by skilled staff with the right values, attitudes, goals and experience

### NQS

QA2	2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
	2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

"Staying Healthy in Early Childhood Education and Care- Preventing Infectious Diseases in Education and Care services" National Health and Medical Research Council, 2012

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (NSW)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

Public Health Act 1991

NSW Health Policy Directive - Notification of Infectious Diseases under the Public Health Act 1991

## 5. Persons Responsible

All families who have children participating in an Early Links service are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with information on illnesses and symptoms that would prevent their child or themselves from participating in an Early Links service.
- Keeping their child/young person or themselves at home until they are feeling well. If the family is expecting an Early Links home visit parents/carers should notify the staff so they do not visit the home.
- Notifying Early Links Administration where families are unable to attend a scheduled appointment as soon as practical on the day of the appointment.
- Ensuring staff are aware of any condition that could impact on their child's wellness e.g. asthma, diabetes, allergy.
- Supporting their child/young person to use behaviours that promote infection control e.g. hygienic use and disposal of tissues, regular hand washing, use of antibacterial gel etc.

All employees are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the reference material on exclusion of children and staff immunisations outlined in the reference guide for Education and Care Services.  
[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files\\_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ch43.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ch43.pdf)

- Supporting the children/young people and their families to use behaviours that promote infection control e.g. hygienic use and disposal of tissues, regular hand washing, use of antibacterial gel etc.
- Following procedures that promote infection control.
- Maintaining privacy, dignity and confidentiality of anyone diagnosed with an infectious illness.
- Following relevant Safe Working Procedures.
- Advising Early Links via the General Manager about any health concerns that they or their immediate family have that may be impacted upon by the illness of others.
- Staying away from the service if they are unwell.

General Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff are notified about the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as practicable.
- Notifying the local Public Health Unit of any notifiable infectious disease as required.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented, upheld and reviewed.

Management Committee is responsible for:

- Approval of this policy.

## 6. Definitions

**Management Committee** – the governing body of Early Links, comprised of elected or appointed members who jointly oversee the activities and legal responsibilities of the organisation.

**Contact** - A person who has had the opportunity to acquire an infection from a specified type of exposure during the infectious period.

**Contagious/infectious disease** - a disease that can be passed from one person to another.

**Educator** - an individual who provides education and care for children as part of an education and care service.

**Family** – refers to the parents/caregivers of the children who receive support from an Early Links program.

**Immunisation** - The process of making a person immune by use of oral or injected vaccines.

**Incubation period** - The time between an infectious agent entering a person's body and the appearance of a symptom of the disease. Incubation periods may range from a few hours to several years depending on the disease.

**Infection period** - The length of time a person who is infectious can pass the infection on to others.

**General Manager** – refers to the General Manager who is responsible for supervising Early Links staff members.

**Operations Manager** – refers to the Operations Manager who is responsible for supervising Early Links staff members.

**Program Manager** – refers to the Program Manager who is responsible for supervising Early Links staff members.

**Staff** – refers to employees and volunteers of the organisation.

**Visitor** – any person who is visiting an Early Links service who is not a staff member, child or family/carer.

**Staff** – refers to employees and volunteers of the organisation.

**Document review history**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Change</b>
November 2017	All	Updated role title from Service Manager to General Manager

This document must be read in conjunction with the Policies and Procedures that it supports

Commencement With Service Policy	ELP-016
HIV / AIDS Policy	ELO-019
Additional Needs Policy	ELP-007
Medical Conditions Policy	ELP-008
Death of a Child Policy	ELP-034