

# Staff Handwashing

**Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.17(8)** – Handwashing, Staff. Personnel shall wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water:

- (a) Immediately upon arrival for care, when moving from one child care group to another, and upon re-entering the child care area after outside play;
- (b) Before and after diapering each child, dispensing medication, applying topical medications, ointments, creams or lotions, handling and preparing food, eating, drinking, preparing bottles, feeding each child, and assisting children with eating and drinking; and
- (c) After toileting or assisting children with toileting, using tobacco products, handling garbage and organic waste, touching animals or pets, and handling bodily fluids, such as, but not limited to, mucus, saliva, vomit or blood; and
- (d) After contamination by any other means.

**Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.11(1)(i)** – Personnel shall wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water immediately before and after each diaper change; immediately upon the first Child's arrival in the Home for care and upon re-entering the Home after outside play; before and after dispensing oral medications and applying topical medications, ointments, creams or lotions, handling and preparing food, eating, drinking, preparing bottles, feeding or assisting children with eating and drinking; after toileting or helping children with toileting, using tobacco products, handling garbage and organic waste, touching animals or pets, handling bodily fluids such as, but not limited to, mucus, saliva, vomit or blood, and after contamination by any other means.

## Rule Type: Core Rule

### Intent of the Rule

To prevent the spread of infection.

### Clarification

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, handwashing is the simplest and most important basic measure for preventing the spread of infection in child care facilities. Many studies have shown that unwashed or improperly washed hands are the primary carriers of infection. Hands and forearms should first be wet and then rubbed vigorously as they are washed with soap for at least twenty seconds using comfortably warm, running water (between 60 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit). This removes organisms such as virus-containing particles and bacteria from the skin and rinses them away. Thorough rinsing should be followed by drying the hands with a single-use or disposable towel.

Bar soap is often left sitting in a pool of water, especially when many people use it frequently. A soap bar that stays wet provides the perfect environment for germs to grow and multiply. Since the germs on the soap bar could spread when others use the soap, liquid soap should be used instead. Liquid soap **not** labeled with a warning to *keep out of reach of children* should be stored within children's reach.

“Contamination by any other means” includes, but is not limited to, wiping children's noses, cleaning a table, and sneezing into the hand. The use of single-use gloves is **not** a substitute for washing hands. For example, if a staff person wears gloves while changing diapers, that person should discard the single-use gloves and wash his/her hands after each diaper change.

## Indicators

- ✓ Staff must wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water.
  - Note: Liquid soap has been found to be more effective than bar soap in limiting the transmission of bacteria; therefore, liquid soap must be used per the rule.
  - Reminder: Liquid soap should be safe for children (i.e., it is not labeled with a warning to *keep out of reach of children*) and stored within children's reach during handwashing activities. Liquid hand soap with a warning label must be kept out of children's reach when not in use.
  - TIP: After hands are washed and dried, the faucet should be turned off with the same towel used to dry hands so that freshly cleaned hands do not touch the faucet.
  
- ✓ Staff must wash their hands at the following times:
  - ❖ Immediately upon arriving to care for children; when moving from one child care group to another (CCLC only); and upon re-entering the child care area after outside play;
  - ❖ Before and after diapering each child; dispensing medication; applying topical medications, ointments, creams or lotions; handling and preparing food; eating; drinking; preparing bottles; feeding each child; and assisting children with eating and drinking;
  - ❖ After toileting or assisting children with toileting; using tobacco products; handling garbage and organic waste; touching animals or pets; and handling bodily fluids, such as, but not limited to, mucus, saliva, vomit or blood; and
  - ❖ After contamination by any other means.
    - TIP: Post a copy of DECAL's handwashing poster at sinks used by adults to serve as a visual reminder of proper handwashing techniques. The department's handwashing poster can be found at: <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/HandwashingChart.pdf>
    - Recommendation: Include information about staff handwashing requirements in the personnel policies and/or staff handbook.
    - Note: Hand sanitizer should not be used in place of soap and water except in situations when soap and running water is not available, such as when outdoors.

## Resources:

Caring for Our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.aap.org>