

Illness and Infectious Disease

Young children pass infections to others very easily and are also highly susceptible themselves. Children who participate in group child care get sick frequently when they are young as they build their immune systems. This results in fewer sick days once they begin Elementary School.

We are required by the Maryland Department of Education to monitor the children for signs and symptoms of acute illness. They have provided us with the following list below of signs of illness in children.

General Appearance

- Excessive crying, clinginess, fussiness
- Doubled over in pain, unable to move
- Listless, lethargic, unresponsive
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Feverish
- Seizure

Appearance of Urine/Stool

- Black, gray, white or blood-flecked stool
- Unusually dark or tea-colored urine

Skin

- Pale, grayish, flushed, yellowish skin
- Hot, cold, or clammy skin
- Skin rashes, sores, swelling or bruising
- Scratching at skin or scalp
- Skin doesn't spring back when pinched

Eyes, Nose, Ears, and Mouth

- Eyes swollen, red, crusty, watery yellowish, or sunken
- Eyes draining mucous
- Ears draining puss or blood
- Pulling at ears
- Sores on mouth or lips
- Sore throat, difficulty swallowing
- Excessive drooling
- Nose congested or runny

Breathing

- Difficulty breathing, wheezing
- Sucking in around ribs
- Fast, shallow, gasping breaths
- Flaring nostrils
- Persistent or uncontrollable coughing

When checking for a fever, we take the children's axillary temperature. We use this method because it is the least invasive and the least likely to spread germs. It also usually provides a temperature reading somewhat lower than the child's actual body temperature. The Maryland State Department of Education has determined that a fever is a temperature over 100°F so we will call you to come pick up your child if their temperature exceeds that.

Exclusion for Illness, Re-admittance, and Parental Notification

Daily, upon arrival at the center, your child will be checked for noticeable signs of illness. Please keep your child at home if you suspect that your child has a communicable disease or infectious condition. Children who have visible signs of illness such as a rash, coughs or colds, temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea will not be admitted or allowed to stay at the center. It is your responsibility to have an alternate plan for childcare when your child is sick. If your child is ill, please notify the center by 9:00 a.m. of his/her absence.

If a child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be placed in supervised isolation and the parent(s) will be contacted and expected to take the child home within an hour. While realizing the inconvenience this may cause the working parent, we firmly believe this is in the sick child's best interest and necessary to ensure the continued health and safety of the remaining children in the center. Failure to comply with this rule may result in dismissal from the center.

If a child has been sent home because of fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, he/she may return to the Center **after being completely symptom-free for 24 hours**. If a child has been sent home with a suspected disease (e.g. pink-eye, thrush, impetigo), he/she must be symptom-free and have a doctor's note to return to the center.

If a child contracts a communicable disease or infectious condition, re-admission after such disease or condition is dependent upon the written consent of the child's physician. In addition, the Center will use its experience with, knowledge of, and judgment of such condition to determine re-admission. We have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of all children in the center, therefore we will refuse to admit or readmit a child who is still exhibiting symptoms of contagion. Children who are absent for more than three days because of illness must bring a note to the center explaining the nature of the illness and any expected reactions.

You will be notified in writing as soon as a communicable disease or infectious condition has been medically verified. A notice will be posted in the classroom when a child in the room has come down with a communicable or infectious disease. Please alert the Center as soon as your child's physician has verified the disease or condition so that we may notify other parents.