

Policy on Diaper Change

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Policy prepared by EH Policy Reference group

Background to the policy statement:

All activities during the day including meal times and diaper change are learning experiences and provide opportunities for meeting individual learning objectives.

Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer and Death 1996 p 186.

Responsive interactions between the adult carer and child during these routine times support children's learning across all domains as well as foster strong interpersonal relationships based on trust and security. We owe a special duty of care to very young children whose safety and well being must be of prime significance.

Aim/purpose of the policy statement:

- To ensure heightened awareness of safety and adherence to best practice hygiene procedures during the diaper change process.
- To ensure children experience a positive interaction which best respects them as participants in the diaper change process and enhances their learning about hygiene practices.

Policy statement:

At EtonHouse preschools adults will demonstrate sound awareness of best practice safety and hygiene in relation to diaper change procedures. These practices will be reviewed regularly (and the policy discussed with all new staff upon engagement) to ensure all staff maintain consistent high quality practice.

At EtonHouse preschools, adults will attempt to involve the child as an active participant in the diaper change process e.g. selecting and carrying their own diaper into the bathroom; washing their own hands after the diaper change process.

At no time during the diaper change process is a child to be left unattended. The adult must maintain physical contact (placing their hand on the child; maintaining eye contact/supervision of the child), to prevent the child from falling from the change table. The younger the child, the more significant this practice becomes. This is also a requirement when changing a special rights child who may still be in diapers.

Implementation practices and procedures:

Ensuring safety and hygiene:

- The adult must ensure all necessary items are ready e.g. clean diaper; diaper bag; wet wipes; diaper rash cream **prior** to taking the child to the change area/change table; consider how a young child could be actively involved in this process e.g. collecting his/her own diaper;
- Storage of creams and sanitizing lotions must be close to the diaper change area/change table to allow for easy access, however children must not have independent access to these items;
- Items belonging to individual children must be labeled so that they are clearly identified. Items owned by one child e.g. wet wipes; rash creams must not be used with another child;
- The diaper change table must be at an appropriate height so as not to cause back strain in adult caregivers. The surface of the table must be slightly cushioned for the comfort of the child. The surface must be washable, clean, smooth and free from cracks so as not to harbour bacteria;
- There should be no toys placed within the area, which may be contaminated by faecal matter, or bodily fluids. However mirrors, or laminated pictures on the wall create an interest for the child during the diaper change procedure;
- The diaper change area must be sanitized after each diaper change procedure;
- There must be a guide to hand washing clearly displayed in the change area and adults who are responsible for changing children must be alerted to best practice hygiene involving hand washing and the wearing of gloves;
- It is not advisable that children be changed on the floor, or in the playroom as floor surfaces may become contaminated with bodily fluids/faecal material;
- If the changing area is in the classroom, thought must be given to maintaining the child's privacy during the change process;
- Flooring to the change area must be non slip;

Changing/washing procedures:

- Change only one child at a time;

- The adult must wash their hands thoroughly prior to lifting the child onto the change table/prior to changing the child;
- **Gloves must be worn during the diaper change process to ensure no transferability of bodily fluids between child and adult.** *Gloves should never be used as a substitute for hand washing Aronson 2002 p19;*
- Lift the child onto the change table (it is preferable to have a set of steps to support the child's participation in this process);
- If the child is standing to have their diaper changed/waiting to be washed, the child must be well supported (e.g. child's hands on the adult's lap; holding on to a safety rail, or toilet grab bar) throughout the whole process to assist the child in maintaining their balance during the change process;
- Begin by unfastening the child's clothing/lift clothing up high enough (both front and back) to allow removal of the diaper. Ensure soiled areas do not come into contact with you, or any surface that you cannot sanitize;
- Wipe the child gently from front to back to prevent faecal contamination. The front of the diaper may be needed to wipe away as much soiled matter as possible prior to cleaning the child with wet wipes/soap and water;
- Be sure to clean within every fold and crease. Remaining matter may cause irritation/diaper rash. In the event of rash or skin irritation, gently dab the child's irritated skin instead of rubbing. Be mindful of sudden urination with very young male children once the diaper is removed. Keeping the diaper underneath and covering genitalia will help to reduce the incidence of the adult becoming wet;
- Place used wipes inside the soiled diaper, roll it and place in a diaper/plastic bag and secure with waist fasteners;
- Place the secured diaper/ plastic bag a (preferably) foot pedal bin fitted with a lid. This bin must be **lined** with a disposable plastic bag. Children must not have access to this bin;
- It is preferable that soiled clothing be washed with detergent using a separate designated container. The container used for washing soiled clothing **must not be used for any other purpose and must be sterilized after each use.** However if soiled clothing is sent home to be washed, then the latter must be placed in a plastic bag, firmly fastened and handed the parent on their return to the centre/preschool;
- Dress the child; keep changes of spare clothing handy to the change area;

- Remove and dispose of gloves (**gloves must not be used for multiple changes of children**);
- Support the child to wash their hands (to connect the concept of hand washing as part of the toileting routine);
- The adult must clean and sanitize the change table area;
- The adult must wash their own hands;
- Diaper change must be recorded (in the child's communication booklet);
- Diapers must be checked and changed regularly to ensure good hygiene and to prevent cross infection via bodily fluids. Changing a diaper before naptime will not only ensure greater comfort for the child but also reduces the likelihood of a wet diaper during naptime; diapers should be checked and changed after nap as well as regularly throughout the day;
- If/when the child shows signs of being ready for potty training e.g. showing interest in accessing a potty or the toilet, staff should work with the parents to ensure a smooth transition which is consistent across both home and preschool settings;

Throughout the diaper change process, it is essential that the adult engage the child through interaction (songs; chants; discussion). Children of all ages will demonstrate greater degrees of co-operation if they feel the experience is a positive one for both them and for the adult.

Evaluation of this policy:

A review of this policy and implementation procedures will be conducted every two years. This review will be undertaken by the Preschool Directors, Vice Principals and staff of the EtonHouse Education Centre (the policy reference group)

References:

http://www.ehow.com/how_448_change-babys-diaper.html

Aronson, S. (2002). *Healthy young children: A manual for programs*. Washington, D.C; NAEYC.