



Catherine E. Heigel, Director

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment

July 29, 2015

Dear Childcare Provider:

This letter is being sent to provide general information about diarrheal illness in children, particularly during the summertime months. During this time of year, it is not uncommon to see an increase in diarrheal illness, particularly due to bacterial and parasitic causes. Therefore, the information provided below can be used to help prevent further spread of these illnesses in childcare settings.

Common causes of diarrhea due to bacteria are *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Shigella*, and *E. coli*. Common causes of diarrhea due to parasites include *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*.

Prevention of Diarrheal Illness

Perform Hand Hygiene and Environmental Cleaning

Good hand hygiene practices are one of the most effective ways to limit the spread of any illness.

- Ensure staff members are trained on appropriate hand hygiene practices.
- Wash hands after each diaper change.
- Wash each child's hands after each diaper change.
- Post signage to remind staff of proper handwashing procedures.
- Sinks suitable for children should be readily available and staff should assist children with handwashing and teach children proper procedures.
- Staff and children should wash their hands upon reentering the building from play time, handling trash, before eating, and after using the bathroom.
- Additional information on handwashing can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>. In addition, the following video can be used to teach staff and children about proper handwashing procedures: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iFEvkbaFh4>

Practice thorough environmental cleaning by disinfecting objects and surfaces where contamination and cross-contamination may occur.

- Disinfect diaper changing stations after each use.
- Use only toys that can be cleaned and sanitized. Toys should be cleaned and sanitized at least daily.

- Disinfect surfaces throughout the facility daily. Pay particular attention to high-touch surfaces such as door knobs, play tables, and faucet handles; these surfaces should be disinfected more frequently.

Avoid Animal Contact

- Animals should not be housed in childcare centers.
- If visiting animal venues, limit contact between animals and children, particularly children less than 5 years of age. Contact should only be allowed in a controlled manner. Persons who do have animal contact should wash their hands thoroughly. Do not allow children to have food or drink around animal areas.
- Avoid contact between reptiles (turtles, iguanas, other lizards, snakes) and infants or immunocompromised persons.

Ensure Proper Food Safety

- Cook all foods thoroughly, particularly poultry, ground beef, and eggs.
- Do not eat or drink foods containing raw eggs or unpasteurized milk.
- Ensure staff members use good hand hygiene procedures when preparing and serving food or drinks.
- Clean and sanitize kitchen work surfaces before and after each use.
- Be particularly careful with foods prepared for infants or immunocompromised persons.
- Ensure diaper-changing stations are not located near food preparation or serving areas.
- Children should not be allowed in the food preparation area.
- Inspect food items for signs of spoilage or mold before serving.
- Use thermometers to ensure foods are cooked to the appropriate temperatures. For more information on safe cooking temperatures, please visit the following website:
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html>

Ensure Safe Water Play

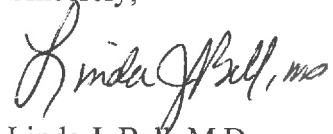
- Ensure children are not experiencing diarrhea if water play or field trips associated with water are planned.
- Do not allow children to drink or swallow water from pools, lakes, rivers, or streams.
- Take children on regular bathroom breaks when participating in water activities.
- If a pool or splash area is on-site, ensure proper pH and disinfectant levels are maintained.

In addition to the prevention information provided above, ensure staff or children with illness are appropriately excluded from your childcare facility, following the guidance outlined in the School and Childcare Exclusion List. Ensure procedures are in place to monitor reports of illness in children and staff. Health checks should be conducted with children as they arrive at the

facility each day; a running log of this information (*e.g.* history of illness) should be maintained. The School and Childcare Exclusion List is available at the following website:
http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/docs/School%20and%20Childcare%20Exclusion_List.pdf.

Thank you for reviewing this information and for your continued assistance with providing childcare in a safe and healthy environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda J. Bell, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Linda J. Bell, M.D.
State Epidemiologist