

## Sick Policy of Christ Lutheran Child Care Center

Please do take the time to read the sick policy in its entirety and ask any questions you may have regarding the policy. Prior to enrollment, each family will be asked to sign a form stating they have read the policy in its entirety and are clear on the center policies.

A main areas of concern as a childcare center, is the rapid and sometimes seemingly uncontrollable, spread of infections. While it may be rapid, it is not uncontrollable. The parents and the childcare center need to work together as partners to keep the children healthy and feeling well. If you suspect your child is not well, but not sure, err on the side of caution! The best word of advice we can offer as a childcare center is to plan and be prepared! A child attending daycare, will on average, contract 5—10 illness each year. These illnesses will then lead to a child to be excluded from care, on average, 5 to 14 days. This is very normal and should still be expected. Children have to build their immune system and this occurs over time, beginning with enrollment in a daycare center.

Working parents typically have tremendous stress on them with limited days off. It is best to have a back up plan in place before your child begins to be exposed to normal childhood illnesses. Often many of our families express the concern that they do not have family members to offer sitting or enough time off to cover all of the days their child may need to be absent from care. A service many of our families have used to provide baby-sitting for an ill child is **[www.yourotherhands.net](http://www.yourotherhands.net)**. While they may be costly, for a family that does not have any back up care, it is certainly a consideration.

At times, as a parent, you may disagree with the director and childcare staff regarding whether your child does or does not meet the exclusion criteria as outlined in our policy. Most often this will happen when we are excluding your child based on your child's inability to participate, or the caregiver's ability to provide the level of care your child needs while providing care to the other children in the center. As the care provider, we are entitled to make this decision and will stand by our decision to not accept responsibility for the care of a child not feeling well.

As a childcare center, we constantly are washing before meals, after sneezing and wiping noses, wiping down and disinfecting toys and teaching good hygiene. Our hope is to decrease the amount of illness we have as a center, yet we understand that the spread of infection is impossible to stop. When we have an ill child, we follow certain procedures as outlined by the Philadelphia Department of Public Welfare and The American Academy of Pediatrics. Our Sick Policy has been based upon information from conversations with physicians, certified nurse practitioners, and the guidelines recommended by the AAP, specifically, "Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools," "Exclusion and Inclusion of Ill Children In Child Care Facilities and Care of Ill Children in Child Care," and "Model Child Care Health Care Policies."

One of our main areas of exclusion occurs when a child has a fever. However, a child having a fever is not the only reason to exclude a child from care. We accept that a fever is a normal and often healthy reaction to infection, but rather it is when the fever is

accompanied by other symptoms that we will exclude a child from care. A child with a fever that is lethargic, not eating, complaining of pain, unable to participate, or is uncomfortable is going to be sent home.

Additionally, a child that does not have a fever but is exhibiting signs of illness will also be excluded from care. A child that is not able to comfortably participate in classroom activities or has a greater need for care than the staff is able to provide without compromising the care of the other children will be sent home. Briefly as an example, your child wants to sleep at odd times, is inconsolable, or in the case of an infant, needs to be held continuously. The Center realizes how important your job is and that your ability to take time off is limited. We will work hard with each family to use our best judgment as to when a child has just a cold and when they cross that line to being unable to be here.

If your child exhibits these symptoms on the weekend, particularly Sunday, please do not bring them to school on Monday. A child receiving an antibiotic must stay at home for 24 hours. It has been our experience until a child has had at least a full 24—48 hours of an antibiotic; they are typically not comfortable while in daycare.

### **Medical Forms**

Pennsylvania state regulations require that the childcare center maintain a current medical record on each child enrolled in the center. Before your child enrolls, your pediatrician will need to fill out a health assessment form. Your child will require well visits as follows:

- ◆ 2 months
- ◆ 4 months
- ◆ 6 months
- ◆ 9 months
- ◆ 1 year
- ◆ 15-18 months
- ◆ 2 years
- ◆ 3 years
- ◆ 4 years
- ◆ 5 years

At each well visit you must have a new health assessment form filled out. You will have 45 days from your child's birthday to return a current assessment. **After this 45-day period, your child may no longer continue in the childcare program until they do have a current health assessment. The childcare center legally may not have a child in our care without a current form.**

### **Daily Health Assessment Check**

The staff that are familiar with the typical behavior of your child and will assess them each day when they arrive and periodically throughout the day. This assessment involves

speaking with the parents, observing the child, and if applicable, talking with the child. The staff will document and make note of:

- ◆ Any changes in behavior, excessive tiredness
- ◆ Skin rashes or itchy skin or scalp
- ◆ Signs of fever such as flushed appearance or shivering
- ◆ Complaints of pain or not feeling well
- ◆ Vomiting, diarrhea, and drainage from the eyes
- ◆ When a child or family member has been exposed to a harmful communicable disease

It is important to share this information between families and caregivers. It will help everyone to be on the look out for your child's well being. Withholding information from us, particularly, if your child was ill on the weekend, is a cause of concern for the center and considered unacceptable practice.

### **Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion**

If your child is not feeling well, the childcare center will recommend temporary exclusion. Often this decision is not only based on your child's physical symptoms, such as a fever, but also on their inability to be comfortable in a group setting. Some reasons of exclusion are as follows:

- ◆ A child is not able to participate comfortably as determined by the staff of the childcare center.
- ◆ The child's illness or symptoms result in a greater need for care than the child care center is able to provide without compromising the level of care provided to the other children.
- ◆ Your child appears to be ill.
- ◆ Has a fever of 100.F auxiliary (armpit) or 101. F orally
- ◆ Diarrhea that is not associated with a change in diet. Any diarrhea that is outside of what is considered a normal bowel movement for your child, loose, watery bowel movement that is not contained in diaper OR a child cannot make it to the toilet in time.
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Complaints of abdominal pain lasting for more than 1 hour
- ◆ Mouth sores with drooling
- ◆ Unexplained rash
- ◆ Pink or red conjunctive with white or yellow discharge
- ◆ Severe diaper rash lasting for more than 3 continuous days
- ◆ Impetigo
- ◆ Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection
- ◆ Head lice
- ◆ Open wounds unable to be bandaged

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, for the sake of your child and the other children in our care, we expect parents to keep their child at home. Sick children and staff are to be kept out of daycare. They are unable to participate, potentially infect other

children and most importantly, need extra care that a group setting cannot provide. If the child care staff are uncertain about whether your child's illness poses an increased threat to themselves or to the children around them, the center will exclude your child until a physician or nurse practitioner notifies the child care center that your child may return.

### **Indications of Illness**

Often, once a child is in care, they can exhibit certain signs that could be indications of an infection or illness. If this happens, the childcare center will call and notify you that your child does not appear to feel well. At this time, we will advise you of how your child is doing, and let you know if they are having a hard time participating in group care or if you need to come and get your child. Some indications could be, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Lethargic behavior
- ◆ Lack of appetite
- ◆ Unusual irritability
- ◆ Apparent pain in the ear
- ◆ Continuous or abnormal crying
- ◆ Difficulty participating or "keeping up" with the class
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Evidence of Conjunctivitis
- ◆ Rash or skin infection
- ◆ Uncontrolled coughing
- ◆ Difficult or rapid breathing and wheezing

We recognize many symptoms may be short lived. We will make every effort to distinguish between those situations and a true illness. The center will, at all times, err on the side of caution in reporting a suspected illness to you. Exclusion is required when the Director feels a child is in the contagious phase or an illness or requires more care and observation than can be offered at the childcare center. We are not at any time, able to care for a child individually. We understand parents have busy and often hectic schedules. And decision to exclude a child is well thought out and discussed.

Arriving promptly following a request to take your child home is important. We will let you know the level of urgency regarding how ill your child is and if we expect you within the hour or if you may take up to two hours. Please let the center know when to expect your arrival. If you are asked to come immediately, we will expect you, at the most, within the hour, **WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS**. If you are in a work position or dependant upon public transportation, please be prepared to have a back up in place to be available to get your child within the time discussed. **Failure to arrive in a timely fashion to pick up your child, as discussed when you are notified of your child's illness, is deemed a serious problem and your child's care from the program will be suspended immediately. Only the Child Care Committee can grant admittance back into the childcare center.**

The childcare center **MUST** be able to get in touch with you at all times. Work numbers, cell phones, pagers and emails, if available, are to be provided to the childcare center. **Not being able to get in touch with you during an illness or emergency is grounds for suspension from the center.** It is the responsibility of the family to provide the childcare center with contact numbers. If you will be away from the office for the day, please provide an alternative means of contacting you or someone we may contact in the event we may not reach you.

In the event of a medical emergency or an accident, we will contact the parents and the doctor of the child. If it is not possible to reach either parent immediately and emergency treatment is required, we will contact 911 and have your child transported to Chestnut Hill Hospital. Your authorization for the center to contact your child's pediatrician and take whatever medical measures deemed necessary is part of the emergency contact form, of which you have signed.

### **Notification of Illness to the Child Care Center**

In the event that your child is exposed or does contract an infection or illness and will not be in care on a given day, please notify the childcare center. Please report any conditions that your child may have. Unreported illnesses are a violation of center policy and are grounds for suspension from the child care program. All rules of confidentiality are followed and your child's name will not be shared, however, we do have the responsibility to report certain illnesses to the other families, such as:

- ◆ Strep Throat
- ◆ Ring Worm
- ◆ Chicken Pox
- ◆ Viral stomach illnesses
- ◆ Bacterial Conjunctivitis
- ◆ Scarlet Fever
- ◆ Fifth Disease
- ◆ Chicken Pox
- ◆ Measles

### **Medication**

The childcare center will only administer **prescription medication as directed by a physician.** In order to do so, we must have the following:

- ✓ Written instructions from a licensed physician
- ✓ Written permission from the parent/guardian
- ✓ The medication in its original container

All prescription medication must have an affixed label with:

- ◆ Child's first and last name
- ◆ Name of medication
- ◆ Date of issue of prescription
- ◆ Instructions for administration
- ◆ Instructions for storage

- ◆ Dispensing physician's name
- ◆ Medicine is prescribed from a non-family member

The childcare center will only administer **non-prescription**, (over the counter) medications/ointments as outlined:

- ◆ Sunscreen of an SPF of 15 or higher, supplied by families in the original container. Your permission to apply sunscreen will be kept on file in the office. We ask that sunscreen be applied prior to coming to daycare and the teachers will then reapply the lotion for the full day children before playing outside in the afternoon.
- ◆ Diaper cream and ointments, as needed, and supplied by the family.
- ◆ Over the counter medicine as prescribed by a doctor, stating the reason and for how long.

### **Physician Notes**

It is to the discretion of the childcare center if a Physician's note will be required for your child to return to care. Most often this is not the case, but in the event of a concern for the well-being of the children in the center, this may be required. Notes for your child must be from a non-family member.

A notice from your child's pediatrician is not alone reason for your child to be able to return to the childcare center. Other factors will be taken into consideration, primarily the ability for your child to comfortably participate in a group care setting and the center is confident your child will get the level and quality of care they deserve. The center understands that children may be more comfortable and appear well at home and ready to return to care, as opposed to coming to daycare and still be recovering and having difficulty keeping up with the level of activity in a daycare setting. We ask that parents take this into consideration when we are still requiring your child to remain out of care even if the family is of the opinion your child is well enough to return.