

Supporting Children who are in nappies

Advice for practitioners working in Early Years Foundation Stage Settings.



Supporting children who are in nappies

Many settings/schools and parents/carers ask about the admission and support of children who have varying degrees of incontinence. This leaflet and the fuller guidance document are an attempt to clarify the situation for providers.

Hertfordshire County Council adopted guidance that was developed by The Council for Disabled Children and Leicester City LEA. This guidance was previously published on the Sure Start website.

Frequently asked questions

Where do we stand in relation to The Equalities Act 2010, incontinence and nappies?

“Any admission policy that sets a blanket standard of continence, or any other aspect of development, for all children is discriminatory and therefore unlawful under the Act.” *

“Asking parents/carers to come and change a child is likely to be a direct contravention of the Equalities Act, and leaving a child in a soiled nappy for any length of time pending the return of the parent/carer is a form of abuse.” *

In light of this information you might like to check your admissions policy and update if necessary.

Should my staff change the child?

Yes. However, in rare circumstances where a child refuses to allow you to change them, you may have an agreement with the parents/carers where they, or a family friend, may be called in to change the child.

Should we provide the nappies/gloves/wipes/sacks?

No, the child’s parents should normally provide these. However, some settings/schools may choose to incorporate these as part of their fees.

* Information taken from the Council for Disabled Children/Leicester City LEA document which is promoted by the National Sure Start Unit.

Do we need a separate changing area?

A suitable place for changing children should be a high priority in any setting/schools Access Plan.

However, if you do not have a purpose built changing area then you can buy a changing mat and change the child in the toilet area or in a separate room. Exceptionally, where a setting/school has only one room and an unsuitable toilet area, it might be possible to change the child discreetly in a corner of the room.

How do we dispose of the nappies?

Nappies and wipes from healthy children can be double bagged or put into nappy sacks and placed into domestic waste bins. If you have concerns about a child's health or about the number of nappies dealt with please contact your local Environmental Health Office for advice.

Do we need more than one person to change a child?

No, all staff are CRB checked and there is no regulation suggesting that more than one practitioner is required to change a child. Think of the child's dignity, he/she does not need more than one person looking at him/her.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is a known risk of false allegations, it may be good practice to have another member of staff to act as witness. It is, of course, always good practice to tell someone that you are about to change a child.

You can find more advice by visiting the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board website www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk.

My staff feel uncomfortable about changing nappies, what should I do?

Please explain to your colleagues that you promote inclusion and that they are bound by The Equalities Act 2010. Also, we recommend that this task be included, where appropriate, when reviewing job descriptions and recruiting new colleagues.

Changing children's nappies is a part of what we provide to cater for our children's individual needs

Where can we get further information?

The document 'Continence guidance for early years settings' (CSF0138) gives more detailed advice and if you require further support please contact your Inclusion Development Officer (IDO) or Early Years Consultant.

Download copies of this leaflet at:
www.hertsdirect.org/childhoodsupport
and visit the Information and Updates page.

CSF Pub 0139
Hertfordshire County Council
Issue 3
October 2012

Design Ref: 065377

Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DF