

Sick child policy

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Fill in the [brackets] with your health consultant or a local pediatrician, delete what doesn't apply and check your state's licensing and health department rules, which may set their own rules. The general reasons to keep a child home come from Caring for Our Children (CFOC) and the AAP's Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools. Numbers in [brackets] are common defaults from CFOC and AAP guidance. Confirm them with your health consultant. This template isn't medical advice.

Why we have this policy

Young children get sick often, especially in their first year in childcare. This policy explains when your child needs to stay home, when we'll call you to pick them up and when they can come back. It helps us care for your child and keep illness from spreading to other children, families and staff.

When your child needs to stay home or go home

We'll ask you to keep your child home, or to pick them up, if:

- Your child can't take part comfortably in usual activities, even with some extra rest.
- Your child needs more care than staff can give without affecting the health and safety of the other children.
- Your child has a fever along with a change in behavior or other symptoms, such as a sore throat, rash, vomiting or diarrhea. For this policy, a fever is a temperature above [101°F (38.3°C)], however it's taken.
- Your baby is younger than [2 months] and has a temperature above [100.4°F (38°C)]. We'll call you right away, because a young baby with a fever needs to see a health care provider right away.
- Your child has vomited [2 or more] times in the past 24 hours, unless a health care provider says it isn't from an illness that spreads and your child is staying hydrated.
- Your child has diarrhea that leaks out of the diaper, causes accidents for a child who uses the toilet or means more than [2] stools above their usual number during the day.
- Your child has blood or mucus in their stool, until a health care provider checks them.
- Your child has belly pain that lasts more than [2] hours, or that comes and goes along with a fever or other symptoms.
- Your child has mouth sores with drooling they can't control, unless a health care provider or the health department says your child isn't contagious.
- Your child has a rash with a fever or a change in behavior, until a health care provider says it isn't contagious.
- Your child looks very ill, such as being unusually sleepy, crying in a way that won't stop or having trouble breathing.
- Your child has a condition on the list below, or a health care provider or the health department says your child should stay home.

Conditions with their own return rules

Some of these conditions mean staying home until a rule is met. Others usually don't, such as pinkeye without a fever, or hand, foot and mouth disease without drooling or a fever. A child with head lice can stay until the end of the day. [Fill in each rule with your health consultant, using CFOC, AAP guidance and your state's rules, then delete this note.]

- Strep throat: [return rule]
- Flu, COVID-19 or RSV: [return rule]
- Pinkeye: [return rule]
- Impetigo: [return rule]

- Head lice or scabies: [return rule]
- Chickenpox: [return rule]
- Hand, foot and mouth disease: [return rule]
- A stomach illness with vomiting or diarrhea, such as norovirus: [return rule]
- Diseases we must report to the health department, such as measles, whooping cough or hepatitis A: when the health department says your child can come back.

If your child gets sick here

- We'll keep your child comfortable and away from the other children, with a staff member who can see and hear them.
- We'll call you, and someone must pick up your child within [time]. If we can't reach you, we'll call your emergency contacts.
- We'll write down your child's symptoms and when they started, and go over them with you at pickup.
- We give medicine only with your signed medication authorization form.

Medical emergencies

We call 911 first, then you, for any medical emergency, such as trouble breathing, a seizure, a severe allergic reaction, a child who is very hard to wake up or a rash that spreads quickly and looks like bruises or tiny red or purple spots.

When your child can come back

Your child can come back when:

- They can take part in usual activities.
- Staff can care for them without affecting the other children.
- They no longer have the symptoms that kept them home, and they meet any return rule for their condition.
- [For a fever with a cough, runny nose or sore throat: no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine, or the time your state's rules set.]
- [When we need a note from a health care provider.]

Telling families about illness

If a child or staff member has an illness that spreads, we'll tell families whose children may have been exposed, without naming who is sick. We report diseases to the local health department as [state] law requires.

Keeping illness from spreading

- Children and staff wash their hands when they arrive, before eating, after using the toilet or a diaper change and after wiping noses.
- We clean and sanitize toys and tables, and clean and disinfect diaper areas [daily, and as our state's licensing rules require].
- Staff stay home when they're sick, following the same policy.
- We keep each child's immunization record on file, as [state] rules require.

Questions

If you're not sure whether your child should come in, call us at [phone] before you leave home. We know sick days are hard for working families, so please plan backup care ahead of time.

Policy review

Health consultant (name and phone) _____

Last reviewed (date) _____

Acknowledgment

Child's name _____

Parent or guardian's printed name _____

I have read and agree to the sick child policy. Parent or guardian signature

Date _____

Free to use and change, but not legal or medical advice. Check your state's licensing rules and your insurer's requirements, and have a lawyer review any consent or waiver language.

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