

## Cross Infection in an Early Learning Environment

Good infection control practices, including teaching and encouraging regular hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and sending unwell children home, can significantly lower infection rates and reduce the spread of germs for all staff and children.

In a child with CF, the lungs are affected by thick, sticky mucus which creates a perfect breeding ground for bacteria to grow. Children with CF can spread these bacteria to other children with CF from coughing, sneezing or touching a contaminated surface. This is referred to as cross infection.

To reduce the risk of cross infection between children with CF, it is recommended that they should avoid close or prolonged contact with each other and endeavour to maintain a distance of 4m apart, particularly in small, enclosed spaces. This recommendation does not apply to siblings with CF.

Cross infection does not occur with children who do not have CF, as their lungs do not have thick, sticky mucus.

### Managing Cross Infection

If there is more than one child with CF attending the centre, the following recommendations need to be considered to reduce the risk of cross infection:

- Children with CF should not be placed in the same rooms.
- Regular cleaning of shared equipment, toys and common areas.
- Provisions made for children to maintain a safe distance from each other in shared spaces, on buses and at events such as Christmas parties.



### Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene is the single most important measure in reducing the risk of cross infection between children with CF, as well as the risk of spreading other infections, such as colds and flus. Good hand hygiene practices should be encouraged among staff and children, with access to liquid soap, paper towels or air hand dryers and alcohol based hand gel.

### More Information

For more information about CF, we have free eLearning modules, including one specific to infection prevention, as well as other resources available on our [CFSmart website](https://www.cfsmart.org.au).