

Cross Infection in an Early Learning Environment

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

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

To reduce the risk of cross infection between individuals 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.

Managing cross infection

If there is more than one person with CF attending your 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 room on the same days.
- Staff or parents with CF should avoid contact with others with CF at the centre.
- Regular cleaning of shared equipment, toys and common areas.
- Provisions made for people with CF to maintain a safe distance from each other in shared spaces, on buses and at events such as incursions/excursions and Christmas parties.

These recommendations may also apply to other people in the school community with chronic lung conditions or impaired immunity, however, does not



include people from the same household with CF, for example, siblings.

Hand hygiene

Good hand hygiene is the single most important measure in reducing the risk of cross infection, 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).