

# Infection Control in an Early Learning Environment

The thick, sticky mucus that builds up in the lungs of a person with CF provides an environment for germs to thrive and multiply. Viruses such as the flu, colds and gastro can have more serious effects on a child with CF. Good infection control programs within early learning centres can significantly lower infection rates and reduce the spread of germs for everyone.

## Good infection control practices

Good infection control practices in early learning environments should include the following:

- Encourage good hand hygiene practices, such as hand washing and coughing/sneezing into the elbow or sleeve.
- Both children and staff have access to handwashing facilities including liquid soap, air hand dryer and alcohol based hand gel.
- Follow recommended cleaning practices including bathrooms/toilets, equipment and common areas.
- Encourage parents to keep unwell children at home until symptoms have cleared.
- Avoid children sharing eating utensils, cups or water bottles.
- Teach children about germs as part of the curriculum (age dependent).

## Environmental bacteria

Bacteria found naturally in the environment, that don't pose a risk to people without CF, can cause infection in children with CF. These bacteria are commonly found in stagnant water, mould and soil and once contracted, can be difficult to treat. Activities that can pose a risk to a child with CF should be discussed with the child's parents beforehand.



## Environmental risks to consider in the early learning environment, include:

- Water play- use fresh water and avoid toys with holes in them as they can contain stagnant water and/or mould.
- Gardening- short periods of exposure and consider a face mask and gloves.
- Excursions/incursions- may need to take precautions with activities involving stagnant dirty water or damp soil/hay.
- Cover fish tanks and regularly refresh water in vases/indoor plants to avoid exposure to stagnant water.

## 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).