

Prevention of infections in early childhood education and at home – information for guardians

Children in early childhood education have more infectious diseases than children cared for at home. Infectious diseases can be prevented and reduced with simple measures described below at home and in early childhood education. This benefits children, their families, early childhood education staff and society.

<p>Hand hygiene</p>	<p>Wash the child’s hands with warm water and soap and dry them thoroughly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when arriving at early childhood education and when returning home • after using the toilet • before meals • when coming indoors from outside • when there is visible dirt on the hands • after blowing the nose, coughing or sneezing. <p>If the hands are not visibly dirty, you can help and supervise the child to use hand sanitiser instead of washing their hands. Hand sanitisers must not be within children’s reach.</p> <p>Keep the child’s nails short.</p>
<p>Coughing and sneezing</p>	<p>Guide the child to cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue. After use, the tissue is placed directly in the bin.</p> <p>If a tissue is not available, guide the child to cough or sneeze into their sleeve or elbow crease.</p>
<p>Toys</p>	<p>Clean the toys at home before bringing them to early childhood education and again after the day.</p> <p>If the toy cannot be washed, keep it out of play for one week.</p> <p>Make sure the comfort toy is clean and washed.</p>
<p>Pacifiers</p>	<p>Clean the pacifiers at home. Bring labelled, clean pacifiers to early childhood education in a clean container.</p>
<p>Water bottle</p>	<p>The child’s own water bottle should be washed at home daily.</p>

Brushing teeth	Brush the child's teeth at home in the morning and in the evening. If the child stays overnight at the care facility, the teeth are brushed there in the morning and in the evening.
Child's vaccinations	Your child will be given vaccines according to the Finnish national vaccination programme. The programme protects the child against 13 different diseases and their complications. The annual influenza vaccination is included in these up to the age of 6.
Child falling ill	Your child should remain at home if they have a fever or symptoms that affect their ability to participate in activities in early childhood education. It is advisable to stay at home as soon as the first symptoms appear. Infectious diseases such as the common cold are most contagious at the beginning of the illness. If necessary, guardians will be asked to pick up the child and take them home during the day. The child must be given sufficient time to recover at home after the illness until they are again able to participate in early childhood education activities.

When can a child return to early childhood education after an infectious illness?

Cough and runny nose	Does not prevent participation in early childhood education unless it affects the child's general wellbeing.
Common cold, influenza, COVID-19, ear infection and eye infection	When the fever has subsided and the child's general wellbeing allows participation in early childhood education activities.
Eye infection	The need for absence depends on the severity of the symptoms. A mild eye infection does not require absence. Staying at home is recommended while the eye discharge is severe.
Stomach illness, diarrhoea and vomiting	Two days after the symptoms have ended to prevent further infections. Exceptions are EHEC, shigella and salmonella, in which case the return to early childhood education takes place according to the instructions of the physician responsible for infectious diseases.
Group A streptococcus: pharyngitis (tonsillitis), scarlet fever, skin infections	When the fever has subsided and the child's general wellbeing allows participation in early childhood education activities, at the earliest 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment. It is advisable to inform early childhood education about a Group A streptococcus infection.
Impetigo	At the earliest 24 hours after the start of oral antibiotic treatment or 48 hours after the start of topical antibiotic treatment. The cause is usually a staphylococcus or Group A streptococcus bacterium.

Hand, foot and mouth disease, parvovirus infection, roseola	When the fever has subsided and the child's general wellbeing allows participation in early childhood education activities.
Scabies	After the first treatment. It is advisable to inform early childhood education about a scabies infection. See the City of Helsinki's instructions on scabies
Pinworm	Does not require absence. It is advisable to inform early childhood education about a pinworm infection. See the City of Helsinki's instructions on pinworm infection
Head lice	After the first treatment. It is advisable to inform early childhood education about a head lice infection. If a head lice infection is detected in early childhood education, the child does not need to be sent home during the day. See the City of Helsinki's instructions on head lice infection
Whooping cough	5 days after the start of antibiotic treatment. If more than 21 days have passed since the start of the cough, absence is not required.
Molluscum contagiosum and other warts	Does not require absence.
Chickenpox (varicella virus)	Unvaccinated child: until all scabs have dried. This usually takes 5 to 6 days from the onset of the rash. Vaccinated child: when no new blisters appear.
Shingles	The child can attend if the skin lesions can be kept covered.
Cold sore (herpes labialis)	If there is no fever, absence is not required. Handwashing is important to prevent the infection from spreading. In children under 3 years of age, the herpes virus can cause febrile stomatitis.

More on the topic

You can find reliable information online about the most common infectious diseases in children and their treatment instructions:

- [Infections and day care \(Terveyskirjasto, in Finnish\)](#)
- [Infectious diseases in children \(Terveyskylän Lastentalo, in Finnish\)](#)