

# HEALTH GUIDELINES

Keeping all the children (and the adults) in a group setting healthy, is not an easy task. Yet, if we all work together, we can make a positive impact on health maintenance.

WestCOP employs a Health Specialist or Nurse at each site, and a full time Health coordinator for all Early Childhood Education programs. The Health Specialists at the Centers are well trained to identify indicators of illness, help implement and interpret policy on health and safety, and determine when children must be kept home from the program.

## AT THE CENTER:

### Health & Safety:

The Health Coordinator visits all the centers on a regular basis and maintain up-to-date health records of children and staff. In-service educational training programs are offered to all staff and health and safety workshops for children. Center staff receives first aid training in early childhood health and safety and certification in CPR. The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS) in Medicine Administration train designated staff at each center. OSHA regulations are followed.

### Enrollment Requirements:

For the center-based program, a primary care provider must examine each child prior to enrollment as required by NYSOCFS. A record of immunizations is also required and maintained in accordance to the current schedule followed by the NYS Public Health Law and recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. In September 2008, the NYS Education Department began to require a dental examination for all preschoolers.

The Health Specialist sends out notices to parents of children in the process of completing the required immunization schedule. *Children will not be excluded for failure to be immunized if they have an appointment for immunizations and have their immunizations initiated within one month.* Three months after admission will be the maximum period allowed to obtain required immunizations unless the health of others in the program is at risk. A child whose immunizations are not kept up-to-date will be dismissed after three (3) written reminders to the parent over a three-month period. The Health Manager and Nurse will check annually for updates of the recommended and required immunization schedule. Children, not properly immunized, are not to be accepted into the program to prevent the introduction of serious diseases. This WestCOP policy is based on recommendations from the agency's pediatric consultant.

Additional information may be obtained from other medical practitioners by utilizing a Confidential Information Release Authorization Form signed by parents. This additional information should be received prior to the child entering the program so staff may offer the special care the child may need, i.e. allergies, asthma management, medication requirements or any other chronic condition.

Routine preventive health services (physical assessment by a licensed health care provider) is required annually for all children enrolled and should include age-appropriate immunization records, physical exam results, screening tests as recommended by the NYS Medicaid EPSDT, and a written statement signed by the health care provider that the child is able to participate in early childhood programs and currently appears to be free from contagious diseases. Parents are responsible for assuring their children are kept up-to-date and a copy of the child's health assessment is given to the Health Manager or Nurse.

The child must have a yearly exam while enrolled. The form must be complete by opening day or the first day of attendance. **No child will be admitted to WestCOP's Early Childhood Education program without the appropriate medical information.**

Enrolled children of preschool age must have an initial dental examination on file within 90 days of entrance and a yearly examination thereafter.

## **Standard Precautions:**

All WestCOP's early childhood programs consistently practices "standard precautions" for infection control in accordance with OSHA regulations. The importance of regular and frequent hand washing is emphasized, as is wearing non-porous gloves when in contact with all body fluids bloods (except sweat), regardless of whether blood is present.

Each site is equipped with a supply of gloves specifically for this purpose. Any staff member responsible for diaper changes must comply with "**standard precautions**" requirements.

Strict hand washing requirements will remain in effect after every diaper change or exposure to blood or body fluids. These precautions are mandatory with no exceptions.

### **All staff will follow standard precautions when handling blood or blood-contaminated body fluids.**

- a. Disposable gloves must be immediately available and worn whenever there is a possibility for contact with blood or blood-contaminated body fluids.
- b. Caregivers are to be careful not to get any of the blood or blood-contaminated body fluids in their eyes, nose, mouth, or any open sores.
- c. Clean and disinfect any surfaces, such as countertops and floors, onto which blood has been spilled.
- d. Discard blood-contaminated material and gloves in a plastic bag that has been securely sealed. Clothes contaminated with blood must be returned to the parent at the end of the day.
- e. Wash hands using the proper hand washing procedures.

**In an emergency, a child's well-being takes priority.** A bleeding child will not be denied care even if gloves are not immediately available.

## **Allergies:**

Allergies are identified on the Health History Form at the WestCOP intake interview or when detected. Parents are responsible for providing written documentation from the child's primary care provider including past history of allergen, symptoms and plan of action by use of the Medication Consent Form.

WestCOP protects children from allergens by (a) keeping an updated list of children with allergies in the classroom and kitchen, allergen and allergic response; and (b) alerting all teachers, Cooks, Cook Aides, Health & Nutrition Coordinator of the allergic condition.

WestCOP's early childhood education centers have a "Nut Aware" (peanut butter) product free policy. Contact with small traces of peanut or any other nut oils, can be critical or even fatal to a child who has a severe nut allergy.

## **Mild Illness and Exclusion Guidelines:**

The basis for all WestCOP health and safety policies is for the protection of the ill/injured child as well as all other children and adults in the program. The decision to exclude a child will be based on whether there are adequate facilities and staff available to meet the needs of both the ill child and the other children in the group.

*A child will be excluded if:*

- a. The illness prevents the child from participating in activities that the program routinely offers.
- b. Keeping the child in the program poses an increased risk to the child or to other persons with whom the child will come into contact.
- c. The illness requires more care than the staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.

If a child is absent for *three (3) or more consecutive days* due to illnesses, the Health Manager or Nurse will ascertain whether or not a physician's note is required to return to the program.