

## PREVENTING COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

*Controlling communicable diseases in the school settings is of utmost importance. Providing a safe, comfortable, and healthy environment facilitates the educational process, encourages social development, and allows children to acquire healthy attitudes toward school.*

*However, children who are ill or feel unwell can create difficulties in the school setting. An ill child cannot always fully participate in class or educational activities. Worse yet, the child with a communicable disease may spread the illness to others. Accordingly, it is essential that educators help control the spread of communicable diseases by safe, effective, and practical efforts. Here are some helpful tips for educators to consider.*

**Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.** Use soap, warm water and disposable paper towels. Wash your hands frequently and teach children to wash their hands, too. Hand washing reduces the number of microorganisms on hands that can spread communicable diseases.

**Open the window to let the fresh air in!** Well-ventilated rooms help reduce the numbers of airborne germs inside. Airing out the rooms is important, even in the winter. When it's cold outside, we spend the majority of time inside. Respiratory diseases easily spread from coughs and sneezes. Opening the window at least once a day lets the germs out and fresh air in.

**Follow a good housekeeping schedule and disinfect in the proper way.** Make sure that the floors, walls, desks, and bathrooms are clean! Clean and disinfect shared items and desks at least weekly. Disinfect diapering tables and the sick bed between the use of each student. The simplest way to disinfect a surface includes three steps. The first step is to clean the surface with soap and thoroughly rinse with clean water. The second step is to spray or wipe the surface with a solution of 1/4 cup of household bleach in one gallon of water. The final step is to let the surface air dry in order to give the disinfectant time to work. Be careful not to use this solution on surfaces that could be damaged, such as carpets. This preparation is inexpensive and kills bacteria, viruses and most parasites. If you prefer to use a commercial disinfectant, you may. It is important, however, to measure the amount of disinfectant according to the directions on the bottle to get the necessary concentration needed to disinfect.

**Do not share personal items among children and keep their belongings separate.** Do not allow children to share belongings such as hair brushes, food, clothing, hats, or other items. Have students keep coats and hats separate, as much as possible.

**Exclude sick children and staff.** Sending a sick child home helps prevent the other students in the school from becoming ill with a communicable disease. Staff and volunteers should also stay home when they are sick. Most school age children are immunized against vaccine preventable diseases. *It is recommended that adults working with children be immunized as well.* Please ask your health care provider for more information on recommended vaccinations for adults.