



Head Lice

Quality Area 2: Children's Health & Safety

Policy Statement

Head Lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. This childcare policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the preschool community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Goals – what are we doing?

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice our preschool community will work in a co-operative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Strategies – How will it be done?

The Parents/Carers will:

- Check children's hair for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method;
- Ensure children do not attend Preschool with untreated head lice;
- Regularly inspect all household members and treat them as necessary;
- Notify the Preschool if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced;
- Children with long hair will attend Preschool with hair tied back;
- Use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice;
- Notify the parents or carers of your child's friends so they have an early opportunity to detect their children if necessary;
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the childcare and broader community especially around issues of headlice; and
- Sign an agreement accepting the terms of the Childcare Head Lice Policy.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required;
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the preschool;
- Include information and updates in preschool newsletters;
- Include annual head lice updates for staff in-service programs;
- Assist staff in checking a child for head lice when they have signs that head lice may be present ie. a child complains of an itchy head or is constantly scratching.

- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health care centres and local government;
- Accept that the responsibility to exclude a child from preschool rests with the Director or Authorised supervisor; and only exclude children from preschool who have live insects;
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced;
- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue;
- Request that all families attending the preschool sign an 'agreement' to accept the conditions of the childcare service's head lice policy;
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required;
- Review the head lice policy annually;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the childcare and broader community especially around issues of Head Lice; and
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding or and response to managing head lice.

Evaluation

The education and care service maintains a safe and healthy environment for children, families and staff by developing and following policies and legislative guidelines.

Sources

- Information Pamphlet and Management Guidelines 'Scratching for Answers'
www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/