

Supporting children who are in nappies

Advice for early years settings



Children, Schools and Families
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Supporting children who are in nappies

Many settings and parents ask about the admission and support of children who have varying degrees of incontinence. This leaflet and the fuller guidance document are an attempt to clarify the situation for providers.

Leicester City LEA has produced guidance in collaboration with the Council for Disabled Children. The national Sure Start unit publicises this on its website, www.surestart.gov.uk saying that it is "pleased to share this policy with all local authorities, childcare and early education settings so that this good practice is available to all." In turn, Children, Schools and Families is pleased to adopt and publicise this guidance.

Frequently asked questions

Where do we stand in relation to The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), incontinence and nappies?

"Any admission policy that sets a blanket standard of continence, or any other aspect of development, for all children is discriminatory and therefore unlawful under the Act." *

"Asking parents to come and change a child is likely to be a direct contravention of the DDA, and leaving a child in a soiled nappy for any length of time pending the return of the parent is a form of abuse." *

In light of this information you might like to check your admissions policy and update if necessary.

Should my staff change the child?

Yes. However, in rare circumstances where a child refuses to allow you to change them, you may have an agreement with the parents where they, or a family friend, may be called in to change the child.

Should we provide the nappies/gloves/wipes/sacks?

No, the child's parents should normally provide these. However, some settings may choose to incorporate these as part of their fees.

Do we need a separate changing area?

A suitable place for changing children should be a high priority in any school's/setting's Access Plan.

However, if you do not have a purpose built changing area then you can buy a changing mat and change the child in the toilet area or in a separate room. Exceptionally, where a setting has only one room and an unsuitable toilet area, it might be possible to change the child discreetly in a corner of the room.

How do we dispose of the nappies?

Nappies and wipes from healthy children can be double bagged or put into nappy sacks and placed into domestic waste bins. If you have concerns about a child's health (for example if a child is HIV positive) or about the number of nappies dealt with please contact your local Environmental Health Office for advice.

Do we need more than one person to change a child?

No, all staff are CRB checked and there is no regulation suggesting that more than one practitioner is required to change a child. Think of the child's dignity, he/she does not need more than one person looking at him/her.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is a known risk of false allegations, it may be good practice to have another member of staff to act as witness. It is, of course, always good practice to tell someone that you are about to change a child.

My staff feel uncomfortable about changing nappies, what should I do?

Please explain to your colleagues that you promote inclusion and that they are bound by the Disability Discrimination Act. Also, we recommend that this task be included, where appropriate, when reviewing job descriptions and recruiting new colleagues.

EVERY CHILD MATTERS

Changing children's nappies is a part of what we provide to cater for our children's individual needs

Where can we get further information?

The document 'Continence guidance for early years settings' (CSF4460) gives more detailed advice and if you require further support please contact your Area Senco, Community Team or Early Years Adviser.

*Information taken from the Council for Disabled Children/Leicester City LEA document which is promoted by the National Sure Start Unit.

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