

**Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre
NAPPY CHANGING POLICY & PROCEDURE**

“In impersonal nurseries, anyone and everyone changes nappies, at a time which is convenient to the organisation. Children may be processed across the nappy changing table like tins of beans travelling along the checkout at the supermarket.

Where there is a thoughtful keyperson system, it will almost always be the keyperson who changes the child's nappy. The keyperson will know about how the child likes to be told that a nappy change is needed, and may have special rituals and perhaps a special song for nappy changing time.

A keyperson changes a nappy in the context of a relationship with the child. If just anyone changes nappies, wipes noses and rocks children to sleep, then there are no special relationships. The care of the children becomes just another task alongside mopping floors and cleaning tables.”

Julian Grenier, Developing positive relations with children (EYFS 2007)

This policy sets out the clear principles and guidance on supporting children's needs with specific reference to nappy changing. Please always bear in mind the quality of the child's experience during this intimate and special time.

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The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 2001 amended 2005)

In line with the above named Act, Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre will ensure:

Policy Statement

No child is excluded from participating in our setting who may, for any reason, not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing nappies or equivalent whatever their age. We work with parents towards toilet training at the appropriate age, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time. We make necessary adjustments to our bathroom provision and hygiene practice in order to accommodate children who are not yet toilet trained.

We see toilet training as a self-care skill that children have the opportunity to learn with the full support and non-judgemental concern of adults.

AIMS

The aims of this policy and associated guidance are:

- To safeguard the rights and promote the welfare of children
- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff who are required to change a child's nappy
- To assure parents/carers that staff are knowledgeable about personal care and that their individual concerns are taken into account
- To protect children from discrimination, and ensure inclusion for all

Basic Principles

At Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre we will bear in mind the following principles when nappy changing:

- Children have the right to feel safe and secure
- Children will be respected and valued as individuals
- Children have a right to privacy/dignity when staff are meeting their needs
- Children are supported in their understanding of toileting procedures so that they are led to independence

Vulnerability to Abuse

We will ensure that all staff are familiar with our Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures to develop children's resilience and to protect them from any form of abuse. It is important that children are changed in reassuring and caring way by their key person or another member of staff they have a close relationship with, and it is important that we signal our intention to change a child's nappy and ask for the child's consent, as appropriate for their development. That means we do not give children the message that just anyone can pick them up, take them off and undress them.

Staff should always change children when there is a colleague in the room, in the nappy-changing areas which allow for privacy but which are not closed off. This is part of making sure we have a culture of open-ness which safeguards children and ensures all adults follow safe working practices.

In the Hygiene Room staff must ensure that the window is not obscured. Staff must position themselves where they can be seen from the corridor.

It is essential that if any member of staff has a concern about safe and appropriate nappy changing that they raise their concern immediately with the safeguarding team.

Working with Parents/Carers

We will work with parents when attending to nappy changing routines.

- Where parents are present, i.e. in the parent and toddler group or during the settling in period, they will be asked to change their own child's nappy
- If a child has any disability or medical needs that may affect their personal care routine, a Health Care Plan will be drawn up in agreement with parents/carers.
- Parents will be asked when their child first starts at the nursery whether or not their child has any special words/actions/particular needs during their nappy changing procedure
- Any significant observations made during a nappy changing procedure will be notified to the parents at the end of the session (i.e. badly soiled nappy/strong urine etc.)

Achieving Continence

At Sheringham Nursery and Children's Centre we will encourage all our children to achieve continence when they exhibit signs that they are ready.

In addition, key people ensure that nappy changing is relaxed and a time to promote independence in young children.

Protection for Staff

As far as possible, nappy changing procedures will be carried out by the child's Key Person, protection being afforded to the single member of staff in the following ways:

- Staff will be trained in good working practices which comply with Health and Safety regulations as set out in our Health and Safety Policy under Toilet and Nappy Changing.
- Staff will inform The room leader discreetly that they are taking the child to carry out a care procedure
- If a situation occurs that causes staff concern, a second member of staff should be called if necessary and the incident reported to the line manager and recorded
- Where staff are concerned about a child's actions or comments whilst carrying out the personal care procedure, this should be recorded and discussed with the lead for safeguarding immediately
- Risk Assessments will be carried out for Toileting and Nappy Changing procedures
- Staff will be trained in the area of Intimate/Personal care for children with specific needs and procedure for safe moving and handling
- Students will only change nappies, as part of their training, if they have developed a close and trusting relationship with the child and with the agreement of their supervisor/mentor.
- Agency staff will not change nappies unless employed as a key person on a long term basis

Nappy Changing Procedure

We will follow the Nappy changing Procedure below:

- Gather all the necessary items needed before each nappy change, for example, nappy, wipes, nappy sack, cream if necessary (where cream is used the child should have their own named cream and written permission obtained from the parent). It is a good idea to have a named box or bag for each child containing these items and spare clothes in case of accidents.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- Put on gloves and apron. **You should use a new set of gloves and apron for each nappy change.**
- Approach the child and say or sign that it's time for a nappy change. You may need to negotiate (e.g. "OK, I can see you're playing, but we need to change your nappy. We'll do it in 2 minutes"). You should never approach a child from behind, pick them up and take them for a nappy change.

- Place the child on a nappy changing mat or, if using steps, support the child if necessary to climb up the steps.
- Remove the child's clothing to access the nappy. Remove the nappy and place it inside the nappy sack.
- If the child's clothes are soiled, they should be bagged separately and sent home, they should not be rinsed by hand.
- Using the wipes, clean the child from front to back and place the used wipes in the nappy sack. Tie the nappy sack and put it in a pedal operated bin.
- Put on a clean nappy and apply cream if necessary (see above).
- Take off the gloves and apron and place them in a pedal operated bin.
- Dress the child.
- Help the child to wash their hands if necessary using liquid soap, warm water and paper towels.
- Wash your hands using liquid soap, warm water and paper towels.
- Take the child back to the room.
- Return to the nappy changing area, clean the changing mat, surrounding area and underneath the mat before leaving to dry. Then wash and dry your hands.

Ask the expert...

Quick change

If nappy changing becomes just a mechanical task, says *Dr Maria Robinson*, both baby and carer lose out

Some of my colleagues have been saying that I take too long when changing nappies, which is worrying me. We have a key person system in place where one of us takes charge of planning, observations and liaising with the parents of our small group. The daily routine includes nappy changing times in the morning when they arrive, and before lunch. We don't always "do" our key children. There seems to be a pressure to get through feeding, snack and meal times quickly, and now it seems as if changing nappies is more rushed – almost like a competition at times.

What a shame! You obviously feel stressed at the atmosphere that arises in your setting, where the 'care' part of 'daycare' appears to be going lost.

It sounds as if the key person system has fallen into the trap of becoming a more administrative role, rather than its original intention of the key person being the one who provides a 'safe haven' for her group of children. Of course, a vital part of the key person role is to think about her children and, following careful observations, to adapt, promote and provide activities appropriate to their individual needs. Deepening the relationship with parents is also crucial. This supports consistency and stability for the child and ensures that parents do not feel 'surprised'.

However, a weakening of the key person role into one where the relationship with the child and their parents is not the hub of daily practice may lead to specific caring aspects of daily life becoming 'mechanical' – with stress being on 'getting the job done' rather than appreciating the significance of the act of feeding a child, or the wealth of experiences associated with the routine procedure of changing a nappy.

Thankfully, the value of meal times is increasingly noticed because of the emphasis on healthy eating and because people have taken the opportunity to reflect on the wealth of social interaction involved, as well as the opportunities for 'natural' learning about number (how many knives, forks and spoons do we need), correspondence (which cup goes with which plate), quantity and mathematical language (how much, more, less, full).

CONSISTENT CARE

To turn so nappy changing, Elinor Goldschmidt said in her seminal work *People Under Three*, "So much of the subtle communication for children who do not yet have command of language comes through touch and handling" (p40). Such touch and handling obviously occurs not only when a child is being held, comforted, lifted and carried, but also when being changed.

I hope we are a very long way from the situation described by Goldschmidt where a child 'was put on a pot by one nurse, wiped by another and had his pants pulled up by a third'. Such impersonal care should have no part in any setting. What may linger is the idea that this is something to



For the baby the experience of nappy changing includes the

carer's voice and facial expression

be 'got through'. The practice may well arise in some settings of a need for discrete staff in change nappies, or the importance of consistency for the child is not always realised. This is not to say that a child should never be changed by another member of staff. There should, if possible, be a 'buddy system' where another person who the child also knows will can take over in the key person's absence.

Why is it necessary for the child to have a consistent, caring person who carries out this process in an unhurried, caring way? What is so important about changing a wet or soiled nappy? The key lies in the intimacy of the act – we are cleaning an intimate part of the child's body. We have several types of touch receptors all over our bodies that respond to gentle pressure, deep pressure, sustained pressure and vibration. We also have two major pathways for touch from all those receptors through the spinal cord and up to the brain. One of these pathways carries 'messages of pain, temperature, itch, tickle, social sensation, crude touch (the one that tells you if you have banged your knee) and sensual touch' – this latter relates to stroking and massage (Blakelee & Blakelee, 2007). Please note, the reference to 'sensual sensation' is identifying what types of touch this pathway accommodates – babies and children do not have 'sensual' feelings in the adult sense.¹

Washing, wiping, patting and stroking during nappy changing will provide a soothing experience for the baby, who may previously have been experiencing feelings of coldness or wetness as a result of their bodily

functions. Some babies are sensitive to changes in temperature, so removing clothing can be distressing. The feel of the changing mat may also be pleasant to some babies and unpleasant to others. It is so important that practitioners recognise that each baby will have an individual response to this process, and that parents will have a very familiar changing routine. Most parents will have their own way of undressing their baby – how they clean, talk and interact – which is going to be the pathway laid down of 'how my nappy is changed'. Then in daycare, someone else carries out this process. As a key person, going to know how the parent usually carry out nappy changing can help baby make the transition from home to daycare.

QUALITY OF INTERACTION

Uncaring, rapid and task-driven mistakes in these everyday routines carry far more implications than their very ordinariness may suggest. As well as the impact on their sensory/touch systems, children will also be aware of the quality of the interaction between themselves and the carer involving facial expression, tone of voice, quality of handling and so on.

Nappy changing is a task and sometimes can be unpleasant. Whatever the state of the nappy, it is how the adult responds that turns this experience into one that is positive or negative for the child. A young child will not evaluate the quality of care, but what will be ingrained into the more subtle aspects of how they feel about themselves will be the impact of their daily experiences and how it felt for them. ■



Dr Maria Robinson is an early years consultant and author of *From Birth to One and Child Development from Birth to Eight: A Journey through the Early Years* (Open University Press). Her *Nursery World* series on child development can be bought online at www.nurseryworld.co.uk/books

If you have a query for Maria please e-mail it to anna@haysmarket.com or write to the address on p13

PHOTO: ISTOCK/NEK



REFERENCES

- 1 Blakelee, S, Blakelee, M. (2007) *The Body Has a Mind of Its Own*. New York, Random House Publishers.
- 2 Goldschmidt, Elinor. (1994) *People Under Three*. London, Routledge.
- 3 I am using the term 'sensual' here as (sadly) the vast majority of daycare practitioners are female, so applying it to the male practitioners who may be reading this!
- 4 However, we must also carefully note that self-touch of the genitalia can be comforting and many young children will do so for this reason.