



March 10, 2022

Dear Head Start Families,

Though we continue to experience lower rates of COVID-19 infection in our communities, we are still seeing illnesses that are typical in the winter months. Recently, several students and staff have come down with the “stomach bug”. Remember, a COVID-19 infection can look like a “stomach bug” or the flu, so always test for COVID-19 if your child shows any signs of illness.

While some illnesses are unavoidable, there are things we can all do to protect ourselves:

- WASH, WASH, WASH YOUR HANDS! This is still the best defense against illness. Encourage your children to wash, using soap and warm water, especially before meals. Have them sing the A-B-C song while scrubbing, to ensure they are taking enough time to adequately kill germs. The “stomach bug” is often caused by a norovirus. Hand sanitizer is NOT effective against norovirus, but hand-washing IS. Always wash with soap and water when they are available.
- Get plenty of rest. School age children should get 9-11 hours of sleep each night. Adults should try to get 8 hours of sleep each night.
- Drink lots of fluids and eat a balanced diet - especially breakfast. Healthy food choices give the immune system the support it needs to help a person fight off infections.
- Dress appropriately for cold weather. Help your child choose warm, comfortable clothing, including socks, every day. Make sure they are wearing a coat, a hat and mittens or gloves. They need the exercise and fresh air during recess, even in cold weather.

Unfortunately, even with the best care, germs can make us sick. The best treatment for many illnesses is often rest and fluids. If anyone is experiencing severe vomiting or diarrhea, or is unable to hold down fluids, contact your medical provider. Please keep in mind the guidelines below when deciding if your child should come to school.

Any child with any of these symptoms should stay home and be tested for COVID-19:

- A fever of 100 degrees or higher. A child should not come back to school **until the temperature is normal for 24 hours without medication.**
- vomiting or diarrhea
- any rash accompanied by a fever
- ear pain and/or eye drainage
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- a frequent cough

Please call us if your child shows any sign of illness. If your address or phone number has changed, remember to contact the school office. It is very important to be able to reach you in the event your child becomes ill at school.

Have a safe and HEALTHY rest of the winter!

Regards,

Kimberly Mansfield
Head Start and Early Head Start Director