



## Hygiene and safety guidance for nappy changing and helping young children use the potty or toilet

### Nappy changing:

- Store each child's nappies and associated items, such as creams and wipes, in individual containers labelled with the child's name.
- Place your changing mat on the changing area (a designated floor space or changing table).
- Check that everything you need is within reach of the changing mat.
- Cover your changing mat with a clean towel or disposable paper towels.
- Wash and dry your hands before beginning to change the nappy.
- If you choose to use disposable gloves a new pair should be used for each nappy change and hands washed before they are put on and after they are removed.
- Clean the child's genital area and bottom with cotton wool and water or with the wipes provided by the parent or guardian.
- Gently lift the child's legs by holding their ankles, this allows you to clean underneath.
- For girls, always wipe from front to back. For boys, also clean from front to back. There is no need to retract the foreskin.
- Let the area dry. There is no need to use powders.
- Slide a new, open nappy under the child by gently lifting their legs at the ankles.
- For boys, point the penis down before closing the nappy.
- The new nappy should be snug but not tight.
- Put used disposable nappies, wipes and cotton wool into a bag and dispose of them hygienically - a foot operated bin is best for disposal. Used cloth nappies should be double-bagged and tied and given to the parent or guardian at home-time.
- If the child's clothes have poo on them, bag the clothes separately and send them home.
- Wash your hands and the child's hands with soap and warm water.
- After each nappy change wash the nappy changing mat with detergent and disinfect it.
- Make sure the nappy changing area is clean and hygienic at all times.

### For children who can use the potty or toilet:

- Provide soap, disposable paper towels or a clean hand towel so older children can wash and dry their hands. You will need to help younger children to properly wash and dry their hands.
- Keep children's toilets clean and hygienic at all times.
- Clean and disinfect potties after each use.
- Treat any toileting accidents sensitively.
- Praise children when they are being toilet-trained to encourage self-esteem and ensure a sense of achievement.

### Think safety:

- Never leave a baby or child alone on a raised surface – always keep one hand on them.
- Remember to keep plastic nappy sacks or bags out of sight and reach of children. The thin plastic can cling to their face causing suffocation.
- Keep hand gels, creams and similar items out of sight and reach of children. They could cause illness if eaten.
- Don't allow young children into the bathroom without adult supervision – the temptation to run water into the bath (drowning risk) or have a rummage around might be too hard to resist!
- Make sure that all dangerous items (razors, cleaners, air fresheners, medications) are out of sight and reach.

Good hand hygiene, nappy changing and toilet practices will reduce the chance of spreading infections.

Children must not attend child-care for 48 hours after their last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.

Read *The management of infectious disease in childcare facilities & other childcare settings* ([www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie))