



ARKANSAS HEALTHY CHILDREN HANDBOOK

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Chapter 13 **HIV/AIDS Infection Control**

Chapter Content

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Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

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GUIDELINES FOR INFECTION CONTROL

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. It stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the immune system and makes it difficult for the body to fight off infection (immunodeficiency). AIDS is Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

HIV is spread only by three ways:

- 1) Blood-to-blood contact (where a sufficient amount of infected blood gets into the bloodstream of another person);
- 2) Sexual intercourse (where certain infected body fluids get into the body of another person); and
- 3) From a pregnant woman to the fetus or newborn or through the mother's breast milk.

Scientific studies continue to show that HIV is not transmitted in any other way, even from close contact such as that which occurs among children and staff in group programs.

Therefore, the following guidelines are suggested for infection control in child care programs regarding HIV infection:

- HIV-infected children should be admitted to group programs if their general health, neurological development and behavior are appropriate. Questions regarding admission of a child with HIV infection should be resolved on an individual basis in consultation with a health care professional who has expertise regarding HIV infection, preferably the child's own physician.
- HIV-infected children who persistently bite others or who have oozing skin lesions may pose a theoretical risk for spread of the virus, but cases of HIV transmission in these ways have not been reported.
- Blood testing children for HIV prior to entering a child care program is neither warranted nor recommended. Parents of children attending group programs do not have the right to know the HIV/AIDS status of other children or staff in the program. Arkansas law only requires that HIV-infected individuals inform potential sex partners or persons providing medical care to them of their HIV/AIDS status.
- Child care facilities should have standard practices to reduce the spread of infections of various sorts. Recommended practices include promptly cleaning soiled surfaces with disinfectant solution (mix $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water*); using disposable towels and tissues with proper disposal; and using disposable gloves when touching mucous membranes, any open skin lesions, or blood or blood-contaminated body fluids. These are precautions that should be routine for all settings.

***Note: If the area is saturated with blood or blood products, then the solution should be $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of bleach per gallon of water.**

SAMPLE HIV POLICY TO BE USED BY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

While concern about HIV/AIDS is natural, studies continue to show that HIV does not spread in the absence of sexual contact or blood-to-blood contact, even in normal intimate family living situations (including child care settings).

The Arkansas Department of Health recommends the following policy:

We will not exclude children, family members or staff based only on their being infected with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). We will attempt to protect the privacy of such individuals. Caretakers need to know if a child has other physical limitations or special needs that require accommodation, whether these are related to HIV infection or not. We strongly discourage mandatory HIV testing prior to enrollment or employment.

The following resource is recommended by a public health official at the Arkansas Department of Health:

“Infection Control in the Child Care Center and Preschool” by Leigh G. Donowitz, published by Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, and available by calling 1-800-638-0672, ISBN 9780683180411.