



The Maldon Neighbourhood Centre Occasional Childcare

Asthma Management Policy & Procedure

RATIONALE:

Asthma is a chronic, treatable health condition affecting approximately one in 10 Australian children. It is the most common reason for childhood admission to hospital. With good asthma management, people with asthma need not restrict their daily activities. Possible signs of asthma include wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, difficulty in breathing and shortness of breath. Symptoms may vary greatly between children.

AIM:

All children at the service who are known to have asthma are supported via Asthma Friendly policies and procedures and all children, staff and visitors can access Asthma First Aid in an emergency.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all MNC Occasional Staff and includes volunteers, parents/guardians/family members, and also applies to incursions and excursions.

This policy will apply regardless of whether a child diagnosed by a medical practitioner as being at risk of asthma is enrolled at the service.

PRINCIPALS

Asthma management is a shared responsibility. MNC recognises the need to educate staff and parents about asthma and responsible asthma management. MNC will:

- Raise awareness of asthma amongst those involved in our services
- Implement strategies to ensure the health and safety of all persons with asthma involved at the service.
- Provide an environment in which children with asthma can participate in all activities to the full extent of their capabilities
- Provide a clear set of guidelines and expectations to be followed with regard to the management of asthma.
- Ensure all educators have attended an Asthma Accreditation course.

Educators should be aware that children do not have to be diagnosed with asthma to experience symptoms of this disease.

If a child is experiencing asthma symptoms and is not diagnosed, follow the Asthma First Aid plan immediately and call Ambulance Victoria on triple zero (000) and follow their direct instructions.

PROCEDURE:

We are committed to being an Asthma Friendly service. This means that educators have current training in Asthma First Aid. Our First Aid kits include an in-date reliever medication and single person use spacers (with masks for under 5 year olds). These are readily accessible at all times and are portable for carrying on excursions or emergency evacuations /practice drills.

Roles and responsibilities:

Children with diagnosed asthma will be supported to self-manage their asthma in line with their age and stage of development.

Parents/carers of children with known asthma will:

- Provide an Asthma Care Plan, signed by their treating doctor. This will be completed on enrolment or after the initial diagnosis. Templates and further information can be downloaded from The Asthma Foundation of Victoria's website: www.asthma.org.au. This will be updated at least once every year.
- Provide their child's medication, clearly dated and in the original labelled container. A spacer and mask (as required) should also be supplied.
- Alert staff to any changes in their child's asthma management

Staff will:

- Encourage children wherever possible to learn about their asthma and how to communicate to staff/volunteers if they are unwell or experiencing asthma symptoms
- Work with parents to develop an appropriate Risk Minimisation Plan.
- Maintain a central record of children's health care needs, including asthma, and review regularly.
- Ensure that the expiry date of reliever medication is checked regularly and replaced when required. Spacers and face masks will be replaced after every use.
- Ensure that children with known asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their full potential.
- Maintain current Emergency Asthma Management training and First Aid qualifications.
- Be aware that asthma is very serious and can be life threatening.

Action to be taken if a child suddenly collapses or has difficulty breathing with a possible asthma attack

This Asthma First Aid Procedure has been reproduced from The Asthma Foundation of Victoria's Asthma & the Child in Care Model Policy, Version 6.4, January 2012.

Asthma First Aid Procedure:

Follow the written first aid instructions on the child's Asthma Action Plan, if available and signed by a medical practitioner. If no specific and signed instructions are available, the instructions are unclear, or the child does not have an Asthma Action Plan, begin the first aid procedure outlined below.

Reliever medication is safe to administer to children, even if they do not have asthma, however if there is no Asthma Action Plan you must also call emergency assistance to attend (000) and notify the parent/carer of the child as soon as possible.

Call emergency assistance (Dial 000)

If the person is not breathing

If the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse, or is not improving

If the person is having an asthma attack and a blue reliever puffer is not available

If you are not sure it is asthma

Step 1. Sit the person upright

Be calm and reassuring

Do not leave them alone

(Send someone else to get the asthma first aid kit)

(Sitting the child in an upright position will make it easier for them to breathe)

Step 2. Give 4 puffs of blue reliever puffer medication via a spacer

Shake the puffer

Put 1 puff into the spacer

Take 4 breaths from spacer

Repeat until 4 puffs have been taken

Remember: Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths

(This medication is safe to administer and may be lifesaving)

Step 3. Wait 4 minutes

If there is no improvement, give 4 more puffs as above

Step 4. If there is still no improvement call an ambulance triple zero (000) and explain that someone is having an asthma attack

Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives

(If calling Triple Zero (000) doesn't work on your mobile phone, try 112)

This treatment could be life saving for a child whose asthma has not been previously recognised and it will not be harmful if the collapse or breathing difficulty was not due to asthma. Reliever medication is extremely safe, even if the child does not have asthma.