

INTRODUCTION

Currently in the United States more than half of mothers with young children are working outside of the home. According to the Nebraska Department of Labor, between 82% and 85% of mothers with children under the age of 12 are working outside the home. These young children are often placed in home or center child care. As a result of the increased numbers of children in out of home child care, a change in the patterns of childhood infectious diseases is occurring, with infants and preschool-aged children acquiring infections at an earlier age. A variety of infections have been documented in children attending child care, sometimes with spread to caregivers and to others at home. The most common infections found are those of the respiratory or gastrointestinal tracts.

Several factors place children attending child care settings at increased risk of infection. These young children are in close physical contact for extended periods of time which increases the spread of communicable diseases. Their hygiene habits and immune systems are not well developed. In addition, wherever there are young children in diapers, spread of diarrheal disease may occur readily as a result of inadequate handwashing, diaper changing, and poor environmental sanitation practices.

This handbook is meant to inform directors, caregivers, parents, guardians, and health care professionals about specific infectious disease problems they may encounter in the child care setting. It is designed to provide specific disease prevention and control guidelines that are consistent with the national standards put forth by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics in the publications *CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN- National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* (1992), *Red Book 2003 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases* (2003) and *The Control of Communicable Diseases Manual* (2000).

This document contains Fact Sheets on 40 diseases that are of concern in child care settings. Some Fact Sheets are for distribution to families and staff for information only; others have instructions for when some sort of immediate action is necessary.



PLEASE NOTE THAT FACT SHEETS FOR ANY DISEASES LABELED "REPORTABLE" SHOULD ONLY BE USED AFTER CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL OR STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.