

## Head Lice Protocol

### Policy:

A child identified as having head lice cannot be in care our Child Care Center until 24 hours after a home treatment has been applied or a certificate of guaranteed treatment from a professional treatment facility has been provided to the Program Director.

All schools are required to have a Nit Free Terminator Lice Comb as well as a package of rat tail combs accessible to utilize in situations when lice or nits are detected. Nit combs or metal must be cleaned in between each child.

### Procedure:

Please take the following steps when it has been determined that a child in our care has head lice:

1. **When a child is found to have nits or live head lice:**
  - ✓ Parents are notified via Brightwheel and/or phone call.
  - ✓ If the child has live lice (opposed to nits), they are sent home from school.
  - ✓ It is required to have the student's head checked upon returning to the center.
  
2. **Move children out of current room if possible.**
  - ✓ All children will be checked using a separate rat tail comb for each child before being sent to an empty, available classroom, i.e., activity room. After the combs have been used, they must be soaked in a thick Dawn dish soap and water solution for longer than 10 hours or overnight. After the cleaning has taken place, the combs may be used again.
  - ✓ Gloves must be worn when checking children for lice or nits. A new set of gloves must be worn for each child that is checked.
  - ✓ Children that are found to have live head lice, need to be sent to the Director's desk until parents can pick up. (The Director or Assistant Director are to follow Step 1.)
  
3. **Family members within our school**
  - ✓ Determine if the child has siblings and they attend our school. If yes, then check the siblings for head lice.
  - ✓ If the child has other siblings (not in the school building), notify the parent/guardian and recommend checking family members and taking precautionary measures to avoid family infestation.

#### 4. Classroom environment:

- ✓ Vacuum the affected classroom carpeted areas
- ✓ Lint roll all upholstered furniture (ie. Couches, bean bags or pillows).
- ✓ Stuffed animals and dress up clothes need to be laundered immediately using the following dry-wash-dry method:
  - First, place items in the dryer for 30 minutes on the highest heat setting.
  - Second, wash items using hot water.
  - Third, place items in the dryer again for a full cycle.
- ✓ If items are not able to be dried-washed-dried immediately, they are to be placed in a trash bag until they can be laundered.
- ✓ All coats, jackets, nap time items or other personal items need to be placed into trash bags to be sent home with all children in the room the head lice was found.
- ✓ Parents must dry-wash-dry all items before returning items to school. If a child was not in attendance that day, Directors must inform those parents to come pick up their child's belongings for laundering.

**Please Note: These same steps should be used in the instance that your school experiences bed bugs.**

#### 5. Notification Procedures

- ✓ A personal message should be sent to the parent/guardian of an infested student.
- ✓ Email the rest of the families in the classroom where the head lice was found to advise them of the situation. Remind parents to check all their children carefully each day for the next few weeks and to continue checking as part of their routine hygiene. *Remember, personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.*

### Signs and Symptoms

Parents, teachers, and other care givers should be aware of the signs and symptoms of a head lice infestation because young children may not be able to express their discomfort directly. The following symptoms should raise the level of suspicion for a head lice infestation:

- Itching (“pruritus”): Caused by an allergic reaction to lice bites. When lice feed, they inject a small amount of saliva into the skin. Over time, the host can develop an immune reaction to the saliva which results in inflammation and itching. It may take four to six weeks for this reaction to occur in people infested for the first time. However, itching may not be present in all cases.

- Sores on the head: Rarely, scratching can lead to abrasions on the skin, allowing bacteria to enter and possibly lead to infection. In severe cases, lymph nodes around the head, neck and underarms can become swollen.
- Tickling sensation: Lice movements in the hair may be felt by some infested individuals.
- Sleeplessness and irritability: Lice are more active at night, possibly disrupting sleep.

Some people with head lice infestations have no symptoms. A lack of symptoms does not mean a lack of head lice.

**Remember...**

**Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.**

**Resources:**

***Head Lice Resource - includes training, scripts to parents, and more.***

***[https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder2/Folder41/Folder1/Folder141/MI\\_HL\\_Manual\\_Final\\_2013.pdf?rev=0d98bd1c91e149d2b727edb96b95cf84](https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder2/Folder41/Folder1/Folder141/MI_HL_Manual_Final_2013.pdf?rev=0d98bd1c91e149d2b727edb96b95cf84)***