



## Important information for parents about children who are too sick to go to child care

It is inevitable that young children will get sick. If parents rely on child care while they work they will need to have a plan for when their child is too ill to go to child care. By knowing and planning ahead of time for when your child is too sick to go to child care you'll be better prepared to deal with this situation and hopefully minimize some of the stress associated with it.

There is only one center, "Toys," in Kent County that cares for mildly ill children. It is located in a hospital and it is only available to employees of that hospital. Since there are no other centers or services that care for ill children in this area here are some suggestions for managing work and family when your child is too sick to go to child care.

### Identify Back-ups:

You may be able to call upon a relative, a close friend or a neighbor to be your back-up when your child is too sick to go to child care and you still need to go to work. Make these arrangements ahead of time. Be sure to discuss important information with your back-up(s) such as information about your child, fees and contact information. It is helpful to have this information written down and discussed ahead of time with your back-up(s). To read an informative article about back-up child care arrangements go to [http://www.childcare.org/families/article\\_bac\\_k-up-child-care.htm](http://www.childcare.org/families/article_bac_k-up-child-care.htm).

### Know your Caregiver's Policies:

It's helpful to know what your child care program or provider's policies are regarding sick children. Very few programs or providers will accept children who are contagious and/or are not feeling well enough to play and participate in activities in child care. You'll also want to know what the policy is for when a child can return to child care after an illness. There may be times when you and the caregiver disagree about when a child is well enough to return to child care. It's best to talk to your caregiver about what your doctor has recommended and encourage your caregiver to contact their own family doctor for more information. A good resource for parents and caregivers regarding sick child care issues is "*Too Sick to Go to Child Care?*"

<http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/sickchild-parents.htm> and

*"When Should I Send a Sick Child Home?"*  
<http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/sickchild-childcare.htm>.

### Learn About your Workplace:

Parents should become knowledgeable about how flexible their employer is about taking time off for when a child is ill and assess their "time off" benefits in general since there probably will be times when you'll have to miss work and stay home with a sick child. A good resource to learn about and explore different workplace options for working parents is the "*Child Care Issues and Your Workplace*" tip sheet  
<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/subscriptions/dailyparent/volume.php?id=17>

### Consult your Child's Doctor:

Parents should always consult their child's doctor when their child is sick. Your doctor can also tell you about the illnesses children suffer and about how child care may expose them to more illnesses. Tell your child's doctor if your child goes or will be going to child care. This is especially important for first time parents. You can also talk to your doctor about steps you can take to lessen the spread of infection at home and at child care. Parents can also visit [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) and click General Health for information about keeping children healthy.

### **Prevent the spread of illnesses:**

Be sure to ask your child care program and provider what they do to prevent the spread of infection and illness among children. Are caregivers and children washing their hands before and after meals, toileting, diapering, and contact with respiratory secretions? Are children eating nutritious meals, getting enough rest and outdoor time that contribute to the development of healthy children? Even with the best health practices at child care and home children will become ill but less often if prevention steps are practiced. Please read "*Protecting Yourself from Illness: General Information and Helpful Tips*" [https://www.accesskent.com/Health/HealthDepartment/CD\\_Epid/Illness\\_Prev.htm](https://www.accesskent.com/Health/HealthDepartment/CD_Epid/Illness_Prev.htm).

### **Other Resources for parents and caregivers:**

Visit the Center for Disease Control website for the article about Preventing Flu in Child Care Settings  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/childcaresettings.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/childcaresettings.htm).

National Association for Sick Child Daycare  
[www.nascd.com/index.htm](http://www.nascd.com/index.htm).

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care offers "*A Parent's Guide to Choosing Safe and Healthy Child Care*"  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/ccquality-ind02/guide.htm>.

If you still have questions about sick child care, other child care questions, or need child care referrals, please contact Kent Regional 4C at (616) 451-8281, toll free 1(800) 448-6995, ext. 230 or visit us online at [www.4Cchildcare.org](http://www.4Cchildcare.org).

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