



Cloth in Childcare

Reusable Nappy Fact Sheet

Many parents utilise childcare facilities. If you are one of them, and would like your childcare centre to use cloth you may face a range of responses. Some centres enthusiastically embrace cloth while others are somewhat reluctant or may even outright refuse to use cloth nappies which may stem from a lack of knowledge.

Here are some tips for successfully combining reusable nappies and childcare, and links to supporting information.

The Australian Government document *Staying Healthy in Childcare* while not saying that you can't use cloth, does note

Disposable nappies may reduce the risk of infections as disposable nappies do not leak as easily as cloth nappies and are able to be disposed of immediately.

Some carers may interpret that as reason to exclude cloth. **This statement is outdated and based on nappy practices and products from decades ago.** The document does include a section on using cloth nappies.

Some centres may try to claim that disposable nappies are more hygienic in a group care setting but this is disputed by a study conducted in the US in the 90's which looked at the difference in hygiene in childcare environments using cloth and disposable nappies. It concluded that **when comparing environments using cloth and disposable nappies, the type of nappy made no difference, hygiene levels came down to the carers hygiene practices.**

Contamination in Child Day Care Centers: Cloth vs Paper Diapers. (1995) Holaday, B; Waugh, G; Moukaddem, V. E; West, J. & Harshman, S. [American Journal of Public Health](http://www.ajph.org/cqi/reprint/85/1/30), Vol. 85, Issue 1 30-33 (<http://www.ajph.org/cqi/reprint/85/1/30>)
Summary of *Contamination in Child Day Care Centers: Controlled Comparison of Cloth and Paper Diapers.* (1993) Holaday, B. et al. (http://www.gownsrus.com/new_page_9.htm)

No State regulations say anything about not using cloth nappies, in fact most regulations are accommodating including sections similar to the following:



Storage of soiled items

This section applies to a child care centre other than a centre for a school age care service.

The child care centre must have a soiled items facility in every toilet area and nappy change area in the centre.

In this section soiled items facility means a facility

- (a) for storing soiled items until the items are rinsed using a sluice; and
- (b) capable of being sealed; and
- (c) adequate to prevent the spread of infection from the soiled items; and
- (d) inaccessible to children in care at the child care centre.

Links to State legislation can be found at the National Child Care Accreditation Council's links to State Departments page (http://www.ncac.gov.au/links/state_licensing_index.asp?note=update).

All centres must participate in national accreditation with the National Childcare Accreditation Council (<http://www.ncac.gov.au/>). Nothing in the accreditation documentation precludes or discourages the use of cloth nappies, in fact it promotes **continuity of care between home and the centre and respect for parenting choices**. Cloth napping is a parenting choice and parents should not have to alter their practices when there is no valid reason nor should they have to incur additional costs.

Below are some **tips** for when approaching a centre about using cloth nappies:

Take in an example of the nappy that you plan to supply (for daycare simple to use nappies such as pre-stuffed pockets or all in ones are suggested)

Show them how they work. Make sure to mention that they do not require soaking. Ask them what they will require you to supply for storage. Two suggested methods are a wetbag or nappy bucket with a lid. If you are supplying a bucket you may consider also providing a wetbag that can be used to line the bucket so that at the end of the day the bucket can be left at the centre and only the wetbag need to be taken home.

Flushable liners can be used to make poo removal easier whilst at daycare.

If your child attends a childcare centre which is 'cloth friendly', please complete our the ANN *cloth friendly child care survey*. More details on the project can be found at the ANN blog (<http://ausnappynetwork.wordpress.com/2008/02/23/ann-cloth-friendly-child-care-cloth-friendly-hospitals-surveys-can-you-help/>).



Links in order of appearance:

Staying Healthy in Childcare – National Health and Medical Research Council
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ch43syn.htm>

Contamination in Child Day Care Centers: Cloth vs Paper Diapers. (1995)
<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/reprint/85/1/30>

Summary of Contamination in Child Day Care Centres: Controlled Comparison of Cloth and Paper Diapers. (1993)
http://www.gownsrus.com/new_page_9.htm

National Childcare Accreditation Council – State Departments
http://www.ncac.gov.au/links/state_licensing_index.asp?note=update
National Childcare Accreditation Council
<http://www.ncac.gov.au/>

Cloth in Childcare Survey
<http://ausnappynetwork.clothincare.sgizmo.com/>

This fact sheet has also published at the ANN blog:
<http://ausnappynetwork.wordpress.com/2008/09/10/do-you-want-your-childcare-centre-to-use-cloth-nappies/>

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Information current at 10 September 2008