

OCFP Office of Child and Family Policy	Department of Children and Family Services	
	Index No: 2001.07	Issuance Date: September 26, 2001
	Origin of Request: Central Office of Licensing	
	Distribution: Licensing Staff, Administrative Staff, Office of Child and Family Policy (A,L,P)	
	Key Words: Soap, liquid soap, hand washing, 89 IAC 407, Day Care Centers.	
	Approved by:	

Interpretation

Question: The use of mild liquid soap is required in the diapering and toileting procedures. Should the use of mild liquid soap also be required in the hand washing procedures for classrooms?

Applicable To: Licensed Day Care Centers

Policy Citation: Section 407.340 Diapering and Toileting Procedures

k) Mild liquid soap and single-use towels or automatic dryers shall be provided. Towels may be disposable. Automatic dryers shall not be used for infants and toddlers.

Section 407.320 Hand Washing

a) Children's hands shall be washed routinely and frequently with soap and water, at least at the following times:

- 1) Upon arrival at the center;
- 2) Before and after each meal or snack;
- 3) After using the toilet or having diapers changed;
- 4) After handling pets or animals;
- 5) After wiping or blowing his or her nose;
- 6) After touching items soiled with body fluids or wastes (e.g., blood, drool, urine, stool or vomit);
- 7) Before and after cooking or other food experience;
- 8) After outdoor play time; and
- 9) Before and after using the water table.

c) The following technique for thorough hand-washing shall be used:

- 1) Wet hands under warm running water.

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- 2) Lather both hands well and scrub vigorously for at least 15 seconds.
- 3) Rinse hands thoroughly under warm running water.
- 4) Dry both hands with a new single-use towel or automatic dryer.
- 5) For hand-held faucets, turn off the water using a disposable towel instead of bare hands to avoid recontamination of clean hands.

- e) When children are too young to wash hands by themselves, staff shall wash their hands using the above technique. As children are developmentally ready, staff shall teach children the proper hand-washing technique and assist and supervise the procedure as needed.

Discussion:

The rule does require the use of mild liquid soap in toileting procedures. In the Hand Washing Procedures no mention is made of the type of soap to be used since it is the physical action of hand-washing, not the type of soap that removes soil. However the National Health and Safety Performance Standards state that "bar soap or liquid soap may be used by staff, as both are equally effective. However, children should use liquid soap, as they do not have the dexterity to handle a bar of soap." The intent of this standard is to make it easier for young, preschool age children to be able to wash their hands.

The Department does recommend the use of mild liquid soap for young preschool age children in the hand washing procedures but the Department does not require it in rule. The use of bar soap for school-age children is acceptable.

Response:

The use of mild liquid soap shall be required for diapering and toileting procedures, but the rule does not require the use of mild liquid soap in the hand-washing procedures. Liquid soap is recommended for preschool children because of their limited dexterity to handle bar soap when washing hands.