

HIV/Aids in the Classroom or Childcare

HIV/AIDS stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. It is an infectious disease caused by a virus. Over time the virus attacks and destroys the body's immune system.

HIV/Aids Spreads Through:

- Contact of mucous membranes or openings in the skin with infected blood and body fluids that contain blood, semen and cervical discharges.
- Breastfeeding
- Dirty needles or sharp instruments
- Mother passes to infant before birth
- Sexual contact

HIV/AIDS is **NOT** spread through the type of contact that occurs in childcare and school settings such as touching, hugging, playing, feeding or by contact with surfaces touched by infected people. It is **not** spread by saliva, tears, stool (bowel movements), urine or kissing.

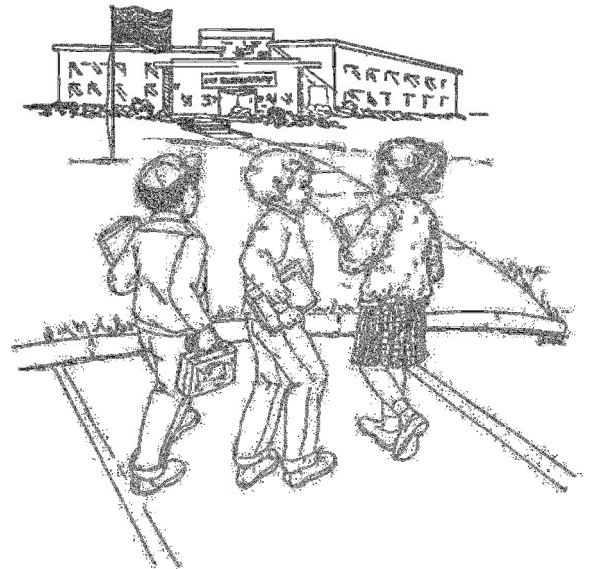
Signs and Symptoms

A child with HIV/AIDS may have some of these signs:

- Failure to grow and develop well
- Enlarged liver or lymph nodes
- Swelling of glands in the neck and face (salivary glands)
- Frequent infections

Treatment of HIV/Aids

There is no cure, but doctors can use several different drugs to treat HIV/AIDS.



Picture 1 Many children with HIV/AIDS can attend school or childcare.

When the Child Should Not Go to School or Childcare

Exclude a child from the group setting if:

- The child has fever or change in behavior
- The child has weeping skin sores that cannot be covered
- The child has bleeding problems
- There is a risk of the child being exposed to a particular infection in the group setting.

A sick child should NOT attend childcare if:

- The child has an illness that poses a risk of spreading serious disease to others.
- The caregiver is NOT able to offer the extra care needed to comfort a sick child without affecting the care of other children.
- The child is not able to keep up with most activities, even after resting or taking a longer nap.

Notes to Childcare Provider

Disclosure – Parents and guardians do not have to share information about the HIV status of their children. If parents or guardians do share the HIV status, this information is not to be shared with other staff or teachers without written permission from parents or guardians. Since HIV/AIDS does not have to be disclosed, or families may not even know that a family member is infected, standard safety measures should be followed when handling blood or blood-containing body fluids.

Risk factors – The child should be evaluated by his doctor and the childcare program director if he has one or more potential risk factors for spreading HIV/AIDS.

A child may return to the group setting when his doctor says it is safe. Once he has returned, any skin lesions should be dry and covered. If the child has bleeding problems or weeping skin lesions that cannot be covered, he should be taken out of the group setting.

Biting – If a bite results in blood exposure to EITHER person involved, persons should follow up immediately with their healthcare provider.