

ASTHMA POLICY

AIM:

To provide appropriate care and treatment for children who suffer Asthma in compliance with parent/carer wishes and in accordance with each child's Asthma Record Card and Management Plan.

Implementation:

On enrolment into Elder Street Early Childhood Centre, we ask that parents complete an Asthma Record card. This card enables carer's an awareness of each child's asthma condition and the treatment that you wish us to implement upon an asthma attack. It also provides vital information and clues as to what type of symptoms your child displays when suffering a mild to severe asthma attack. We have been advised by Asthma Australia that the Asthma record card should be completed in consultation with your doctor and that it is important to advise us of any changes in your child's condition, treatment and overall Asthma Management Plan.

Asthma Medications

If a parent wishes to leave their child's asthma medication at the centre when they are in attendance, we ask that it be kept in a lunch box type container, and fully marked with their name and its contents. If they are on preventative medication on a long term basis, we will instruct parents in providing a standing order for the medication required. The centre does have a nebuliser machine, but we ask that parents provide their child's own mask and attachments for administration.

Play and Asthma

The Australian Asthma Foundation state that children with Asthma need not be limited by their condition. Reducing the the likelihood of asthma symptoms occurring can be achieved by following simple steps, that we adhere to at Elder Street, they are:

- * Refer to child's Asthma Action Plan to determine if the child requires medication before exercise
- * Begin play with some gentle warm up exercises in the area where the activity is to take place.
- * Ensure children are warmly dressed if the weather is cold.

If a parent feels that their child is unwell and would prefer to keep their activity to a minimum, especially outdoor physical play, then we will always follow their instructions in this regard.

A copy of the Australian Asthma Foundation's "4 Step Asthma First Aid Plan" is on display for staff around the centre. All staff are made aware of each child's asthma condition and Asthma Record Card and management

plan on enrolment. A copy of same is kept in the child's room for access to staff and also on file in the office for reference.

Treatment of children suffering from breathing difficulties

The Asthma Management Plan also allows carers to be able to instigate treatment of a child who appears to be suffering from breathing difficulties, but has no known existing asthma condition. By ticking the box on the back and allowing carers to follow the four steps of action, this ensures that parents are aware of what steps will be taken, if their child shows signs of breathing difficulties.

Our policy at the centre, for any child showing signs of breathing difficulties, whether they have an Asthma Management Plan or not, is to again follow these four stages of care, as our main priority is to treat the child as quickly as possible. Please see Asthma Management Plan cards attached for further information.

Asthma Management in Preschool aged children – by Karen Goodall, Community Asthma Educator

Asthma is the most common condition affecting children in Australia. It affects 1 in 4 primary school (and younger) children, 1 in 7 high school students and 1 in 10 adults.

Asthma cannot be cured, however it can be managed and many children do not continue to have episodes into adulthood. If it is not managed properly it can lead to frequent sickness, poor concentration, tiredness and lethargy as well as affecting the child's ability to partake in activities. The major trigger of asthma in the preschool age group is viral infections (coughs and colds).

There are several things that you as parents can do to help manage your child's asthma:

- Ensure that you tell the centre if your child has ever had asthma, even if they only suffer from it once or twice a year. There is always a chance that they may have an attack at the centre.
- Ensure that your child is given their medication as prescribed. If required, preventers must be taken every day, usually twice a day.
- Use blue relievers (ie, ventolin, asmol, respolin, airomir, bicanyl) as necessary. If they are needed more than 3 times per week your child may need to start or increase preventative medication. So see your Doctor if this is the case.
- Use a reliever 2 puffs 3-4 times a day at the first sign of a cold to help prevent an attack.
- Ensure that you take your child's reliever puffer to the centre, preferably with a spacer, for use during acute episodes. Tell the staff that you have brought it and they will store it in a safe place.

However, should you forget, the centre does have these for emergency situations.

- Always give young children (especially under the age of 8 years) their asthma medication using a puffer and spacer as this is the best means of delivery for this age group.
- Ensure that your child has an action plan completed by his/her doctor, which you can understand and follow. Please provide the centre with a copy of this – (see Asthma Record Card and Management Plans available from office).

For more information regarding asthma please contact the Community Asthma Support Service 62052000 for an appointment. We provide family or one to one education sessions for parents and children/young people with asthma.

FIRST AID FOR ASTHMA

1. Sit the person comfortably upright. Be calm and reassuring.
2. Give 4 puffs of blue **RELIEVER** inhaler (puffer) - Ventolin, Asmol, Bricanyl or Airomir

Relievers are best given through a SPACER if available. Use 1 puff at a time and ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.

Use the person's own inhaler if possible. If not use one from a first aid kit or borrow one.

3. Wait 4 minutes. If there is no improvement, give another 4 puffs.
4. If little or no improvement,

CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)

And state that the person is having an asthma attack.

Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.

Children: 4 puffs each time is a safe dose

Developed: 22 July 2005 by M Duffy-Fagan
Source: Asthma Australia Foundation