

Wash down guidelines

Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (ECE) services

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora works with ECE services to ensure safe environments and good health practices to support the health and wellbeing of children. These guidelines provide ECE services with advice on wash down facilities and procedures.



Wash down facility

It is strongly recommended that your ECE service has a plumbed in shower, tub or shub. This should:

- be close to the nappy change area
- allow for the privacy of the child
- be at a comfortable temperature
- be easy to clean.

If you don't have a plumbed facility, we recommend you plan to install one at the next renovation of your premises.

It is not recommended to wash a sick or soiled child in a portable tub. Continuous reuse of the contaminated water to wash a child can lead to illness.



Wash down procedure

It might be necessary to wash a child:

- at nappy change time – sometimes wipes are not enough
- if a child has vomited over themselves or another person
- if a child has a toileting accident
- if children become wet or dirty during play.

Situations where children need to be washed down can be emotionally traumatic for a child. It is important you are familiar with wash down procedures.

The procedure should focus on the privacy and personal dignity of the child as well as protecting their health and safety, and that of other children and staff.

The procedure must be specific to:

- the ECE service's wash down facilities
- the number and age range of children
- the number of staff and helpers.

The procedure should cover the following.

- **Wash down facility** – Instructions on how to use the plumbed in shower, tub or shub.
- **Clean up of wash down area** – How to effectively clean up the wash down area. *Include:* Wash the area and equipment with hot soapy water, then wipe down with a 0.1% bleach solution and leave to dry in the air. If a portable tub is used, discard water down the toilet.
- **Soiled clothing** – Instructions on cleaning and storing. *Include:* Do not rinse. Remove any solids, double bag and store in an area (laundry) that is inaccessible to children. Send home with whānau.
- **Staff health and safety** – Staff involved in washing children should wear protective clothing, gloves, mask (if appropriate) and disposable apron. Once the child is washed down, wipes, disposable washcloths, protective clothing and equipment must be disposed of carefully. All soiled or contaminated clothing or disposable equipment should be double bagged. Take care when opening the bag to not breathe in aerosolised particles.

Attach the procedure to a wall in a visible location by the wash down area.

Keep a spill kit in an accessible location.

