The Science of Diapering

Who needs diapering?
All infants and young children who are not permanently potty trained need diapering.

When should diapering occur?
- Diapering should occur as needed, to meet individual needs.
- Diapers should be checked on a regular basis – at least once every hour.

What is the proper diapering procedure?
- Position the diaper changing cabinet so that the entire room is visible.
- Cover the diapering surface with a clean, disposable, non-absorbent covering before each use.
- Both adults and children should wash hands properly before and after diapering.
- Remove clothes and soiled diapers, and place out of the reach of the child while the child is on the changing cabinet.
- Clean the child from front to back with disposable wipes. Place the wipes out of reach of the child.
- Use diapering creams only at the parent’s direction. (Powders should not be used.)
- Caregiver should then wash her hands properly before dressing the child with a clean diaper and clothes.
- Wash the child’s hands properly, and return him to play.
- Place soiled clothing in a sealed plastic bag marked with the child’s name and send it home. (Do not attempt to rinse or clean clothing.)
- Dispose of tightly wrapped, soiled diaper, wipes, and surface cover in a lined diaper pail that is inaccessible to children.
- Clean the changing cabinet surface, and disinfect it with the appropriate bleach solution.
• Upon completion of the changing and clean-up process, caregiver should then wash her hands using proper hand washing procedures.

• Write down diapering information for parents.

**What equipment and supplies are needed?**

• a specified diapering area located away from food areas

• a diaper changing cabinet that is sturdy with a non-absorbent surface and built-up sides. The changer should also be a convenient height for caregivers.

• a changing cabinet with built-in steps or a regular changing cabinet with sturdy steps available for toddlers to use to climb up to the changing surface

• a hand washing sink used only for diapering that is within easy reach of the changing cabinet

• only disposable diapers and wipes used unless directed otherwise for medicinal reasons

• a diaper pail that is lined and inaccessible to children

**The Art of Diapering**

Daily routines are the “nitty gritty” parts of the day in an early childhood setting. Diapering is probably the “grittiest” routine of all, but it can be a fun, nurturing, and bonding time between a caregiver and a child. Here are a few hints for making this necessary routine meaningful.

• Be organized. Have diapering supplies and children’s belongings within arm’s length to make the process flow smoothly.

• Check diapers regularly – at least once an hour. Children should not have to wait to be changed.

• Assign a specific caregiver to each child to meet individual needs and to make the diapering process consistent.

• Do not rush the process. Move smoothly and reassuringly with a gentle touch.

• Talk, sing, hug, smile, and look into the eyes of the child. Make this a fun one-on-one time.

• Respect the individuality and self-concept of each child. Talking about what is happening makes diaper changing times pleasant and reassuring.
• Respond to an infant’s cooing and babbling noises. Talk to toddlers about the colors of their clothing or their hair and eyes. This is a great time for language development to take place naturally.

• Hang a mobile or a banner above the changer to have something that is pleasant to look at and talk about. Be sure to hang the mobile or banner out of the reach of children.

Reference