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## **BEST equipment and infection control**

### **NHS Policy**

NHS organisations and other organisations that deliver care and education typically have policies and procedures relating to infection control. You have a duty under health and safety law to follow any such policies and procedures. Please refer to the local policy and how this relates to children and the use of toys in a clinical environment. You may find it useful to liaise with the local Infection Control Nurse/Lead in your organisation.

If you are employed by one organisation but deliver sessions on sites owned/controlled by another (for example, an NHS employee delivering a session to a nursery), you may need to consult the policies and procedures for both organisations.

If no local policy exists, or you are a lone practitioner, it is recommended that you carry out your own risk assessment relating to infection control.

Responsibilities usually include:

- Staff receiving regular up-to-date training as part of mandatory continuing professional development
- Hand hygiene procedures both for staff and clients
- Availability of hand washing sinks and/or hand gel dispensers with good hand washing techniques prominently displayed
- Liaison with parent(s)/carers. Some children may have medical conditions which make them more likely to catch infections than their peers. For this reason, it is good practice to discuss infection control with parent(s)/carers. A written record should be created and an alert sheet placed in the child's case notes should any specific conditions / susceptibilities be identified
- Regular audit of infection control and toy disinfection / washing schedules (compliance monitoring).

Additional care or more stringent infection control measures may be required if there is a current outbreak of a particular infection (pandemic). Infection control policies and risk assessments should be reviewed regularly.



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BEST may be used within many infection control policies. However, practitioners need to carry out a risk assessment relating to infection control.

The main points when considering the BEST language programme are:

- The BEST toy box includes toys made of plastic and/or wood or other non-porous materials. These may be easily wiped with a suitable disposable disinfectant wipe or washed in warm water with a suitable detergent between sessions
- The BEST toy box includes cloth bags, toys with cloth clothing and plush toys. These items are machine washable and may need to be laundered between use
- Any damaged toys should be thrown away and replaced
- Heavily contaminated toys should be thrown away and replaced. Please refer to the organisational policy.

If the organisational policy does not allow the sharing of toys, or there is a client with high susceptibility to infection, or you have been advised not to allow children to touch/share soft toys by the Infection Control Lead then there are two options:

1. Deliver BEST on a one-to-one basis, ensuring that toys are disinfected and laundered between sessions (if used with another client)
2. Deliver BEST in an observational mode, i.e. demonstrate all actions and do not allow the child to touch/manipulate the toys
3. Ask parents to bring in their own 'agent' toys (Man, Woman/Lady, Baby, Boy, Girl, Teddy) for their exclusive use in the BEST sessions

Option 2 above will require the children in the BEST group to have sufficient listening and attention skills to benefit from an observational delivery style. The person/people delivering BEST should also consider providing more frequent/concrete reinforcement for attending to the activities such as reward stickers. However, please refer to the BEST manual, as verbal praise may interfere with the pairing of verbal input with the observation of actions in shared attention, which is required for BEST to be effective.



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## Useful documents and examples of guidelines

National Day Nurseries Association and The Infection Control Society. *Nursery manager's guide to infection control*. Available at: [http://www.ndna.org.uk/Resources/NDNA/Public%20Factsheets/NDNA%20Manager\\_s%20Guide%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf](http://www.ndna.org.uk/Resources/NDNA/Public%20Factsheets/NDNA%20Manager_s%20Guide%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf) [Accessed 26/09/14]

Public Health England. *Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings*. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/353953/Guidance\\_on\\_infection\\_control\\_in\\_schools\\_11\\_Sept.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/353953/Guidance_on_infection_control_in_schools_11_Sept.pdf) [Accessed 26/09/14]

Sussex Community NHS Trust. *Infection control toy guidelines* (2010). Available at: [http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/downloads/trustwide\\_policies\\_procedures/clinical/ipc\\_toy\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/downloads/trustwide_policies_procedures/clinical/ipc_toy_guidelines.pdf) [Accessed 26/09/14]

## Disclaimer

It is not possible for the authors and publishers of the BEST language programme to evaluate the needs of the clients who may participate in the programme or the various settings in which the programme may be delivered. The BEST toys have been selected so that they are safe for use and machine washable where appropriate. It is incumbent on the supervising member of staff and all staff delivering the programme to carry out a suitable risk assessment and follow any local and national policies relating to infection control.