

## BETHEL FOSTER HOME BABY CARE POLICY

(adapted from Hope Foster Home)

Most of the babies that we have with us have been rejected and had difficult and painful experiences. They are helpless and totally dependent on us to love and protect them from all harm. At ALL times, be gentle with them and treat them as precious creations of God. Let them know that they are loved. **No baby will be abused verbally or physically in any way! Anyone who treats a baby unkindly in any way will be dismissed immediately!**

All babies are individuals and though we try to fit them into our routine to make our work easier, we must allow for their individual personalities to develop so that they will grow as normal children in a loving home environment. We don't want them to grow up as "institutionalized" children. For example, some babies feed every two hours and some every five hours. Some sleep well and some don't. Some may be colicky and cry when being fed. Some need more physical contact and want to be held more than others. Get to know your babies well and give them the care that they need.

Before they are able to speak, their only way of communicating is by facial expression and by crying. Crying means that they could be tired, hungry, sad, lonely, bored, frightened, in pain, needing physical contact, uncomfortable because of dirty diaper or diaper too tight, need to burp, teething, too hot, too cold, or any combination of the above. Loud noises or crowds of people could also upset them. Be sensitive to their needs.

You may have children of your own or you may have been taught your own way of caring for babies. Some of the methods outlined here may be very different from what you have been taught before, **but we ask you to follow our principles of baby care while you are working in this Home.** This is very important.

Each baby will have his/her own schedule prepared by the Director. Please follow this schedule precisely. Do not change anything on the schedule without the knowledge of the foster parents.

### **Basic baby care**

#### A. Bathing and dressing

- 1) Babies should be bathed everyday in the evening before bedtime. Babies enjoy this time, so give them time to play in their bath with a few toys that you clean first.
- 2) Make sure the water is at a comfortable temperature (37C)

- 3) Have all the things you need (towel, face towel, shampoo etc.) ready before you put the baby in the water. **Never leave the baby alone in the bath**, even for a few seconds.
- 4) Be gentle when you wash them. Their skin is very tender. They usually don't like water on their faces. Just wash their faces gently with a wet face towel. Wash their hair daily. Do not massage children.
- 5) Towels are not to be shared. Each baby will have 2 towels of his/her own. Hang the towels to dry when you are finished. Put the towels in the laundry at least once a week or before, if they are dirty.
- 6) When drying the babies, pat them rather than rubbing. Check their bodies for skin problems, diaper rash, rashes in the folds of their necks, armpits, and thighs. Apply diaper rash cream when necessary. If the rash is unusual or severe, let your supervisor know and she will inform the doctor.
- 7) Wash your hands before and after every diaper change.
- 8) **Never leave the baby alone on the change table even for a few seconds.** They could turn over and fall off.
- 9) Always dress them in clean clothes and fresh diapers. If they have dirtied or wet their clothes during feeding, change them. Stained clothes are to be returned to the laundry to be treated with stain-remover. Dress them appropriately according to the weather. The room temperature in the Home should be at a constant, comfortable temperature, so there is no need to over-dress the babies in winter. If your babies' clothes are too small or stained, please inform the supervisor so that new clothes can be chosen for the baby. Do not go to the storeroom to change the clothes yourself.
- 10) For babies who are just learning to crawl or walk, do not put socks or shoes on them while they are indoors. Babies learn different sensations through the soles of their feet. You will deprive them of this learning experience if you keep their feet covered all the time.
- 11) Encourage toddlers to dress themselves, even allowing them to choose what they would like to wear as long as it is appropriate.
- 12) Babies' nails need to be cut or filed. This is best done while they are asleep. Their hair is to be kept neat and tidy.

## B. Sleep time

- 1) Most babies need to have a morning nap and an afternoon nap. Younger babies need more sleep than older ones. Assess babies' needs according to their age and put them to sleep as necessary.
- 2) Different babies have different rituals when going to sleep. Some will go to sleep as soon as they are put down while some may cry for a short time (1 to 2 minutes) before falling asleep. Don't leave your

baby to cry while she is distressed. Some may need to be rocked. Some want a pacifier. Do whatever your baby needs to make their sleep time pleasurable.

- 3) Put them in their cribs and close the door to shut out noise. Check on them frequently. Some babies need to be patted back to sleep if they wake too soon. Babies get irritable if they do not get enough sleep.
- 4) Small babies should be put to sleep on their sides or on their backs, but it is okay for older babies to turn over to sleep on their tummy.
- 5) Remove all bibs or anything that may tighten around the babies' necks while they are asleep.
- 6) As soon as the babies are awake, take them out of the crib.

### C. Feeding

- 1) Your babies should be fed according to their requirements. Their feeding charts should be filled out after every feed.
- 2) Wash your hands well before you prepare their milk or cereal feeds
- 3) The cook will prepare food for the older children. Encourage older children to feed themselves if they want to, even if they make a mess. Make sure the children wash their hands before they eat.
- 4) If the baby is not hungry, encourage him/her to eat, but do not force feed. Do not feel guilty or discouraged if your baby does not finish her food.
- 5) Only bottle-fed babies are allowed to be fed in the playroom. All other children must be fed in the dining room. No drink or food is allowed in the playroom.
- 6) Solids should be started between 4 to 6 months of age. Start with a teaspoon of watery rice cereal, slowly adding more and thicker cereal as the baby use her tongue to swallow. Add different cereals to her diet to get her used to different tastes.
- 7) Older babies should be encouraged to drink water and fruit juices, especially in hot weather. Encourage older children to use a cup.
- 8) After feeding, clean the bottle and utensils. Return the bottles to the sterilizing containers. Dry the plates and cups and put them back in their places.
- 9) Throw away any uneaten food or milk
- 10) Clean up the area of any food or liquids that may have been spilled while feeding. The area may be needed to feed another baby.

### D. Play time

- 1) Playtime is very important in a child's development

- 2) When they are not asleep, they should be in the playroom or in the outdoor playground if the weather permits. Toddlers may be allowed to play outside and get dirty, but must be washed after play time and changed into clean clothes.
- 3) Make sure that they play with toys that are appropriate for their ages and not dangerous to them, (e.g. small toys that can be put in their mouth and choke them should not be given to them).
- 4) Make sure the toys are clean.
- 5) Teach them to share toys and play together and to put away their toys when they are finished.
- 6) If you have to leave your child for a few minutes, make sure someone else is watching your child for you.
- 7) If the weather is nice, take your children for walks.

### **Isolation room**

Care of the babies in the isolation room is under the direct supervision of the doctor. The control of the spread of infection is very important in this area. Extra care must be taken with regards to cleanliness.

- 1) Babies and staff in this area are to be kept apart from the healthy babies to prevent the spread of infection. Other babies or staffs who are not assigned to work in this area should not enter the isolation area when sick babies are there.
- 2) Staff must wear their over-garments whenever they are in the isolation area and take them off when they leave.
- 3) Staff must wash their hands when entering and leaving the area, as well as other times when caring for babies.
- 4) Babies must remain in the isolation area until they are clear of infection. The Doctor will decide when the babies are well and can leave the Isolation room.