



# Head Lice Policy

## Port Augusta West Childhood Service Centre

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

In the case that a child has head lice, the child is excluded from preschool until appropriate treatment of eggs and lice has commenced. The child is welcome to return to preschool after they have been treated.

### **PROCEDURES**

- Once nits or eggs have been detected, to minimise infection, it is necessary for the child concerned to be discreetly separated from the rest of the class.
- Parents will be contacted and informed.
- Parents should treat their child's hair using appropriate head lice preparation (based on medical advice), or conditioner and a nit comb.
- Parents should ensure that all eggs, dead and alive are removed between the initial and follow up treatments.
- Children are allowed to return to preschool once treatment has commenced.
- Parents of the remaining children in the preschool class should be notified of head lice being present, keeping details of child who is inflicted strictly confidential.

## Recommendations

**Chemical Treatment:** Treat and comb to remove the head lice and eggs; and repeat in 7 days.

**Non-chemical Treatment:** Use conditioner and comb to remove the head lice and eggs, repeat every two days until no live lice have been found for ten days.

Using the conditioner and comb method every week is the best way to detect head lice early and minimise the problem. Tying back hair can also help prevent the spread of head lice.

### Useful Information (Source: Department of Human Services)

**Do head lice fly or jump?** Head lice do not have wings so they cannot fly. They can't jump because they do not have knees.

**How do head lice move around?** Head lice crawl very fast and require head to head contact for transmission. It is possible that because of the way young children play together, head lice are seen more widely amongst small children than adolescents or adults.

**Do head lice live in carpets, clothes, hats or sheets?** No. Head lice very rarely fall from the head. They require blood to survive. Head lice feed 3-4 times a day and without blood, will dehydrate in six hours in a dry climate and 24 hours in a humid climate. An egg requires warmth to hatch and is the reason why they are laid close to the scalp. The further away from the scalp, the less likely they are to survive.

**How does the conditioner and comb method work?** It is a very cheap and effective way of finding head lice. Hair conditioner does not kill lice, but it does stun them for about 20 minutes, meaning they do not move around, and it is difficult for them to hang on. This gives you time to comb through the hair with a lice comb.

**How does chemical treatment work?** Only use products that are licensed or registered for head lice. There are four different active chemicals that target head lice, each works differently and aim to kill lice and/or eggs.

**Should I treat everyone in the family?** It is important to check each family member, using conditioner and comb, for head lice, but only treat those with live lice.

**What should I wash or treat at home?** As head lice only live for a short time off the head, the only extra cleaning needed is to wash the pillowslip on the hot cycle or place in a clothes dryer. Head lice combs can be cleaned in water hotter than 60 degrees.

**Why does my child keep getting re-infected?** Reinfection is the least likely reason for head lice returning in a week's time. If eggs do not die, or were not removed during the original treatment they may hatch and the lifecycle occurs all over again. To break this lifecycle you must re-treat (regardless of treatment method) seven days after the first treatment and continue with weekly checking.