

## Sick and Tired...

Even in the best programs, serious illness can occur. Read the following scenarios and describe how you would respond.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>I would...</b>
<p>Brenda is a staff person in your preschool program. She has not been feeling very well for a few days. This morning her cheeks are bright red and you can tell something is wrong. You are not a doctor, but you can't help but suspect she has a serious illness. You think her symptoms are very similar to what a child with Fifth Disease showed recently. When you ask her to go home and see a doctor, she tells you she has already used all her sick leave and can't afford to take the time off.</p>	<p><i>Make it clear that children are at risk when staff members come to work sick. Talk to your manager about whether there are sick leave donation policies or other ways the staff member could accrue leave. Perhaps there are options for working extra shifts when she recovers to earn back the time. This could be a serious situation, and ethically you must be firm about the staff member going home and seeing a doctor.</i></p>
<p>An infant in your program was just diagnosed with whooping cough. You and the staff members posted a sign outside the door saying a child was diagnosed with that illness. Family members from classrooms throughout the program are waiting to talk to you. They want to know who is sick and whether their child had contact.</p>	<p><i>Reassure the families that anyone who had direct contact with the infected child has been notified. Also assure them that siblings of children in the affected classrooms have been notified. Ease their concerns by sharing the symptoms to watch for and the incubation period for the illness. The CDC has fact sheets for parents about common illnesses. You could print these out and share them with families. Encourage families to talk to their health care providers and to make sure their families' immunizations are up-to-date. Be firm that you cannot share personal health information and that you will not share the identity of the infected infant.</i></p>
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