

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730

Official Government Website:

<https://gov.vg>

Early Childhood Centres To Reinforce Handwashing

Release Date: 17 February, 2025



Early childhood facilities in the Virgin Islands are being urged to be diligent with hand hygiene practices to arrest the spread of common childhood diseases.

Acting Chief Environmental Health Officer, Ms. Henrietta Alexander said these diseases are especially prevalent from November through March each year and includes Influenza, Common Colds, Chicken Pox, Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD).

Ms. Alexander said many childhood diseases are spread through direct contact with infected persons, contaminated surfaces and toys and/or respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing.

“Proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent transmission. Early childhood facilities must ensure children and staff wash their hands frequently, especially before meals, after using the restroom and after handling toys or other shared items,” Ms. Alexander has advised.

Recommended handwashing protocols for early childhood facilities:

- Ensure children and staff wash their hands with liquid soap and clean, running water for at least 20 seconds.
- Supervise young children to ensure proper handwashing techniques.
- Regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as toys, tables, doorknobs and bathroom facilities.
- Encourage parents to keep sick children at home until they have fully recovered.

Ms. Alexander said the division will continue to provide hygiene and sanitation guidance and support to childcare facilities to mitigate the risk of potential outbreaks. Persons who may require additional support or information are asked to contact the Environmental Health Division at 468-5110.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development is committed to improving the health of the people of the Virgin Islands.