

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Each church should adopt a policy for managing communicable infectious diseases such as flu viruses, measles, hepatitis, HIV infection, AIDS virus, etc., whether the church operates a child care center or not. Such a policy is necessary due to the many fears associated with infections and viruses including people's responses to sexual lifestyles and drug use. The policy should include a continuing education program for child care workers as well as other church leaders.

Initiate your policy by selecting a task force/committee to secure up-to-date medical and legal information. Such a policy should be developed over a period of time to educate church members, encourage a compassionate atmosphere among church members, and avoid allegations of discrimination against anyone that is HIV infected or has the AIDS virus.

The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to persons who are HIV infected or have the AIDS virus. This act affects churches with fifteen (15) or more employees, although there may also be nondiscriminating state laws that apply to churches with as few as four (4) employees.

Check with local and state departments of health and social services as well as the U.S. Department of Labor (OSHA) regarding health care standards for **infectious diseases**. Maximum health standards should be maintained whether required by law or not. Of particular concern is the HBV (hepatitis) virus, HIV infection and AIDS virus. This is a concern for workers who change diapers and/or come in contact with blood and other potentially infectious material (body fluids) in a variety of ways.

The following are a few **examples** of precautions that workers should take:

- Face shields, masks, gowns, aprons, disposable rubber gloves, etc. are available for handling persons where contact could be made with any infectious material (body fluids).
- Hepatitis B Vaccine is available and is required in some instances.
- Washing hands should be a policy of the church for all workers.
- Food handlers should be required to wash hands before and after distributing food.
- Sanitizing of carpets, toys, mattresses, etc. should be done on a regular basis.
- Cleaning kitchens/restrooms with bleach water.

**Please note these precautions should be exercised in all childcare areas; whether the church maintains a day care center or not.**