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Cystic fibrosis summary for early childhood educators & relief teachers

Cystic fibrosis is a genetically inherited condition that causes mucus in the body to be thick and sticky. The mucus mainly causes issues in the lungs and the pancreas (in the digestive system). Children are affected differently by cystic fibrosis so their needs will vary.

The following things need to be taken into consideration when teaching a child with cystic fibrosis.

- **GERMS:** minimise the child's exposure to colds etc. by keeping the child seated away from other children who are unwell and encourage good hand washing practices.
- **MEDICATIONS REQUIRED:**
  - enzyme capsules may be needed with snacks and lunch
  - salt tablets
  - other medications such as antibiotics or vitamins.
- **DEHYDRATION:** during warmer weather, the child is more at risk of dehydration so requires easy access to a water bottle and salty drinks. You may need to remind the child to drink.
- **EXERCISE:**
  - the child may become more tired during exercise and need to rest
  - the child will need a water bottle for extra hydration.
- **COUGHING:** is common for some children with CF, it may not be a cold.
- **TOILETING:** the child may need to go to the toilet frequently and urgently.
- **CYSTIC FIBROSIS DIET:** most children need more calories in their diet e.g. food higher in fat and salt.

SUMMARY

- **Cystic Fibrosis (CF) is a complex chronic illness which requires a team of health professionals to assist in the management of it.**
- **CF affects people differently.**
- **Early childhood teachers can have the same expectations of the child's behaviour and abilities as they would of other children in their care.**
- **Regular and good communication with the child's parents is vital.**