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GLOBAL READINESS FOR
MAJOR DISEASE OUTBREAK RESPONSE

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MAKING YOUR HEALTH CENTER CHILD FRIENDLY:

ADVICE FOR HEALTH ACTORS DURING INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS



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Introduction

Infectious disease outbreak containment, control, and mitigation measures may include establishment of isolation and treatment units, contact tracing, quarantine, isolation, prophylaxis, and social distancing. However, these public health actions are often not designed, implemented, or budgeted to comprehensively address the needs of children and their caregivers. In many of the humanitarian settings in which outbreaks occur, children represent a large proportion of the affected population. Their physical and psychological needs must continue to be met during triage, admission, clinical care, and discharge.

Health facilities must be prepared to act to protect diverse children based on their evolving capacities and needs.

This document provides brief advice and tips on how health facilities during an outbreak can be designed in ways that (i) avoid causing unintentional distress to children, (ii) help children cope with the stressful situations they are experiencing, and (iii) respond to any child protection concerns that may be disclosed or observed.

You can report child protection cases to:  018 4729 2321

What is the subject of this Guidance?

- **An infectious disease** is a viral, bacterial, parasitic, or fungal disorder that can be transmitted between people.¹
- **An outbreak** is an increase in the number of cases of a disease. It is a higher incidence rate than is normally experienced in a given community and location at a particular time of year.²
- **Health facilities** are any structure or location where medical care is provided.³ They can be treatment units; isolation centers; clinics; doctor's offices; birth centers; emergency, temporary or mobile clinics; and/or vaccination centers.
- **Making something child friendly** means designing and running it in a way that is welcoming and suitable for children.⁴ For a health facility to be child friendly, the needs, wishes, best interests, and safety of diverse children must be addressed during preparedness, operational, and exit phases.
- **A child** is any person under the age of 18. 'Children' includes those who are:
 - Of all ages: infants, toddlers, children of school-going age, and adolescents;
 - Girls, boys, and those of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and sexual characteristics;
 - Living with disabilities;
 - Displaced;
 - From all kinds of social, cultural, economic, and political backgrounds; and
 - Living in a diverse range of settings and family structures.⁵
- **A child carer** is a health worker with training in child protection who can provide care in the health facilities.⁶

1 UN, "Infectious disease," <https://unterm.un.org/unterm/display/record/who/na?OriginalId=7602> [accessed March 5th, 2022]

2 UN, "Disease outbreak," <https://unterm.un.org/unterm/display/record/who/na?OriginalId=e63ede9f-4cbf-4627-ae0-a618ba338570> [accessed March 6th, 2022]

3 Adapted from UN, "Health facility," <https://unterm.un.org/unterm/display/record/unog/na?OriginalId=02006d67ec69631d852569fd000373f4> [accessed March 6th, 2022]

4 Adapted from the Oxford English Dictionary, "child-friendly," <https://www.lexico.com/definition/child-friendly> [accessed March 6th, 2022].

5 The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, (2019), "Minimum standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action," https://alliancecpa.org/en/CPMS_home.

6 Health Sector Cox's Bazar, Child Protection & Health Care for Children in Health Facilities during COVID-19, [DOWNLOAD PDF HERE](#).

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance note is for health actors working during infectious disease outbreaks who wish to make their health facilities more child friendly. This includes administrators, coordinators, and managers of health facilities, doctors, nurses, aides, helpers, laboratory technicians, auxiliary staff, and volunteers working in health facilities. It also includes security staff, drivers, accountants, and those managing logistics and procurement. Health workers can consult with child protection practitioners if they would like more in-depth advice on making their health facilities child friendly.



When should you reference this guidance?

This guidance is specific to infectious disease outbreaks. It is useful to review the guidance before and during an outbreak.

What does this guidance contain?

- Preparing to make your space child friendly;
- Organizing your physical space;
- Adapted supplies and medical equipment;
- Personnel;
- Management, supervision, and coordination; and
- Budget.

Preparing to make your space child friendly

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TASK
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask diverse children and their parents/caregivers for ideas on how the space should look and feel. You can also consult diverse children’s and youth groups. This should include groups representing children with disabilities. 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Designate a space that is designed to receive children/adolescents in all health facilities. This doesn’t have to be a whole room; it can be a corner in a larger waiting room. This space must be accessible to diverse children and their diverse caregivers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask local artists, painters, community volunteers, or children to donate their time to add murals to your walls inside and outside the facility. Make sure the artwork is inclusive and appropriate for diverse children.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Place a carpet, rug, or woven or plastic mat on the ground in the area for children and babies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) materials that are tailored for and target children. Have these displayed in your facilities. 

KEY









ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE WHERE BUDGET ALLOWS





REPEATED ACTIVITIES

Organizing your physical space

✓	TASK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Put up posters that indicate the frequent child protection risks in Cox’s Bazar. These child protection risks include child marriage, physical violence, neglect, child labor, and sexual violence and exploitation. The posters should include details of how to refer children experiencing these risks to relevant service providers. Include any hotline or helpline numbers for children where these exist.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have low chairs and tables of a range of different heights and sizes, adapted to children of different ages.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Install smaller toilets and sinks for easy handwashing for smaller children. Set out WASH facilities so that diverse children can Reach, Enter, Circulate and Use (RECU) any of the WASH facilities in a continuous movement (i.e., without facing barriers). ¹	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a private area for changing babies’ nappies and/or washing them clean.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a screened area or separate room for breastfeeding.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set out a range of washable toys in a visible and accessible location. They should be diverse to appeal to different interests of children of a range of ages, gender identities, religious (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist) and cultural backgrounds (Rohingya, Chittagong Hill Tribes, Bengali, among others.). Soft toys can be useful for comfort when giving small children treatment. In many places, it is possible to buy toy medical equipment. Children can play with this while the doctor uses real medical equipment to examine the child.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly wash any toys set out for use by children. This may be after each use, daily, weekly, or monthly, depending on the disease and its mode of transmission.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a collection of books and magazines featuring both words and pictures. Remember to cater to younger children with picture books and to adolescents with magazines or books that may appeal to them. Consider accessible multiple formats, including braille, for any communication materials.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Books and magazines should be rotated and quarantined at intervals before they are brought back out to avoid spread of any disease that is indirectly transmitted.	




Adapted supplies and medical equipment

✓	TASK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical equipment designed for children. For example, pediatric stethoscopes (brightly colored and made for smaller patients) and multi-colored plasters/adhesive bandages. Blood pressure gauges can also be bought in bright colors in child sizes.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medication and vaccinations in child-friendly doses that account for the weight of diverse children.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supplies of smaller needles, as these can be less intimidating for children.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small items to reward younger children for their bravery and/or good behavior. These items can be stickers, dried fruit, or small sweets.	


¹ UNICEF (2017), *Including Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action: WASH*, [DOWNLOAD PDF HERE](#).

KEY  **ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE WHERE BUDGET ALLOWS**  **REPEATED ACTIVITIES**

Personnel

✓	TASK
<input type="checkbox"/>	Designate a “child carer” in each facility during each shift. This should be someone who has been specifically trained and made responsible for responding to the needs of children. Wherever possible, the ideal is to have two child carers, one male and one female, at each shift.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide training for all staff at health facilities on: (i) How to recognize child protection concerns; (ii) How to refer child protection concerns; (iii) Child-friendly communication methods/ psychological first aid; and (iv) Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policies. 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Include adherence to Codes of Conduct, PSEA, and Safeguarding Policies in all job descriptions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supply more brightly colored clothes for administrative and medical staff responding to the needs of children, especially the trained Child Carers. This may be a coat made with fabric that has a fun pattern or print, for example animals, flowers, or rainbows. Or the coat may simply be a bright color, such as yellow, orange, or green. A traditional white coat may create fear or be associated with bad memories of previous medical treatment. 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a fun badge or pin to add to white coats, where the budget does not allow for the cost of different coats, or there are no supplies available in your location.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide personal protective equipment that allows children to see medical and administrative staff’s eyes and facial expressions. 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be clear on who the child protection focal point is in your area for quick referral of suspected child protection cases. See here for details.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure all health staff are briefed on the content of the guidance provided in Care for Children in Health Facilities during COVID-19 Cox’s Bazar.

Management, supervision, and coordination

✓	TASK
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have staff who are setting up and managing your health facility attend camp coordination meetings alongside child protection actors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create links between health facility managers and child protection staff that allow for exchange of advice and guidance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update health facility managers’ job descriptions to include responsibilities for (i) Supervising and monitoring child-friendly behavior among staff; (ii) Implementation of child-friendly interventions, as described above; and (iii) Adherence to Codes of Conduct and safeguarding and PSEA policies. 

KEY



ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE WHERE BUDGET ALLOWS



REPEATED ACTIVITIES

Budget

Items you should budget for to make your health facility child friendly are listed below. To calculate the actual costs of these items, you will have to speak with logistics and procurement colleagues.

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
Consultations with diverse children and/or diverse children's or youth groups to get their inputs on design. This should include representation of children with disabilities.			
Decorative materials for the space, including paint, posters, rug or play mats, among others.			
Toys and/or other play materials.			
Disinfectants for regular cleaning of toys.			
Books or magazines.			
Rent, purchase, or construction of an extra space that is designated for children.			
Child-sized furniture.			
Child-sized medical equipment: needles, stethoscopes, among others.			
Small rewards.			
Brightly colored clothes/uniforms for child carers.			
Badges for child carers.			
PPE that allows facial expressions to be seen.			
Briefing or training on Care for Children in Health Facilities during COVID-19 Cox's Bazar.			



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