PARENTING TIPS FOR DEALING WITH LICE

Please realize that dealing with lice and nits is VERY common among young children, and there is no reason to be ashamed or hide. There are many misconceptions regarding lice and one of them is that the child is “dirty”. The opposite, in fact, is true. Lice LOVE clean hair! Just like the flu, lice can spread if proper measures are not taken. Please note: Our policy at ECMCS is a "no nit" policy. This differs from the CCSD policy. ECMCS requires parents to "OPT-OUT" of having their child checked for lice in the case of an outbreak. If you would like to OPT-OUT, please complete the form below ECMCS Opt-Out Form

Here are some things we have found to be helpful:

- Check each child’s hair at least once a week or daily if there are known cases of lice going around. The best places to look for lice are in the hair right behind the ears and the nape of the neck. Lice are wingless and they do not fly. They are brown in color, and are about the size of a sesame seed. Nits are oval and range in color from milky white to tannish-brown. Nits are "glued" individually to pieces of hair near the scalp. It is easy to mistake sand, dirt, dry skin, dandruff, or other things caught in the hair for nits. Remember that nits are always "glued" to a piece of hair, are not easily moved.

- Get a quality steel comb made specifically for lice and nits. The plastic combs that come in the kits are not the best choice. A couple good brands are: Nit Free Terminator Lice Combby Eco Living Friendly (ELFbrands) & Fairly Tales Terminator Nit and Lice Comb. Both are available on Amazon.

- If lice or nits are found, apply a treatment to kill the lice. You can buy a kit in any drugstore, or alternatively use a mixture of tea tree oil, and olive oil (or mayonnaise). You can check online to find specific instructions for using the mixture. It is crucial for all the hair to be thoroughly coated and left on for 3 to 8 hours with a plastic shower cap or bag. Longer is better.

- Wash all bedding in hot water. Put pillows in the dryer on high. Wash all stuffed animals. If you have a large freezer, items can also be put in a plastic bag and left in the freezer for 72 hours.

- Wash all brushes, combs, hats and hair accessories in hot water or soak in lice treatment.

- Vacuum house, furniture and car thoroughly and spray with lice treatment (tea tree oil mixed with water works and there are other natural sprays available like the Fairy Tale products).
• This is where it is extremely important to be vigilant - after the initial action, comb each family member’s hair daily for 2 weeks with the steel nit and lice comb. This is VERY important because the lice treatment kills only the live lice and nits can survive for over 2 weeks. Use hot water and a clear glass bowl to dip the lice comb into after each brush through. Divide the hair in sections if it's long. Being diligent about combing through daily for this long after treatment is what will prevent a re-infestation. A detangling spray is helpful to use with the comb. This is a good time to put in a favorite movie or if you move outdoors, it can be even more fun!

• For continued prevention use a conditioner with tea tree oil or simply spray hair before school with tea tree oil mixed with water. Consider using gel or hairspray to keep the hair slick and hard for lice to attach to - especially if there is a known outbreak at school.

• Girls with long hair can wear their hair up during lice season or if an outbreak occurs at school.

• Keep your children away from other children until the problem is completely gone. Lice can jump and spread faster than you can blink!

• Tell parents of children your family has been in contact with lice and they too should check for lice. It's easier to treat if you catch it early. We are a family here at East Cooper Montessori and open communication is always encouraged.

• Tell your kids not to share brushes, combs, hats or hair accessories.

As always feel free to call the nurse at 216-2883 or email at nurse@montessoricharterschool.com.

It's easier to treat if you catch it early.
Head Lice Policy Stated in the 2015 - 2016 ECMCS Handbook

Students may return after completing an approved treatment. A parent must accompany the child into school upon return and provide proof of treatment (the lice shampoo or medication box). No live lice or nits may be present at the time of readmittance. Please see the school nurse before entering the classroom.

ECMCS Procedure Regarding Lice

- ECMCS sends a notification by email or letter to parents that lice are present in the classroom.
- The classroom(s) are carefully vacuumed and cleaned
- The ECMCS nurse checks all of the students in the affected class
How to Get Rid of Head Lice

- Use a special shampoo that is available over the counter or with a prescription. Your pharmacist or health care provider can help recommend one. **It is important to follow the instructions on the bottle carefully.**
- Your child can return to school after one properly applied treatment with lice shampoo if there are no live lice present.
- Nits can be removed by using a fine-tooth comb. You do not need to cut or shave your child’s hair to get rid of head lice. See "10 Tips for Manual Removal of Nits".

*Most lice shampoos need to be used a second time, 7-10 days after the first treatment, to make sure that new lice that hatch are killed. Some lice shampoos are very good at killing lice, but not good at killing nits. Be sure to check the label to see if a second treatment is needed.*

What Head Lice are NOT:
- Not an Emergency
- Not Dangerous
- Not a Health Risk
- Not able to live more than 48 hours without a host
- Not able to reproduce on pets, carpet, trash cans, furniture, etc.
- Not a sign of “dirty” hair
- Not easily controlled with shampoos alone

What Head Lice Are:
- Are Inconvenient
- Are Frequently found in schools
- Are able to be controlled by manual removal

Signs of Head Lice:
- Frequent head scratching
- Complaints of itchy scalp/head
- Redness behind ears or on back of neck

“How to Get Rid of Head Lice” from the Health Services Department

“Manual removal is the safe alternative and necessary component of any head lice treatment regimen”

National Pediculosis Association
How to Keep Head Lice from Spreading

- Head lice are primarily transmitted by direct head-to-head contact and sharing of personal grooming items. Lice cannot jump, hop or fly, but they can crawl rapidly.
- Discourage children from sharing combs, brushes, hair accessories, scarves, hats or headphones, to diminish the spread of lice. If headphones are used as part of a class, wipe them with a damp cloth before allowing another student to use them. Store each student's hat/coat separately. Articles can be isolated in bags if space is a problem.
- Vacuum chairs, sofas, pillows, mattresses and car seats. Do the same for carpets and rugs — especially where people sit or lay to watch TV.
- Combs and brushes can be cleaned by soaking them in boiling water for at least five minutes.
- Never apply pesticides to your home, child's classroom, bus, furniture, clothing or student in an attempt to control head lice. These applications do not help control lice populations.
- Be sure to check for lice on other family members and other close contact and treat at the same time.

- Infants under 1 year old should not be treated routinely. If your infant has head lice, contact his/her health care provider before treatment.

10 Tips for Manual Removal of Nits

1. Work in a well lighted area or use a flashlight and magnifying glass.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles. A hair detangler spray or other hair conditioner may aid in this process.
3. Divide the hair in sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.
4. Use a lice comb to detect and remove lice and nits.
5. Go through hair sections from the scalp to the end of the hair. Nits are usually found close to the scalp.
6. Dip the comb in a cup of hot, soapy water or use tape to remove any lice, nits, or debris from the comb.
7. Sift through the same section of hair and look for attached nits and live lice.
8. Move on to the next section until entire scalp and all hair has been checked.
9. Screen the infested person every day for ten days and regularly thereafter.
10. If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, another manual search is recommended.

Sources: South Carolina DHEC; National Pediculosis Association; National Association of School Nurses; Journal of School Health

SCHOOL READMITTANCE AFTER BEING INSTRUCTED TO TREAT FOR LIVE LICE:

PARENT MUST ACCOMPANY CHILD TO SCHOOL AND PROVIDE PROOF OF TREATMENT. IF LIVE LICE ARE STILL PRESENT PARENT MUST TAKE CHILD HOME FOR FURTHER HEADLICE TREATMENT/REMOVAL.