

Integrated Pest Management Plan for Bed Bugs - Child Care Settings

Background

In general, institutional child care center environments are not conducive to bed bug infestations. Bed bugs prefer a setting where they can hide during the day and come out at night to feed on a sleeping host; they will, however, feed on a resting host during the daylight hours. Major bed bug infestations of child care facilities are rare. However, child care facilities can be transition sites for bed bugs that can hitchhike to and from on clothing or in bags and backpacks. It is, therefore, prudent for child care programs to be watchful for bed bugs and to keep individual children's belongings separate. There is no association between cleanliness and a bed bug infestation; anyone can experience a developing problem. Remember, bed bugs could be found on staff and others, as well as children.

Child care programs with napping infants and toddlers may provide the conditions suitable to support a bed bug population. If children in this type of setting are experiencing skin signs that might be associated with bed bug bites, investigate each classroom and all common areas. It may be necessary to contact parents/guardians.

Bed bug infestations are not only an individual family and child care concern, but are also a concern for the entire community. Individuals have their respective responsibilities, but it is important that the entire child care community work together to address pest problems.

While bed bugs do not transmit disease, they present a problem because they are blood-feeding, human parasites. Once established in a home, these insects can cause physical and psychological symptoms, as well as present an additional economic investment to eradicate. The cost, anxiety, and lost instructional time at the child care facility are significant.

Recommendations

It is best to remain calm if a bed bug is reported and confirmed at your child care. Follow this list of recommendations and communicate only factual information.

A preventive appropriate response to bed bugs would include the following items:

- Follow the established Integrated Pest Management program for all child care settings.
- Provide educational information for all staff members, volunteers, children, families, and the community, through notices posted on bulletin boards, websites, and in newsletters.
- Identify community resources to assist in the educational process, such as local public health agencies, pest management professionals, community regulations, Iowa State University, and diagnostic clinics.
- Train staff on bed bugs and report and/or collect any unusual bugs found in the child care facility.

If bed bugs are suspected:

- Have a pest management professional identify any bugs in question.
- Maintain a list/log of insects identified to assess repetitive activity and rooms for inspection.
- Children should not be excluded from attending your program if a bed bug is found on them or in their belongings.
- Consider sending letters to families of children who attend in all rooms in the child care program if recommended by the pest management professional.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents have the ultimate responsibility for their children. This includes:

- Providing a healthy, safe, and pest-free living environment for their children.
- Promptly responding to bed bugs in the home for the health and safety of the family and the child care community.
- Assist in the prevention and management of bed bugs through:
 - Regular checks of the home, especially when bed bugs have been reported in the child care facility
 - Reading information provided by the child care program on bed bugs
 - Making immediate arrangements for the inspection of their home when a bed bug problem is suspected
 - Following the treatment recommendations of pest management professionals
- Consider requesting a physician's evaluation of a child if extreme itching and possible skin conditions develop from reddened skin irritations, regardless of the suspected cause.

The child care program has the responsibility for:

- Providing a healthy, safe, and pest-free environment for its children, staff members, and volunteers.
- Following a predetermined protocol to address families who may have a bed bug infestation in their home.
- Inspecting the classroom(s) where the bed bug was reported/found. A pest management professional or trained child care provider should do the inspection.
- Decreasing clutter, rugs, and upholstered furniture in classrooms and common areas.
- Weekly inspections of backpacks, diaper bags, and other items that travel back and forth to the facility for signs of bed bugs. Extra changes of clothing should be placed in plastic bags or totes until needed.
- Cleaning thoroughly on a regular schedule with special attention to cracks, crevices, and furniture.
- Laundering washables in hot, soapy water and drying on the highest heat setting (at least 120°F), if the child care program has access to these facilities and personnel to accomplish this task. If facilities are not available, child care staff should seal the washables in a plastic bag and send home with the child.
- Contracting treatment by a pest management professional for an infested area if warranted.
- Providing initial and follow-up trainings for staff and volunteers on bed bug biology, identification, and how to be vigilant in looking for these and other problematic insects.
- Providing information and help with current community resources about bed bugs to staff, volunteers, parents, guardians, and other interested persons.

Procedures to follow if a bed bug is found

If a bed bug is found on a child or in their belongings in the facility, it does not mean the child brought the insect into the child care setting. Bed bugs do not infest people; they only feed on them. Bed bugs can crawl onto or off a person (or in their belongings) at any time. If a suspected bed bug is found on an individual, in their belongings, or anywhere else on the property, the following procedures should be followed:

- Discreetly remove the child from the classroom to a private space. Have a trained individual examine the child's clothing and belongings. Any bugs found should be removed, placed in a sealed container, and covered with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; these should be sent to a professional for identification. Alternatively, use a small piece of transparent tape to stick the bug to a 3 x 5 card. It is very important to confirm that the insect(s) really are bed bugs.
- Inform the child's parents/guardians. The child care provider may contact the family, send a letter home, and/or provide educational materials and resource list. Enrollment records should be checked to determine if the child has any siblings attending area schools/child care programs. If so, these facilities should be notified of the bed bug occurrence and the siblings at those facilities should be discreetly checked for signs of bed bugs.
- Inspect the classroom and common areas. If additional specimens are found, thoroughly inspect these areas, looking for live or dead bed bugs, cast skins, eggs, and fecal droppings/smears.
- Children should not be excluded from the classroom due to bed bugs, nor should the facility be closed.

- Continue to monitor classrooms, common areas, and individuals for bed bugs or complaints of bug bites.
- Communicate findings and successes with child care staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians, as appropriate.

For an individual that repeatedly comes to the child care with bed bugs

In a situation where a child arrives at the program with evidence of bed bugs on a regular basis, it is important to increase the inspection and monitoring processes of the facility.

- Each situation will be somewhat unique, so assessments should be on a case-by-case basis.
- In a bed bug infested home:
 - Parents/Guardians should store their child’s freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags in a place away from sleeping areas until they are put on in the morning. This greatly reduces the likelihood of bed bugs hiding in clothing and being carried away from the home.
 - Backpacks, lunch boxes, diaper bags, and other items that travel back and forth to the program should be inspected daily. Place these items in sealed plastic containers in a place away from sleeping areas at home to prevent bed bugs from getting into them.
 - If the dwelling is a rental property, parents/guardians should be encouraged to contact the landlord or property management company.
- At the child care program:
 - The staff/volunteers will be responsible for placing a child’s belongings in plastic bags or bins for storage to prevent any bed bugs from spreading in the facility.
 - Having a set of clean clothing at the facility for the child will permit a change of clothes. If laundry facilities are available, the child’s clothing worn to the facility should be removed, laundered in hot water, and dried in a hot drier (120°F or higher) for at least 20 minutes to kill any bed bugs. The child’s clothing should be stored in a sealed plastic bag until it is placed in the washing machine.

Child care personnel working in partnership with skilled community partners may contact the parents/guardians to set up a time to discuss this issue further. They may choose to set up a home visit or meet at a neutral, acceptable location.

Repeated bed bug presence may be due to the following:

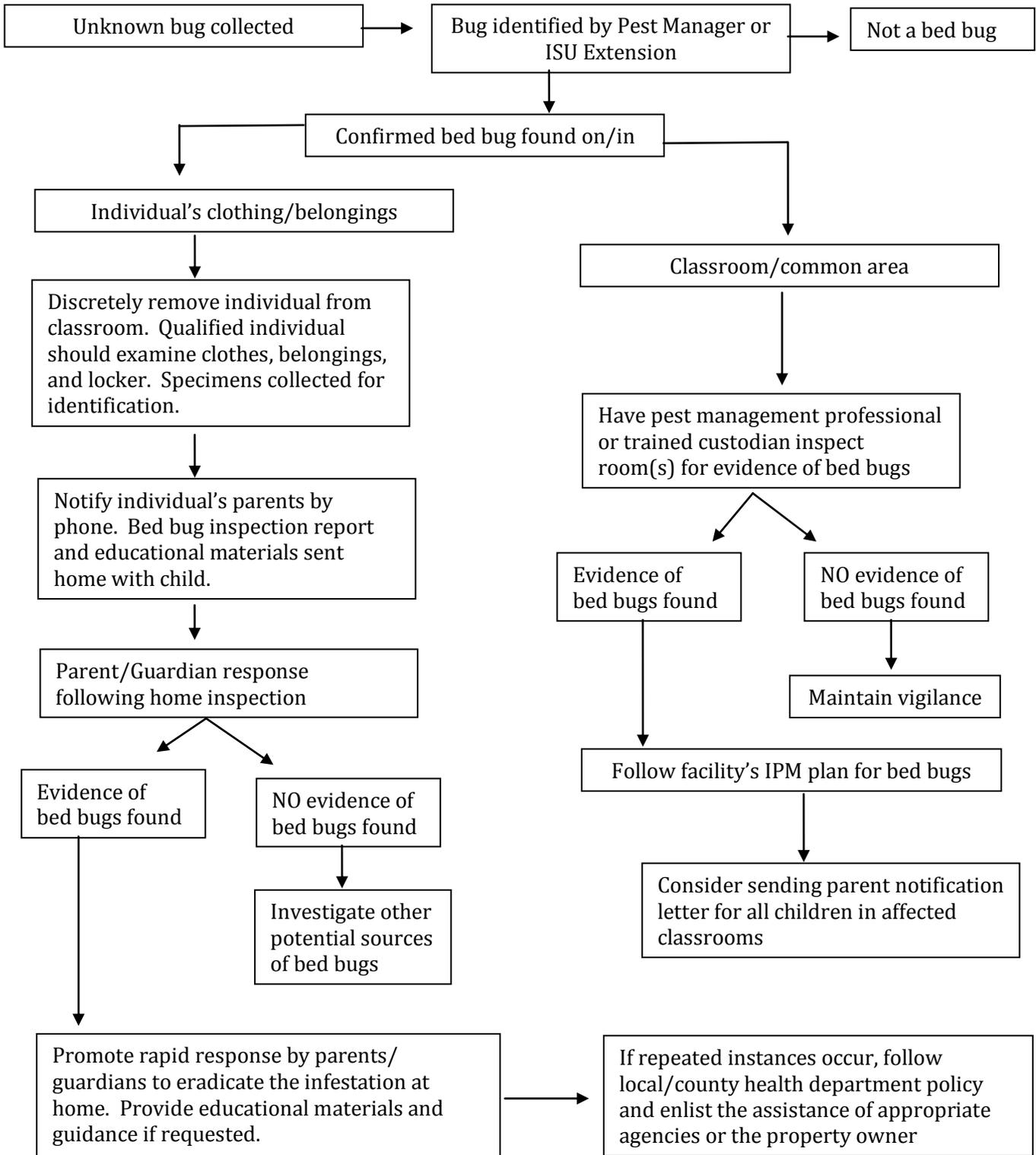
- Inability of the adults to recognize the scope of the infestation at home.
- Failure to effectively treat a recognized infestation - this could be the result of pest management failure, landlord/tenant miscommunication, lack of financial resources, improper preparation for treatment, or repeated re-infestation of the home.
- Failure to adhere to recommended clothing and backpack sanitation.
- Infestation of vehicle(s) transporting the child.
- Poor monitoring skills or lack of concern by adults in that home situation.

Every effort should be made to assist the family with control of bed bugs. Other options may include:

- Consulting with the city or county Department of Health.
- Notifying Child Protective Services if neglect is suspected.
- Notifying the Polk County Housing Inspection division.

Modified from Michigan Manual for the Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs, Michigan Department of Community Health and Michigan Bed Bug Working Group, and the Monroe County Community School Corporation IPM Plan for Bed Bugs (July 2010). Prepared by MH Shour [Ph.D.], Iowa State University Extension, October 2011. Reviewed by Iowa Child Care Nurse Consultants Karen Doughan [RN, BS], Amy Karaidos [RN, BSN], and Kristin Sjulín [RN, MSN]

Child Care Response Flowchart



Sample
Parent Notification Letter from Your Child Care Program
(Use appropriate letterhead)

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Recently, bed bugs were identified in your child's care environment. Bed bugs are a nuisance but their bites do not spread disease. Bed bugs are usually active at night and feed on human blood. The bite does not hurt at first but the skin/area may become swollen and itch, much like a mosquito bites. Watch for clusters of bites, usually in a line, on exposed areas of the body. If you have concerns for you or your child, please contact your doctor.

The source of bed bugs often cannot be determined, as bed bugs may be found in many places and can hitchhike from one place to another. Even though it is unlikely for bed bugs to infest child care sites, _____ (*add program name*) will conduct an identification and inspection process. The Integrated Pest Management Plan is being carried out in the area the bed bug was identified. _____ (*program name*) will continue to be monitor for additional bed bugs, provide thorough inspections of the facility, and have licensed pest management specialists assist with pest issues whenever they arise.

Contact your physician or the local Public Health Department for proper care and treatment of bed bug bites.

It is recommended you inspect your home; information about bed bugs and an identification guide is enclosed to help you with this inspection. For rental properties, it is recommended that you contact your landlord or property management company.

If you need more information or have questions please do not hesitate to contact _____ (email and/or phone number).

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Administrator/Owner Name

**Sample
Bed Bug Inspection Report**
(Use appropriate letterhead)

Dear Parent,

Bed bugs have been identified on your child or in your child's belongings. While this does not necessarily mean that the bed bugs were brought to the child care facility by your child, it is important to your child's health and the child care community that you inspect your home for signs of bed bugs.

Enclosed, you will find information about bed bugs and an identification guide to help you with your inspection. Once you have inspected your home, please fill out the form below and return it to: _____.
Please contact us for additional resources and information.

(Name of Administrator / Owner)

I have been informed that bed bugs were found on my child or in their belongings at child care. I understand that bed bugs pose a threat to my child's well-being and to the greater community. I have read and understood the educational materials provided to me regarding bed bugs, and I have:

- _____ carefully checked my family and home for signs of bed bug infestation
 - _____ notified my landlord/property management company (rental properties only)
 - _____ hired a pest management professional to check my family and home for signs of bed bug infestation.
- Name of pest control company: _____

After completing a careful inspection, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge:

_____ I or a pest management professional found signs of bed bugs in my home, and I will take the following actions to eliminate this infestation:

_____ I or a pest management professional did not find signs of bed bugs in my home at this time. If I find evidence of bed bugs in the future, I will notify the child care immediately and take action to address the infestation.

I understand that bed bugs can be spread to other homes if they are brought to child care in backpacks, diaper bags, clothing, lunchboxes, or other belongings. I understand that if bed bugs are repeatedly found on my child or belongings, that the child care program may take additional actions to protect the child care community from bed bugs.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pest Management Professional: _____

Pest Reporting Slip

Name: _____

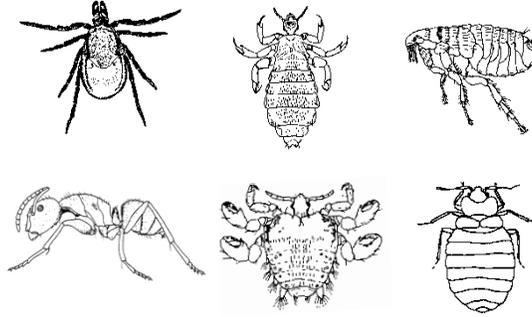
Date: _____

Time: _____

Number of pests: _____

Where was the pest sighted?

Room: _____ Location in room: _____



*Use tweezers to pick up unknown bug, then put in a screw top bottle/jar. Add hand sanitizer (alcohol-based). Seal top on container.

**Another collection method is to use one piece of transparent tape and stick the bug to a 3 x 5 index card. Place card in an envelope and seal.

Pest Reporting Slip

Name: _____

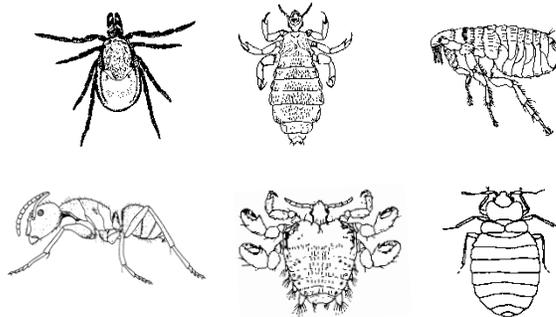
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