

01.19 Face painting and mehndi

Children are face painted only if parents have given prior written consent. Verbal consent is fine at events where parents are present.

- A child who does not want to have their face painted will not be made to continue.
- Children under two years of age are generally not fully face painted, however a nose and whiskers (or similar) is fine. Having an arm or hand painted with a flower, star or butterfly is also an option for very young children who may not sit still.
- Children with open sores, rashes or other skin conditions are not painted.
- Members of staff painting children's faces wash their hands before doing so, cover any cuts or abrasions and ensure they have the equipment they need close to hand.
- Only products with ingredients compliant with EU and FDA regulations are used.
- Clean water is used to wash brushes and sponges between children.
- Staff face painting at an event ensure they have a comfortable chair or shoes if standing, to reduce the risk of back or neck strain. Face painting is an activity that can cause repetitive stress injuries; therefore, regular breaks are not taken at events such as fetes.

Mehndi painting

- Staff never mehndi paint children under three years old using henna/henna-based products.
- Parental permission must be gained before staff mehndi paint children over the age of three years old.
- Children prone to allergies, anaemic or suffering from any illness that may compromise their immune system are never painted under any circumstances.
- Black henna is never used and only 100% natural red henna (diluted with water) is used on children
- It is preferable that non-henna products are used to create mehndi patterns but if the setting operates in an area where mehndi is practiced by families and the criteria above is followed then henna may be used.

Further guidance

Good Practice in Early Years Infection Control (Alliance 2009)