

FACT SHEET

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Potential Environmental Hazards in Day Care Facilities



Why should I be concerned about environmental hazards inside and outside of the day care facility?

- Very young children spend most of their time near the ground where environmental hazards may exist.
- Children crawl and put things in their mouths.
- Illness and disease may be caused by contact with environmental hazards.
- Children are still developing and are more vulnerable to many environmental pollutants.

What are some common environmental hazards that may be present in the day care setting?

- Carbon monoxide • Dust/dirt • Craft supplies
- Mold • Cleaning products • Lead paint
- Chemicals in soil • Arsenic in pressure-treated wood • Radon gas
- Second-hand tobacco smoke • Pesticides/insect repellants

What can I do to reduce environmental hazards?

Mold

- Repair leaky plumbing and clean up standing water promptly to prevent bacteria & mold growth.
- Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely.
- Remove and discard carpets/rugs if they have been wet more than 24 hours; do not let children play or sleep in/near the area.

Carbon Monoxide

- Install at least one carbon monoxide detector on each occupied level of the facility and maintain it properly.
- Maintain fuel-burning appliances with a yearly checkup and cleaning.

Chemicals in Soil

- Cover bare soil with grass or mulch.
- Keep children's play area away from the building foundation.
- Have children wash their hands and face after playing outdoors.

Second Hand Smoke

- Never allow smoking anywhere in the building/home or grounds.

Dirt/Dust

- Keep carpets clean.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter and vacuum only when children are not present.
- Use barrier mats at each entrance.

Cleaning Products

- Avoid using cleaning products around children.
- Store cleaning products in a separate locked area.
- Switch to products that contain less toxic chemicals (“green” products).

Arsenic in Pressure-treated wood

- Seal decks and playscapes with a weather-resistant coating such as a penetrating, oil-based stain.
- Keep children out from under the deck area.
- Put a fresh layer of sand or wood chips under playscapes after sealing.

Pesticides/Insect Repellants

- Empty garbage frequently, at least daily, to an exterior location.
- Store food in closed containers.
- Consider non-chemical options to control weeds and pests.
- Use insect repellants with no more than 10% DEET (do not use on infants).
- Remove standing water after rainfall to prevent mosquito breeding.

Craft Supplies

- Buy ACMI (Art & Creative Materials Institute) approved products labeled “A” for use by young children.

Lead Paint

- Wash children’s hands often, especially before eating or napping.
- Keep play area clean: wash bottles, pacifiers, toys and stuffed animals regularly.
- Test for lead in homes built before 1978.

More information about lead regulations can be found at: www.ct.gov/dph/lead or 860-509-7299.

Radon

- Test for radon between the months of November and April as required for daycare centers and group daycare homes that use the 1st floor or basement.
- Reduce high levels of radon, when found.

More information about radon regulations can be found at: www.ct.gov/dph/radon or 860-509-7367.

More information about environmental hazards can be found on the CTDPH web site: www.ct.gov/dph/ieq or by contacting the Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program at 860-509-7740.

State statutes and regulations regarding the environment in child day care facilities can be found in Section 19a-79-7 (centers and group homes) and in Section 19a-87b-9 (family day care homes) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Additional Resources:

Connecticut Department of Public Health Day Care Regulations Unit: www.ct.gov/dph/daycare

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/iaq

Children’s Health Environmental Coalition: www.chechnet.org/healthhouse

Art and Creative Materials Institute: www.acminet.org