



## CHAPTER 7

### HEALTH & SAFETY

There are a number of steps you can take to protect the health and safety of children in your program. To ensure the health and safety of children and to prevent injuries, the *Child Care Regulation* specifies some requirements regarding the health and safety of children in licensed child care settings. It is a good idea to integrate these requirements with definitions of health and well being relevant to your culture.

This chapter discusses health and safety precautions, policies, and procedures. A sample list of first aid supplies is included in the appendix.

### ***Health precautions***

There are some basic ways that you can help protect the health of children in your centre. Enough rest and exercise, nutritious food, good personal hygiene practices and regular sanitizing of toys and other objects help reduce illnesses and their severity. Common illnesses amongst children are:

- |  |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Respiratory infections<br>(Colds and flu) | 2. Head lice             | 4. Viral infections<br>(Chickenpox) |
|  | 3. Intestinal infections | 5. Skin infections                  |

#### **You can help decrease illnesses by:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Using hand washing routines in your program (after diapering, after using the washroom, before and after food preparation and eating, after sneezing, coughing or blowing noses, after touching pets, after being outdoors). | 4. Knowing which children are immunized.                    |
| 2. Recommending that staff be immunized.  | 5. Sanitizing surfaces and toys regularly.                  |
| 3. Labeling personal items with each child's name to ensure personal use only.  | 6. Having tissues available for nose wiping.                |
|   | 7. Teaching children to cover their mouths when they cough. |
|   | 8. Ensuring staff are aware of head lice.                   |

Some parents may choose not to have their child(ren) immunized. Talk with your local licensing officer about managing health risks when some children are not immunized.

## ***Hepatitis B and HIV***

These are blood-borne diseases that are caused by viruses. They are spread by contact with infected blood and other bodily fluids. There is no evidence of these diseases being spread through casual contact, including touching, diapering or sharing sinks, bathrooms, and utensils. Follow universal precautions to prevent transmission of these diseases.

## ***Cleaning and sanitizing practices***

Maintain a regular cleaning and sanitizing schedule. Infant and toddler toys should be cleaned and disinfected daily. Food preparation areas, potties, and diaper changing areas should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Clean toys and surfaces with a clean cloth and mild household cleaner. Rinse and air dry the object. Sanitize toys and surfaces by spraying them with a disinfectant solution. Leave the solution on for thirty seconds. Wipe dry with a disposable towel or air dry.

### **Recipes for disinfectant solution**

#### Small quantity for a squirt bottle

5 ml (1 teaspoon) bleach  
500 ml (½ litre) water

#### Large quantity for dipping objects

50 ml of bleach (1/4 cup)  
5 litres (1 gallon) water

With all of this cleaning, your hands can get dry and irritated. You can protect them by wearing rubber gloves as you clean.

## ***Universal Precautions***

Universal Precautions are guidelines to help prevent the spread of disease, including blood-borne infections like HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis. Your health nurse or licensing officer can provide you with the most up-to-date information about Universal Precautions.

Here are some examples of universal precautions:

1. Thorough and frequent hand washing procedures.
2. Use of disposable gloves when in contact with bodily fluids ((blood from nosebleeds or cuts, urine or feces, pus or drainage from the eyes, mouth, nose, etc.)
3. Sanitizing of articles (such as clothing and bedding) that have been contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids.
4. Regular disinfecting of changing tables, countertops, etc. with a bleach solution.
5. Personal use only of items that may come in contact with blood or other bodily fluids (e.g. toothbrushes).
6. Avoidance of oral thermometers to take a child's temperature. An ear thermometer is preferable. (If an oral thermometer must be used, wash and disinfect in alcohol before storing and again before using.)
7. Appropriate responses to all bites that break the skin. (For example, advise the family doctor or nurse).

### ***Health policies and procedures***

Procedures for each of the following should be posted in the appropriate area. For further information about health policies and procedures, see chapter 8.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Hand washing  | 5. Cleaning of toilets, potty chairs, changing diapers, handling any type of bodily fluids, covering cuts and sores. |
| 2. Diapering   |  |
| 3. Use of personal items, such as combs, toothbrushes, clothing/hats, and bedding. | 6. Serious injuries  |
| 4. Universal precautions   |  |

**Nutrition and Food management**

Good nutrition is important to children's healthy growth and development. Children can learn healthy eating habits through your early childhood program.

The *Child Care Regulation* requires that snacks and/or meals be prepared for children who attend a program for more than a 2-hour period. Meals and snacks served in your program should meet the nutritional needs of children and comply with Canada's Food Guide or the Aboriginal Food Guide. Both Food Guides are available by calling 1-800-O-Canada.

In general, foods should be varied to provide carbohydrates, fats, and protein. Children should also be encouraged to drink water, which helps remove waste from the body.

Food services inspection is required if the program prepares lunch onsite. If your program is on reserve, this inspection will be done by a federal inspector. Kitchen staff are required to have Food Safe certification and follow hand washing and disinfection procedures.

**Nutrition and food management for infants**

Food for infants is usually provided by the child's family. It is a good idea to get written instructions from the family about their preferences for feeding. You can help parents by providing a quiet private area for feeding their infants. Keep a record of each infant's daily food intake, diaper changes, and bowel movements and give a copy to the family at the end of each day.

**When planning meals and snacks, follow these guidelines:**

1. Plan menus a week in advance.
2. Keep families informed of menus. (Talk with parents before introducing new foods to very young children. If children are bringing food from home, post a list of serious allergies on the parent bulletin board).
3. Plan menus to take into account children's allergies and special diets. (Post a list of known food allergies in the kitchen. Watch for allergic reactions to new foods).
4. To prevent choking, cut carrots, hot dogs and other cylindrical foods lengthwise. Children under age 4 should not be given hard candy, peanuts, popcorn, or seeds. Encourage children to sit down and to chew their food slowly. Avoid using foam cups, which children tend to bite into small pieces.
5. Food preparation, serving, and storage areas should be separate from diapering, toileting, and play areas.
6. Perishable foods should be refrigerated according to Food Safe guidelines.
7. Dishes should be sanitized with bleach or another approved sterilizing agent and air dried (an approved commercial dishwasher may be used).
8. Counter surfaces and cutting boards should be washed and disinfected after each use. They should be free of cracks, scratches, and chips.

**Smoking**

Smoking around children is a health and safety issue. Second hand smoke can lead to asthma, bronchitis, and respiratory infections. Staff who smoke should do so in designated areas away from children and the facility. Staff who smoke are responsible for making sure that matches, lighters, cigarettes, and ashtrays are stored out of children's reach.

**Alcohol**

Alcohol must not be permitted at the program facility. In Family Child Care homes, alcohol must be stored out of children's reach in a locked cupboard.

## **Safety precautions**

### **Some facts about injury prevention**

The BC Ministry of Health brochure called *Preventing Injury in Child Care Settings* provides the following facts:

1. Most injuries to children result from falls, burns, poisoning, and choking or suffocation.
2. Injuries in daycare settings occur most frequently at arrival and departure times, on field trips, when children are tired or hungry, and when routines are disrupted.
3. Most injuries are predictable and preventable.

### **Safety Rules**

Clear and simple rules are tools that help children learn to be safe. Generally speaking, rules are easier for children to understand when they describe what to do, rather than what not to do. For example,

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. We walk when we are inside.                                       | 4. We use pencils only at the table.  |
| 2. We use toys gently and respectfully so that no one will get hurt. | 5. We use our inside voices in the playroom.  |
| 3. We use scissors only at the table.                                | 6. We tidy up our toys when we are finished playing so that no one will trip over them. |

**General safety precautions**

To help prevent injuries, use common sense and refer to a good safety resource book. Here are some general precautions:

1. Avoid using toxic materials and supplies. Store dangerous substances in their original containers, in a locked cupboard that is inaccessible to children.
2. Cover hot pipes and radiators with non-combustible protective materials. (Ensure that the furnace and hot water tank are inaccessible to children.)
3. Fasten phone or electrical cords along walls or under/behind furniture to prevent tripping.
4. Ensure that there are no poisonous plants, bulbs, and seeds in areas accessible to children.
5. Supervise children at all times. Toys with small parts must be kept out of reach of children under 3 years of age.
6. Use safety approved covers on electrical outlets.
7. Prohibit maintenance and/or repair of the facility while children are present.
8. Keep the facility clear of pets and dander.
9. Check all furniture frequently to ensure it remains free of cracks, protrusions and sharp edges.
10. Ensure that garbage and diaper pails have secure lids.
11. Arrange indoor furniture and equipment in ways that discourage running.
12. Plan activities that are developmentally appropriate for the children in your program. For example, a four year-old child may be able to balance on a balance beam, but a toddler can practice balance by following a piece of tape on the floor.
13. Provide staff with a secure place that is inaccessible to children to store their personal goods. Medication, cigarettes, and even pens can be hazardous for children.
14. Use only non-toxic lead free paint.
15. Check outdoor play areas and equipment for hazards before each use.
16. Test smoke detectors regularly.

## Safety in specific spaces

### Kitchen

Children love to help in the kitchen! Toddlers can take pots and pans out of the cupboards and help to shape and knead dough. Preschoolers can help wash and peel fruits and vegetables. The following precautions can make these activities pleasant and safe.

1. Keep sharp objects (knives, forks, scissors), plastic bags, elastic bands and other small items out of children's reach.
2. Mop up spills right away to prevent slipping.
3. Turn handles of pots and pans toward the back of the stove.
4. Ensure freezers are locked.
5. Avoid crowding in food preparation areas.
6. Prevent falls by using child size tables and chairs.
7. As an alternative, have children help prepare food to be taken to the kitchen for cooking.

### Sleeprooms

1. Use cribs and playpens that meet current Canadian safety regulations.
2. Place cribs and beds away from windows and blind cords.
3. Avoid using bumper pads, pillows, stuffed animals or large toys in cribs and playpens.
4. Keep hanging mobiles away from cribs and playpens.

### Washrooms

1. Set temperature of hot water below 102°F.
2. Ensure that stools or platforms at sinks are secure.
3. Store cleaning products out of children's reach.
4. Remove locks from washroom doors.
5. Supervise children in the washroom at all times.

### Outdoors

1. Repair cracks in walkways to prevent tripping.
2. Protect stairs and decks with railings.
3. Check for sharp edges on fences and gates.
4. Trim low branches and shrubs.
5. Use soft surfaces like wood chips, washed sand, or grass.
6. Remove poisonous plants, broken glass, nails, cans, bottles, sharp sticks, condoms, and other hazardous objects at least once each day. If you find used syringes, contact your local health authority.
7. Check play equipment for broken parts, loose screws, or sharp edges every day.
8. Keep the sandbox securely covered when not in use.
9. Supervise children at all times when using wading or swimming pools.
10. Remove beehives, wasp's nests, and anthills from play areas.
11. Teach children safety rules for all play equipment, inside and outdoors.
12. Ensure that children wear appropriate clothing and footwear at all times.
13. Ensure access to outdoor shaded areas during hot weather.
14. Use sunscreen and protective clothing on sunny days.

### Emergency preparedness

Policies and procedures dealing with emergencies should be posted in the centre. You need to be prepared to respond effectively in all of the following emergency situations:

1. Fire
2. Earthquake
3. Flood
4. Interruption of electrical, gas, water or heating services
5. Toxic spills

**Your program can prepare for emergencies in several ways:**

1. Have 2 first aid kits: one for use at the facility, and one for use on field trips. The kits should be stored in a clearly labeled cupboard that is inaccessible to the children. Each kit should have a list of contents inside. Contents should be checked and replaced regularly. See appendix 7-1 for a list of contents suggested by the Central Vancouver Island Health Region.
 

It is a good idea to keep some quarters in the field trip first aid kit to make emergency calls if necessary.
2. Practice fire drills regularly (once a month is advised). Post fire escape plans, marked exit doors, and a map in a visible area. Consult your local fire chief.
3. Keep two non-electrical telephones in working order (one in the office, and one in the play area).
4. Post emergency telephone numbers near each telephone for:
 

a. Fire	e. Police
b. Local hospital or health unit	f. Ministry of Children and Family Development (in case of suspected abuse)
c. Ambulance	g. Substitute caregivers
d. Poison control	
5. Ensure smoke detectors function properly.
6. Identify an alternate location in case evacuation is necessary. Keep families informed of this alternate location.
7. Train staff in proper use of fire extinguishers and in procedures for disconnecting utilities (power, water, natural gas).
8. Keep children's attendance records by making sure that children are always signed in and out by parents.
9. Designate a staff member with responsibility for bringing the sign-in/sign-out sheet to your alternate location in the case of evacuation.

**Earthquake preparedness**

To help prevent injuries as a result of an earthquake:

1. Secure tall cabinets and hot water tanks.
2. Store heavy toys and objects on lower shelves.
3. Fasten pictures and mirrors to wall studs.

**To be prepared in case of an earthquake, keep the following supplies at hand:**

1. Clean drinking water (1 litre per day per person).
2. 3 days' food per person (canned food stored in a cool area).
3. Can opener.
4. First aid kit.
5. Radio.
6. Flashlight.
7. Batteries.
8. Solar blankets.
9. Large garbage bags.
10. Plastic sheeting for building shelter.
11. Plastic eating utensils.
12. Crescent wrench for turning off gas, water, etc.
13. Supply of essential prescribed medications for adults and children.

## REFERENCES

**\*Indicates resources available on loan through the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society.**

BC Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. 1996. *Preventing Injury in Child Care Settings*. Victoria: Author

Chu, A. 1996. *Setting Up for Infant/Toddler Care: Ensuring Health and Safety*. Washington DC: NAEYC

\*Morissette, Lucie B. 1994. *Starting and Operating a Native Child Day Care Centre*. Quebec: Anjabowa Daycare Services Centre

\*Westcoast Childcare INFORM, A Program of Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre. 1999. *Inform Guide: An Administrative Manual for Non-Profit Child Care in B.C.* Canada: Author

## RESOURCES

American Public Health Association/ American Academy of Pediatrics. 1992. *Caring for our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*. Washington, DC: Author

Canadian Paediatric Society. 1999. *Well-Beings: A Guide to Promote the Physical Health, Safety, and Emotional Well-Being of Children in Child Care Centres and Family Day Care Homes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Ottawa:

Ontario: Author (Web site: <http://www.cps.ca/>)

*HIV/AIDS and Child Care*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation. Available through the National AIDS Clearing House, 613-725-3434

Emergency Procedures Booklet. Order through the BC Publications Index. 1-800-664-6105 [www.publications.gov.ba.ca](http://www.publications.gov.ba.ca)

McLeod, Darrel. 1999. (Unpublished.) *Establishing a First Nations Child Care Program*. Vancouver: BC Aboriginal Child Care Society.

Vandervort, Don. 1998. *Making your Home Child-Safe*. Menlo Park, CA: Sunset Books, Lane Publishing

### Web sites

BC Emergency Social Services [www.ess.bc.ca/preparedness.html](http://www.ess.bc.ca/preparedness.html)

*Canada's Food Guide/ Indian Food Guide*: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

ECEwebguide.com

### Videos

*Sudden Infant Death Syndrome – Reducing the Risk*. Order through the BC Publications Index. 1-800-664-6105 [www.publications.gov.ba.ca](http://www.publications.gov.ba.ca)

*Max the Safety Cat*. Various videos available through the Canadian Institute of Child Health, 613-230-8838

# APPENDIX 7-I

## FIRST AID SUPPLIES



**CENTRAL  
VANCOUVER ISLAND  
HEALTH REGION**

COMMUNITY CARE FACILITY LICENSING  
233 Prideaux Street  
Nanaimo BC V9R 2M9  
Telephone: (250) 741-5463 Fax: (250) 741-5472

CVICC 32A (00/03)

**FIRST AID SUPPLIES FOR CHILD DAY CARE  
CHILD CARE LICENSING REGULATION – SECTION 22(a)  
APPROVED BY THE MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER (CVIHR)**

An approved first aid kit will contain the following items as a minimum requirement. The quantity of each item should reflect the size of the facility and the access to medical aid. Some facilities may wish to include additional items.

**FIRST AID KIT:**

**EQUIPMENT:**

- Disposable latex gloves
- CPR mask (size appropriate for children)
- Band-Aids (various sizes)
- Sterile gauze pads (various sizes)
- Non-adherent dressing
- Gauze roll
- Elastic Tensor bandage
- Adhesive tape (non-allergic)
- Triangular bandages
- Liquid soap (replace regularly, it does grow bacteria)
- First Aid Book

**INSTRUMENTS:**

- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Safety pins

**EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS** (keep in kit on a laminated/waterproof card):

AMBULANCE \_\_\_\_\_  
 FIRE \_\_\_\_\_  
 POLICE \_\_\_\_\_  
 POISON CONTROL \_\_\_\_\_

**SYRUP of IPECAC** (as recommended by Provincial Poison Control Centre):

- must be kept in locked medicine container for emergency use.
- must only be used after consulting with a physician or poison control centre.
- induces vomiting.
- keep a laminated/waterproof card in First Aid Kit with location of Syrup of Ipecac.

**SUPPLIES FOR FIELD TRIPS:**

- First Aid Kit
- Syrup of Ipecac
- Money for public telephone (2 x 25¢) or cell phone
- Pad/Pencil to record incidents
- Emergency records for each child
- Space Foil blanket (or equivalent)
- Fresh water
- Chemical ice pack

*'Healthy People and Healthy Communities'*