



Child Care Center ALERT!

2013

The purpose of this Alert is to highlight areas where the Division of Licensing has seen injury or harm to children and to offer suggestions on prevention. The suggestions do not replace rule and statute requirements. Please review this information and take precautions, including improving current procedures, orientation, and training. Additional information might be included in previous Alerts that is not included in this Alert. This and other Alerts are online at www.dhs.state.mn.us. To find them go to “general public,” click “licensing” in the left column, and then click “maltreatment investigations,” where you will find links to “alerts.”

Implementing these suggestions does not mitigate the license holder’s responsibility to ensure compliance with licensing rules and statutes. If an incident occurs, failure to address the topics in this Alert may contribute to findings of maltreatment under the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). Findings of maltreatment at a center may result in the disqualification of one or more individuals and fines against the license holder.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN: The Division of Licensing has received reports involving children leaving child care centers without staff persons’ knowledge; children being left without supervision on playgrounds, in classrooms, hallways, and in bathrooms; leaving children unsupervised in community settings; and children leaving the group during outings or fieldtrips. The following may reduce the likelihood of such incidents: Develop procedures for taking attendance that involve matching each child’s name to the child present, as well as procedures for taking attendance more frequently during high risk times such as on field trips, in the community, and before and after transitions. Provide training to staff persons on the implementation of these procedures.

ROUGH HANDLING: The Division of Licensing has received reports regarding rough handling of children by staff persons. The following may reduce the likelihood of such incidents: Provide training to the staff persons on acceptable methods of behavior guidance; discuss with parents or guardians methods of behavior guidance they have used successfully with their child; and when a child engages in persistent unacceptable behavior, develop a behavior plan and provide training to the staff persons on the implementation of the behavior plan.

ALLERGIES: The Division of Licensing has received reports regarding children receiving food that they are allergic to. The following may reduce the likelihood of children’s exposure to food that they are allergic to: Create a protocol to ensure that children are not exposed to allergens and ensure that all staff persons are trained on the protocol. Ensure that allergies are posted as required. Ensure that the facility is provided with prescribed medications such as an EpiPen® if the child has been prescribed epinephrine for allergies. Provide training to staff persons on how to recognize symptoms and respond to a child having an allergic reaction, which may include information on how and when to use an EpiPen®.

DELAYED EMERGENCY AND FIRST AID TREATMENT: The Division of Licensing has received reports where a child was not provided with appropriate and timely first aid treatment or emergency care after an incident or injury occurred. In many cases, a staff person attending to the child did not telephone 9-1-1 because they minimized the condition, or believed that they needed permission from a supervisory staff person prior to telephoning 9-1-1. Facilities should develop and implement written policies and procedures, in conjunction with a health care professional, that provide clear guidelines for staff persons on how to assess and identify an emergency situation and how to provide, or obtain, first aid. These policies and procedures should also address how to continually monitor the injury or illness for worsened or changed symptoms.

BURNS/SUNBURNS: The Division of Licensing has received reports involving burns to children from tap water, bottle warmers, and sunburn.

- Tap water accessible to children should be maintained at or below 120°F and should be checked regularly with a thermometer as well as any time a water heater is installed or repaired.
- The following may reduce the likelihood of bottle warmers causing injury: Secure the bottle warmer to the back of a countertop; ensure that electrical cords are out of the reach of children; and post signs warning that the bottle warmer may be hot and that staff persons should not allow, or carry, children in the area of the bottle warmer.
- The following may reduce the likelihood of burns from sun exposure and reduce the likelihood of heat exhaustion or heat stroke: Develop and implement written procedures to reduce the risk of injury from sun exposure; providing seasonal reminders to staff persons on the procedures; check the expiration date on sunscreen products; apply sunscreen prior to exposure to the sun; and reapply sunscreen at frequent intervals, especially when engaging in water play. Provide shaded areas for children when outdoors and adequate liquids for children to drink when playing outside during warm temperatures.

Important tool for prevention, orientation, and training to reduce injury and harm to children:

RISK REDUCTION PLANS: Thorough development, training, and implementation of the *Risk Reduction Plan* required by Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.66, subdivision 2, may help reduce the likelihood of incidents of known risk to children including situations requiring increased awareness such as the above mentioned areas of supervision, prevention of burns, prevention of food allergen exposure, and the following additional areas:

- Closing children's fingers in doors
- Dislocation of children's elbows
- Injuries from equipment
- Children falling from changing tables
- Children accessing dangerous items