

Environment Rating Scale Resource Information Sheet

Topic: Safety Practices

Scale and Item Number: _____

Common Issues:	Suggested Solutions:
<p>Hazards that could result in serious injury are dangers in the physical environment that might cause accidents for young children and required a hospital or doctor visit for treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Supervision cannot take the place of minimizing hazards. No assumptions can be made, such as saying, "I know it is dangerous, but the children know not to go near it," or, "We have never had a child fall from that place," or, "We are always watching." Accidents will happen. ★ Establish a daily safety check for all areas the children use indoors and outdoors. Designated a new staff member to do this check every day in the morning.
<p>Common indoor safety issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ No safety caps on electrical sockets ★ Loose electrical cords or strings accessible ★ Heavy objects or furniture child can pull down ★ Medicines, cleaning materials, and other substances labeled "keep out of reach of children" not locked away. ★ Stove controls accessible ★ Open stairwells accessible ★ Easy access to parking lot or busy street ★ Staff pick up infants/toddlers by arm or hand, putting child at risk for joint injury ★ Thumbtacks or staples used in infant/toddler classrooms ★ Walkers that a child can move across the floor or bean bag chairs used for infants ★ Crib/playpen slats or mesh sides permit entrapment (slats less than 2 3/8 inches apart; a mesh playpen with collapsible sides) ★ Babies put to sleep on stomach or side instead of on their backs ★ No 6-inch raised edge as protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Check electrical caps on sockets daily ★ Tie up cords or strings that are accessible to children so that they are out of reach ★ Arrange heavy furniture that children can pull over against walls where it can be attached with brackets. ★ Limit stacking heavy objects on top of shelves where children can pull them down. ★ Use locked doors or gates to protect stairwells ★ Use lock and key, combination lock, or magnetic lock to lock cabinets where you store medicines, cleaning materials, and other substances labeled "keep out of reach of children". ★ Remove stove knobs when children are in care or use a commercially designed safety cover. ★ Lock doors or gates that provide easy access to parking lots or busy streets. If doors can not be locked, install a door alarm, safety latches, or door knob covers to help limit easy access. ★ Check small toys to see if they can fit through a toilet paper tube. If it can pass through the tube, the toy is too small to be in an infant/toddler classroom. ★ Replace crib mattresses if you are able to fit 2 or more fingers in between the mattress and the crib side.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from falling off diapering table ★ Poisonous plants accessible ★ Small choking hazards in infant/toddler room ★ Crib mattress that does not fit snugly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ If playpens or travel cribs are used, make sure they do not have collapsible sides or holes in the mesh sides.
<p>Common outdoor safety issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Play area not contained by fence or barrier that prevents children from leaving ★ Tools not meant for children’s use are accessible ★ All dangerous substances not locked away ★ Unsafe walkway or stairs accessible to children ★ Sharp or dangerous objects (broken glass, metal, etc) ★ Hazardous trash accessible ★ Children can gain independent access to road or parking lot ★ Play equipment too high ★ Play equipment that poses entrapment issues, pinch-points, or projections. ★ Insufficiently cushioned fall zones ★ Climbing equipment too close together or fall zones not clear ★ Air conditioning units accessible to children ★ Poisonous plants accessible ★ “S” hooks at the top and bottom of swings ★ Protruding exposed hardware on play equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Store tools in locked shed ★ Lock away dangerous substances in cabinets that can be locked with a key, combination lock, or magnetic lock. ★ Lock or limit access to gates where children can easily gain access to the road or parking lot ★ Make sure the play equipment is not too high for the children in your care. (more than 1 foot per year of age above fall surface). ★ Check for gaps in play equipment that are between 3 ½ inches and 9 inches. These pose a threat of head or body entrapment. ★ Check for gaps in play equipment that are between 3/8 inch and 1 inch. These openings pose a threat to finger entrapment or catching clothing. ★ Make sure play structures are at least 12 feet apart to allow children space to circulate around or fall without striking another structure. ★ Fence in air conditioning units ★ Replace “S” hooks with hardware that forms a complete closure ★ Cover or replace protruding exposed hardware ★ Replace or “fluff” impact material under climbing equipment to make sure it meets the required depth. ★ Rubber mats can be added at the ends of slides and under swings to help keep impact material in place.

*This information is adapted from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005) and All About the ECERS-R (Cryer, Harms, & Riley, 2003).



Center for Early Childhood Professional Development
College of Continuing Education — The University of Oklahoma
1801 North Moore Avenue, Moore, Oklahoma 73160-3667
(405) 799-6383 - (888) 446-7608 ext.226
Fax: (405) 799-7634