



Michael R Pence, Governor
State of Indiana

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
402 W. WASHINGTON STREET, P.O. BOX 7083
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46207-7083

April 30, 2015

Dear CCDF Provider,

Thank you for caring for Hoosier children receiving Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) vouchers. All children need a safe and healthy environment. Children from low income families, including those receiving CCDF vouchers, have an even greater need for high quality child care that provides a safe environment where they can learn all that they need to be ready for success in school and in life. You play a critical role in the success of these children.

In December 2014, The Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL) sent out a letter to all CCDF providers informing you of the changes in the Indiana CCDF Provider Eligibility Standards laws (IC12-17.2-3.5) which will take effect **July 1, 2015**.

This mailing contains important information about the requirements on Daily Activities and Safe Conditions that will take effect on July 1, 2015. Please read this information carefully.

We recognize that there are many changes that your child care program must make in order to remain eligible to receive public funds through CCDF after July 1, 2015. These changes will significantly improve the health and safety of Hoosier children receiving a CCDF voucher. OECOSL will continue to send you additional information and resources on each change in the law in the coming months. You will also have the opportunity to attend future training opportunities, including webinars and teleconferences, on these new requirements.

Please visit <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/4935.htm> to see a copy of the new law, copies of past informational letters, and additional resources about the new requirements. You can also find free training opportunities by visiting IACCRR's Training Central at <http://www.iaccrr.org/default.cfm?page=training-central> or calling 1-800-299-1627.

Sincerely,

Melanie Brizzi
Director
Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning



Information and Resources on Daily Activities and Safe Conditions

Effective July 1, 2015, the new Provider Eligibility Standards under IC12-17.2-3.5 require that all unlicensed providers that receive CCDF funds, including registered ministries that receive CCDF funds, plan **daily activities** and maintain **safe conditions** within their child care program.

Daily Activities:

Children need certain daily activities to remain healthy and learning. Children of all ages need a variety of different activities throughout the day including quiet play (such as reading, block building or art), and active play (such as physical activities including running and jumping or crawling and climbing). Children also need time outside daily. Children need access to supplies and equipment that support their learning. Activities should be balanced with attention to all areas of a child's development.

Under the new CCDF Provider Eligibility Standard laws, you are required to plan and provide daily activities appropriate to the age, developmental needs, interests, and number of children in your care, including both active and quiet play and daily outdoor play. Activities need to be appropriate to each child's developmental stage. Toys, games, and play equipment used indoors and outdoors must be safe, appropriate to the children's developmental stages and include a sufficient quantity to allow children to make choices. Please note that due to safety hazards trampolines shall be inaccessible to children at all times.

Daily outdoor play must take place for all children unless the severity of the weather poses a safety or health hazard or if a health related reason for a child to remain indoors is documented by the child's parent, guardian or physician. Children shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Outdoor play for infants may include riding in a carriage or stroller; however, infants should be offered opportunities for gross motor play outdoors in a safe environment as well.

Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 25 degrees F and heat index as identified by the National Weather Service, see <http://www.weather.gov/media/um/heatindex.pdf> for more information. Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities or through ozone (smog) alerts. Children with respiratory health problems such as asthma shall not play outdoors when local health authorities announce that the air quality is approaching unhealthy levels.

Please be aware that outdoor play environments must be safe and children must be actively supervised at all times, both while inside and outside. This includes protection from environmental hazards such as ponds or other bodies of water, traffic as well as protection from children wandering off or becoming lost. If you have questions about how to provide for safe outdoor play, your consultant can assist you.

Consultants will be looking for your written schedule of daily activities and evidence that daily activities are being completed during your CCDF inspection visits. Training and assistance on the development of appropriate daily activities will be available through the Indiana Association

of Child Care Resource and Referral (IACCRR) and your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.

Safe Conditions: The new laws also require that your program have and maintain a written policy describing how you maintain safe conditions in your child care facility or home. This policy must also include what steps will be taken to ensure the safety of motor vehicles used to transport children (if applicable).

These written policies and any changes to this policy must;

Be submitted to the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning

Posted in a public location in the facility or home.

Provided to the parent or guardian of each child in your care.

The intent of this law is that parents and families, as well as any staff of your program, understand the steps that will be taken to ensure that children in your care will be protected from harm and injury.

Below are **samples** of information that you will want to include as applicable in your safety policy.

Transportation Safety Policy (for programs that do not transport children)

Our child care does not provide transportation to school or other extra-curricular activities. Occasionally we take field trips and parents are always invited to participate. Child/staff ratios will be maintained at all times and only qualified staff or volunteers will be used to transport children. If children are transported for field trips, you will always know prior to that day. Children will always be restrained in proper seats and seat belts. We have automobile insurance that covers transportation of children for our child care business.

Transportation Safety Policy (for programs that transport children)

Our child care will provide transportation to (add details as applicable). We will only transport children if we have a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian on file. Only qualified adults that are licensed drivers will transport children. Drivers will follow all pertinent Indiana laws and will not use cell phones at any time while in the vehicle. Children will always be restrained in proper seats and seat belts and at no time will a vehicle exceed the recommended capacity. Children will not be left unattended. Upon returning from each trip, the bus/van/car will be inspected to ensure that no children are still on board.

We have automobile insurance that covers transportation of children for our child care business. All vehicles used for transportation will be maintained in a safe condition.

Safe Conditions Policy

The following steps will be taken to ensure that your child is safe while at our child care program.

Children will be actively supervised with the required number of qualified adults (adults who have completed a comprehensive criminal history check, drug screen and negative TB test and have completed all required trainings).

Our child care will not care for children in areas that are being remodeled, repaired, or painted. The administrator or director is responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces, including walls, floors, ceilings, equipment, toys, furnishings, and cribs, in a safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose parts, rusty parts, or materials containing poisonous substances.

The child care will take the following steps to maintain the child care:

- (1) Clean the child care daily.
- (2) Keep the child care in a sanitary condition at all times.
- (3) Sanitize toys, furniture, and other equipment used by children, weekly and when they become soiled or contaminated.
- (4) Wash all soiled items prior to sanitization.

If you have additional questions about providing daily activities and maintaining a safe environment, please call the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning at 1-877-511-1144. You can also find additional information and resources about daily activities and safe conditions at the following websites:

The Child Care Collection - <http://www.childcarecollection.com/default.cfm>

Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies - <http://www.iaccrr.org/default.cfm?page=child-care-providers> where free and low cost training opportunities are available from your local CCR&R agency and online through IACCRR Training Central.

Caring For Our Children - <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/>

US Consumer Product Safety Commission - <http://www.cpsc.gov/>

Other Training <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/development/teacher-time-webinars.html>

Be Prepared with Policies!

It is important for child care providers to plan and be prepared for emergencies and disasters. When policies and procedures are in place, staff, children and parents know what to do in an emergency situation. This helps to decrease panic, resulting in better outcome for all involved. A few policies important to consider are: illness, injuries, allergic reactions, dangerous weather, and fire. Policies about sanitation procedures, inspection of equipment and toys are also important.



Why have written policies?

- Promotes and protects the health and safety of children and staff.
- Advance planning can avoid a crisis and help set aside fear/ lessen stress.
- Helps staff, parents and children to understand what their role is.
- Helps ensure that practices are consistent throughout the facility.
- It may also decrease liability.

Policy Writing Considerations

It is always important that your policy:

- Fits the purpose for which it was intended to be used.
- Makes sense to everyone that it affects, including parents and staff.
- Can be put into practice at the facility.
- Is accurate and contains current practices.
- Meets or exceeds state regulations for the type of facility.

Who should be involved in writing the policies?

Staff, parents and board members, emergency personnel, legal council, medical personnel, law enforcement, county extension or other professionals with expertise on the policy topic.



What should your policies look like?

- Title of policy (*The health goal covered.*) Belief
- Statement/Intent Statement (*The purpose of the policy and why the policy is necessary.*)
- Procedure/Practice/Responsible Person (*Steps necessary to take to accomplish what the policy recommends.*)
- Communication (*How families and staff will be informed of the policy?*)
- Applicable (*To whom does the policy apply?*)
- References (*Sources of information for the policy*)
- Review (*Names of those who reviewed the policy*)
- Effective date and Review date

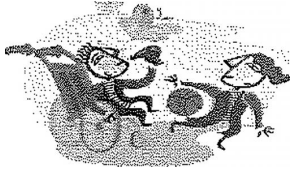
Getting others to follow policies

- A policy is helpful only when it is followed. Try to be pro-active (prevention-oriented), rather than reactive, when developing policies.
- Make sure everyone affected knows when old policies are being reviewed or new ones are being written.
- Inform everyone again after the changes are completed, and let them know about the review date.
- Send a written statement to parents and staff to review, sign and return.
- **Be Firm:** Do not to make exceptions once the policy is in place. For the policy to be effective, it must be followed by everyone.
- A monitoring system should be in place to assure that policies and procedures are being followed. Check lists are usually the easiest way to accomplish this.

Resources:

Caring for Our Children 2002; <http://nrc.ucbsc.edu>
Model Child Care Health Policies
www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org
National Association for Education of Young Children:
800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org
Bright Horizons Family Solutions:
www.brighthorizons.com/talktochildren or 617-673-8000.

Safe Playgrounds



Outdoor play offers unique opportunities for children to engage in physical fitness and experience cognitive, gross motor, and social development.

Unfortunately, playground safety is a big issue, because children are more likely to experience accidents and injuries on playgrounds than anywhere else in the child care setting. The good news is that there are no-cost, easy ways to make outdoor spaces safe for children.

Supervision

- Keep close watch to ensure proper use of equipment. Every child **MUST** be kept in sight *at all times*.
- Adults should position themselves in different areas of the playground so they can view all the children.

Age-appropriate Activities

- Make sure little ones do not use things meant for bigger children-post signs at their height with picture messages.
- Safe heights on play equipment are 1 foot per year of child's age.

Daily Playground Check List

- Equipment must be firmly anchored with no sharp, broken, loose, hanging, missing, or projecting parts or loose paint or splinters.
- Certain openings could present an entrapment hazard if the distance between any interior opposing surfaces is greater than 3.5 inches and less than 9 inches. All openings should be less than 3.5 inches or greater than 9 inches.
- The grounds (including spaces like sandboxes) are free of trash, food, poison, plants, chemicals, and animal waste.
- Fall-area protective material is provided and raked back to required depths around equipment/footers/ landing zones.

Healthy Kids

- Age limits/simple rules are posted at each piece of equipment.
- The air quality is good. The heat index is not above 90 degrees F or the wind chill is not below 15 degrees F.

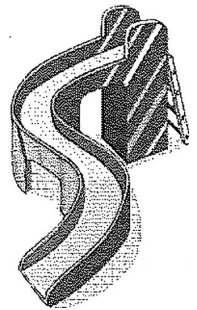
Daily Kids Check List

- Clothes are weather-appropriate and sunscreen is applied with parent permission.
- Bike helmets are worn when riding toys.
- NO drawstrings on clothes.
- Review/repeat/sing playground rules.
- Children have water to drink.

Equipment Warnings!

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) advises against the use of the following equipment:

- Chain or cable walks
- Metal animal-figure swings
- Log rolls
- Swinging gates
- Trampolines
- Parallel bars or overhead rings
- Old-fashioned fulcrum seesaws
- Free-standing arch or flexing climbers
- Slide-down poles or loose ropes/loops



Talking Points for Parents

- Share your playground rules with parents.
- Remind parents how important it is to supervise children at play.

Social and Learning Opportunities

- Fine and gross motor skills develop in ways not possible indoors.
- New interests, abilities and relationships can be found in a varied environment.

Resources:

National Program for Playground Safety:
www.playgroundsafety.org or 800-554-PLAY.
US Consumer Product Safety Commission:
www.cpsc.gov or 800-638-2772.
Information consistent with *Caring for Our Children* 2012: www.nmckids.org