

Health and Safety Checklist

Use this checklist to find hazards. Whenever a hazard is found, fix it if you can. If you can not fix it, make a note of it and plan to get it fixed.

Safety checks should be done at least once a month. Having different people do the safety checks helps find more hazards. The more people who are involved in watching for hazards, the more they will help fix hazards whenever they see them. Safety is everyone's business!

General Indoor Areas

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Guns, projectile toys, darts, and cap pistols are not kept in the child care setting. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Floors are smooth and have nonskid surfaces. Rugs are skid-proof. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Doors to places that children can enter, such as bathrooms, can be easily opened from the outside by a child or by an adult. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Doors in children's areas have see-through panes so children are visible to anyone opening the door. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Doors have slow closing devices and/or rubber gaskets on the edges to prevent finger pinching. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Glass doors and full-length windows have decals on them that are at the eye levels of both children and adults. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Windows cannot be opened more than 6 inches from the bottom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All windows have closed, permanent screens. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bottom windows are lockable. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Walls and ceilings have no peeling paint and no cracked or falling plaster. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The child care setting is free of toxic or lead paint and of crumbly asbestos. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Safety covers are on all electrical outlets. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Electrical cords are out of children's reach. Electrical cords are placed away from doorways and traffic paths. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Covers or guards for fans have openings small enough to keep children's fingers out. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Free-standing space heaters are not used. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pipes, radiators, fireplaces, wood burning stoves, and other hot surfaces cannot be reached by children or are covered to prevent burns. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Nobody smokes or has lighted cigarettes, matches, or lighters around children. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tap water temperature is 120° Fahrenheit or lower. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trash is covered at all times and is stored away from heaters or other heat sources. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drawers are closed to prevent tripping or bumps. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sharp furniture edges are cushioned with cotton and masking tape or with commercial corner guards. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Emergency lighting equipment works. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Regular lighting is bright enough for good visibility in each room. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Enough staff members are always present to exit with children safely and quickly in an emergency. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All adults can easily view all areas used by children. |

General Indoor Areas (cont.)

Yes No

- Pets are free from disease, are immunized as appropriate, and are maintained in a sanitary manner.
- Poisonous plants are not present either indoors or outdoors in the child care areas.
- All adult handbags are stored out of children's reach.
- All poisons and other dangerous items are stored in locked cabinets out of children's reach. This includes medicines, paints, cleansers, mothballs, etc.
- Pesticides are applied only to surfaces that children cannot reach and surfaces not in direct contact with food.
- A certified pest control operator applies pesticides while observed by a caregiver.
- Cots are placed in such a way that walkways are clear for emergencies.
- Children are never left alone in infant seats on tables or other high surfaces.
- Teaching aids such as projectors are put away when not in use.
- A well-stocked first aid kit is accessible to all caregivers.
- Non-porous gloves are readily available for caregivers in all areas where child care is provided.
- Heavy equipment or furniture that may tip over is anchored.

Toys and Equipment

Yes No

- Toys and play equipment have no sharp edges or points, small parts, pinch points, chipped paint, splinters, or loose nuts or bolts.
- All painted toys are free of lead.
- Toys are put away when not in use.
- Toys that are mouthed are washed after each use.
- Children are not permitted to play with any type of plastic bag, balloon or latex/vinyl gloves.
- Toys are too large to fit completely into a child's mouth and have no small, detachable parts to cause choking. No coins, safety pins, or marbles for children under 4 years of age.
- Infants and toddlers are not permitted to eat small objects and foods that may easily cause choking, such as hot dogs, hard candy, seeds, nuts, popcorn, and uncut round foods such as whole grapes and olives.
- Toy chests have air holes and a lid support or have no lid. A lid that slams shut can cause pinching, head injuries or suffocation.
- Shooting or projectile toys are not present.
- Commercial art materials are stored in their original containers out of children's reach. The manufacturer's label includes a reference to meeting ASTM Standards.
- Rugs, curtains, pillows, blankets, and cloth toys are flame-resistant.
- Sleeping surfaces are firm. Waterbeds and soft bedding materials such as sheepskin, quilts, comforters, pillows and granular materials (plastic foam beads or pellets) used in bean bags are not accessible to infants.
- Hinges and joints are covered to prevent small fingers from being pinched or caught.

Toys and Equipment (cont.)

Yes No

- Cribs, playpens, and highchairs are away from drapery cords and electrical cords.
- Cribs, playpens, and highchairs are used properly and according to the manufacturer's recommendations for age and weight. Cribs have no corner posts.
- Cribs have slats placed $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches apart or less and have snug-fitting mattresses. Mattresses are set at their lowest settings and sides are locked at their highest settings.
- Toys are not hung across the cribs of infants who can sit up.
- Rattles, pacifiers, or other objects are never hung around an infant's neck.
- Infant walkers are not used.
- Five gallon buckets are not accessible to infants and toddlers.

Hallways and Stairs

Yes No

- Handrails are securely mounted at child height.
- Handrails are attached to walls for right-hand descent, but preferably are attached to the walls on both right and left sides.
- Stairway gates are locked in place when infants or toddlers are nearby. Gates should have openings small enough to prevent a child's head from fitting through. No accordion-type gates are used.
- Doorways to unsupervised or unsafe areas are closed and locked unless the doors are used for emergency exits.
- Emergency exit doors have easy-open latches.
- Safety glass is used in all areas of potential impact.
- Caregivers can easily monitor all entrances and exits to keep out strangers.
- Stairways and hallways are clear of objects that can cause a fall.

Kitchen and Food Preparation and Storage Areas

Yes No

- Caregivers always wash hands before handling food.
- Caregivers always wash children's hands before mealtimes.
- Trash is always stored away from food preparation and storage areas.
- Refrigerator temperature is monitored by thermometer and is kept at or below 40° Fahrenheit.
- All perishable foods are stored in covered containers at 40° Fahrenheit or lower.
- Hot foods are kept at 140° Fahrenheit or higher until ready to be eaten.
- Pest strips are not used.
- Cleansers and other poisonous products are stored in their original containers, away from food, and out of children's reach.

Kitchen and Food Preparation and Storage Areas (cont.)

Yes No

- Nonperishable food is stored in labelled, insect-resistant metal or plastic containers with tight lids.
- Five gallon buckets are not accessible to children.
- Refrigerated medicines are kept in closed containers to prevent spills that would contaminate food.
- Food preparation surfaces are clean and are free of cracks and chips.
- Eating utensils and dishes are clean, free of cracks, chips and lead.
- Appliances and sharp or hazardous cooking utensils are stored out of children's reach.
- Pot handles are always turned towards the back of the stove.
- An ABC-type fire extinguisher is securely mounted on the wall near the stove.
- All caregivers know how to use the fire extinguisher correctly and have seen a demonstration by members of the fire department.
- There is a "danger zone" in front of the stove where the children are not allowed to go.
- A sanitarian has inspected food preparation and service equipment and procedures within the past year.
- Children are taught the meaning of "hot."
- Trash is stored away from the furnace, stove, and hot water heater.
- Kitchen area is not accessible to children without constant adult supervision.
- Caregivers do not cook while holding a child.
- Hot foods and liquids are kept out of children's reach.
- Stable step stools are used to reach high places.

Bathrooms

Yes No

- Stable step stools are available where needed.
- Electrical outlets have safety covers or are modified to prevent shock.
- Electrical equipment is stored away from water.
- Cleaning products and disinfectants are locked in a cabinet out of children's reach.
- Toilet paper is located where children can reach it without having to get up from the toilet.
- If potty chairs are used, they are easy to clean with a bleach solution in a utility sink used only for that purpose, if possible.
- Potty chairs are not used in the food preparation or dining areas, and potty chairs cannot be reached by children when they are not in use.
- There are enough toilets so children do not have to stand in line.
- Caregivers and children always wash hands after toileting and diaper changing.
- The changing of diapers or soiled underwear is done in a special, separate area away from food and play.

Bathrooms (cont.)

Yes No

- The diapering or changing table has rails to keep the child from rolling off.
- Trash cans for diapers, tissues, and other materials that come in contact with body fluids can be opened with a step pedal and are lined with a plastic bag, emptied daily, and kept clean.
- Paper towels and liquid soap are readily available at the sink.
- Thermometers are used to check that water temperatures are between 120° and 130° Fahrenheit or lower. The lower the water temperature, the safer it is for young children.
- Cosmetics are stored out of children's reach.
- Bathtubs have skid-proof mats or stickers.
- Children take baths only when adults can supervise.
- Children are never left alone on a changing table, bed, or any other elevated surface.
- Children are never left unsupervised in or near water.

Active Play Areas Including Playgrounds

Yes No

- The active play area offers a wide range of parallel and interactive activities.
- Water for drinking and first aid is available near the play area.
- A well-stocked first aid kit is accessible to all caregivers during outdoor play.
- A file is available containing the name and address of the manufacturer of each piece of equipment.
- The file also contains records of equipment purchase, installation, inspection, maintenance and CPSC/ASTM approval.
- For old equipment, the file contains documentation of safety provided by an inspector who is certified by the National Playground Safety Institute (800) 554-PLAY.

Surfacing

Yes No

- Measure the highest point that a child can climb to (critical height). For swings, the critical height is measured from the pivot point where the swing is suspended down to the ground. For elevated structures with guard rails, the critical height is measured from the top of the guard rail down to the ground. The highest accessible part for platforms with protective barriers is the deck. For all other structures, the critical height is measured from the highest point of the structure down to the ground.
- Surfaces underneath indoor and outdoor play equipment that children can climb are covered with impact-absorbing material according to the CPSC recommendations for critical height on page 6 of this checklist.
- The following surfacing materials are not in use underneath indoor and outdoor play equipment that children can climb: asphalt, concrete, soil or hard-packed dirt, grass, turf, linoleum, or carpeting.
- The dirt in the play area has been tested and found free of toxic materials, including lead.
- There are no toys or objects (including surfacing material) with a diameter less than 1¹/₄ inch accessible to children who are still placing objects in their mouths.

Loose-Fill Playground Surfacing Materials: Depth Needed

Height of Equipment	Type and Minimum Uncompressed (Not Packed Down) Depth at Point of Impact (More Must Be Installed to Account for Scatter)
5 Feet	6 inches of fine sand 6 inches of coarse sand 6 inches of medium gravel
6 Feet	6 inches of double shredded bark mulch 6 inches of uniform wood chips 6 inches of fine gravel
7 Feet	6 inches of wood mulch 9 inches of uniform wood chips 9 inches of fine gravel
9 Feet	12 inches of fine sand
10 Feet	9 inches of wood mulch 9 inches of double shredded bark mulch 12 inches of fine gravel
11 Feet	12 inches of wood mulch 12 inches of double shredded bark mulch

Adapted from “Critical Heights (in feet) of Tested Materials” Table 2, page 21. For characteristics (fall absorbing characteristics, installation/maintenance, advantages and disadvantages) of organic and inorganic loose-fill materials and of unitary synthetic materials, see Appendix C, pp. 29-31. Loose-fill surfacing materials in list above are described in Appendix D, p. 31. Handbook for Public Playground Safety. Pub. No. 325, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC, 1994.

American Academy of Pediatrics (1995) Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs—Video Series. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, p. 50.

Fall Zones

Yes No

- Fall zones (the areas onto which a child falling from or exiting from a piece of play equipment would be expected to land) do not overlap.
- Impact-absorbing surfacing material extends at least 6 feet beyond all sides of the equipment.
- For to-fro swings: the impact-absorbing surfacing material extends in front and in back of the swings a distance that measures twice the height of the swing beam.

Fall Zones (cont.)

Yes No

- For slides: the impact-absorbing surfacing material extends at least 6 feet from the end of the slide chute — or — a distance that equals the height of the slide platform + 4 feet, whichever is greater. (It is not necessary for surfacing material to exceed 14 feet).

Protrusion & Entanglement

Yes No

- All metal edges are rolled.
- There are no equipment pieces that could catch clothing. There are no strings or loose items on children's clothing or around children's necks that could get caught on play equipment.
- Any exposed bolts do not protrude more than two threads beyond the face of the nut; exposed bolts have no burrs or sharp edges.
- There are no open "S" hooks.

Entrapment

Yes No

- There are no openings in any pieces of active play equipment between 3¹/₄ and 9 inches that could cause head entrapment.

Equipment Spacing

Yes No

- There are at least 6 feet of use space on all sides of each piece of equipment.
- Play equipment pieces are spaced at least 12 feet apart from each other (each has its own 6 foot use space).
- Traffic patterns are designed to prevent children from bumping into each other.

Trip Hazards

Yes No

- All anchoring devices, such as footings and bars at the bottom of climbers, are below the playing surface.
- There are no exposed tree / plant roots.
- Changes in elevation are made obvious by the use of brightly colored visual or other barriers.

Appropriate Activities & Equipment

Yes No

- Age-specific play areas are separated by distance or a physical barrier.
- Equipment is warranted by the manufacturer as suitable for the age of the users (2–5 years and 5–12 years) according to ASTM Standard F1487-95.

Pinch, Crush, & Shearing points

Yes No

- All spaces are too big or too small to entrap a child's finger.
- All wooden parts are smooth and without splinters.
- All corners are rounded, especially at exit ends and sides along a slide bed.
- Exposed ends of tubing have caps that cannot be removed without tools.

Guardrails, Handrails, and Safety Barriers

Yes No

- Guardrails or protective barriers are used to prevent inadvertent or unintentional falls off elevated platforms.
- For preschool children: elevated surfaces more than 20 inches high have a guardrail or protective barrier; those more than 30 inches high have a protective barrier (an enclosing device that is intended to prevent both inadvertent and deliberate attempts to pass through the barrier).
- For school age children: elevated surfaces more than 30 inches high have a guardrail or protective barrier; those more than 48 inches high have a protective barrier.
- Handrails are child hand-hold size, and are at waist to shoulder height of the child users (22"–38").
- Boundaries such as painted lines or dividers separate play equipment from walking areas.
- Bike or trike riding areas are separate from other areas.
- Playgrounds are fenced in.

Unsafe Equipment

Yes No

- There are no heavy swings or swings made out of wood, metal, or other rigid materials.
- There are no animal figure swings.
- There are no multiple-use occupancy swings (swings used by more than one child at a time) other than tire swings.
- There are no swing sets with more than 2 swings per bay.
- There are no rope swings; all ropes are anchored at both ends.
- There are no trapeze bars.
- Any see-saws present have a spring centering device for children 2-5 years of age. If see saws are used, there must be a shock absorbing material required to cushion seat impact on surface and the maximum height of the seat above the protective surfacing must not exceed 5 feet.
- There are no trampolines.

Maintenance

Yes No

- Daily checks include: broken glass, animal waste, trash, toxic plants or plant debris, damage by vandals, displaced surfacing, broken equipment, chipping paint, puddles of water, insect hazards, need for lubrication of moving parts.

Maintenance (cont.)

Yes No

- All hardware fasteners, permanent coverings, or connecting devices are tight and cannot be removed without tools.
- All surfaces are intact.
- All structures are sturdy enough that they will not move or tip over when the weight of an adult is put against them.
- There is no peeling paint. (Lead in peeling paint on play equipment is a common hazard.)
- All ropes are tight and strands cannot be pulled apart.

Supervision

Yes No

- All areas where children can play are in view of an adult at all times.
- Every child is accounted for at all times by a supervising adult. Some method of assuring that no child is hidden or missing from the group must be used.
- When children must leave the play area to use the toilet, to get first aid, or for any other reason, supervision of the child who leaves and the children who remain in the play area is secure and consistent.
- Children are prevented from playing in a way that challenges them beyond their abilities or that puts others at risk of significant injury.

Slides

Yes No

- The impact-absorbing surfacing material extends at least 6 feet from the end of the slide chute -or- a distance that equals the height of the slide platform + 4 feet, whichever is greater. (It is not necessary for surfacing material to exceed 14 feet).
- Slides are no taller than 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ feet and have side rims at least 4 inches high.
- Slides have an enclosed platform at the top for children to get into position to slide.
- Slide ladders have flat steps and a handrail on each side. For users 2-12 years of age, steps are 9 inches apart. Rungs are 12 inches apart. (If steps are 9 inches apart, check for entrapment).
- Slide beds have a flat surface at the bottom to slow children down and are sloped at no greater than a 30 degree angle overall.
- Slides with metal beds are shaded to prevent overheating.

Sand

Yes No

- Sand digging areas are in the shade.
- Sand digging areas are contained by smooth frames.
- Sand is covered when not in use to prevent infectious disease and injury risk when animals and insects get into it.

Swings

Yes No

- Swings are located away from other equipment and activities.
- Swing footings are stable and buried below the ground or covered by protective surfacing.
- There is no corrosion evident on hooks or chains.
- There are no “A” frames with horizontal cross bars present.
- Tot swings are in a separate bay from the other swings.
- Swing hangers are spaced wider than the seats, not less than 20 inches.
- There is a minimum space of 24 inches between seats and 30 inches between the swing and supporting structure.
- The distance between the bottom of the seat and the protective surface is at least 12 inches.

Multi-Axis Tire Swings

Yes No

- Tire swings do not share a bay with any other type of swing or are mounted on any structure with other play components.
- There are no exposed steel belts in steel-belted radial tire swings.
- There are drain holes in tire swing tires.
- The minimum clearance between tire and support structure is 30 inches.
- The tire swing itself weighs less than 35 pounds.

Climbers

Yes No

- Climbers have a safe way off for children who cannot complete the activity.
- No places exist where children can fall more than 18 inches onto any component of the climber.
- Connections between ropes, cables, or chains are securely fixed.
- There are no arch climbers or sliding poles accessible to preschoolers.
- Horizontal ladders and overhead rings are used only by children who are over 5 years of age. Chinning bars may be used by 4 year olds.

Merry-Go-Rounds

Yes No

- The platform is continuous, approximately circular.
- There are no components, including handgrips, that extend beyond the perimeter of the platform.
- Unless the merry-go-round is tub shaped, there are 1–1¼ inch handgrips available.
- There are no accessible shearing or crush points.
- Peripheral speed of rotation is limited to 13 feet per second.

Spring Rocking Equipment

Yes No

- The seat accommodates only the intended number of users at one time.
- There are hand grips and foot rests for each seating position.
- Handgrips are between 1–1¼ inches in diameter; minimum length 3 inches for one hand, and 6 inches for two hands.
- Foot rests are a minimum width of 3¼ inches.
- Seats are not less than 14 inches nor more than 28 inches above platform surface.

Other Hazards

Yes No

- There is no litter or animal feces in the play area that may attract insects, hide hazards, and harbor infectious disease agents.
- There are no attractive climbing hazards (such a trees) that are accessible from an object placed underneath them.
- There are no toxic or thorny plants present.
- There is a fence that encloses the play area.

Please explain your plan to fix or take out of play any items checked “No.”

Items on the Active Play Areas including Playgrounds Checklist are based primarily on the recommendations of the Consumer Product Safety Commission in the Handbook for Public Playground Safety (1994) and the current ASTM Standards.

Swimming Pools

Yes No

- All pools and ponds are enclosed with four-sided fencing that is resistant to climbing, is at least five feet high, comes within 3¹/₄ inches of the ground, and has openings no greater than 3¹/₄ inches.
- Fence openings have self-closing latching gates with the latch at least 55 inches from the ground.
- Walk areas around the pool have a nonskid surface.
- The pool and pool maintenance have been inspected and approved by the local health department within the past year.
- Small, portable wading pools are not used for group water play.
- Equipment is available and used every two hours while children are in the water to test and maintain the pH of the water between 7.2 and 8.2.
- Water temperatures are maintained between 82° F and 93° F while the pool is in use.

Emergency Preparedness

Yes No

- All caregivers have roles and responsibilities in case of fires, injury, or other disasters.
- One or more caregivers certified in infant and child first aid and where children swim or children with disabilities are in care, one or more caregivers certified in infant and child CPR are always present.
- All first aid kits have the required supplies. The kits are stored where caregivers can easily reach them in an emergency.
- Caregivers always take a first aid kit on trips.
- Smoke detectors and other alarms are tested monthly.
- Each room and hallway has a fire escape route clearly posted.
- Emergency procedures and telephone numbers are clearly posted near each phone.
- Children's emergency phone numbers are posted near the phone and can be easily taken along in case of an emergency evacuation.
- Emergency procedures include the following:
 - How to phone emergency medical services (EMS) system
 - Transportation to an emergency facility
 - Notification of parents
 - Where to meet if the child care setting is evacuated
 - Plans for an adult to care for the children while a caregiver stays with injured children. This includes escorting children to emergency medical care.
 - Alternate location for care is known to staff and parents, and is stocked with essential supplies (formula, diapers, toys, first aid supplies).

Emergency Preparedness (cont.)

Yes No

- All exits are clearly marked and free of clutter.
- Doors and gates all open out for easy exit.
- Children are taught to report if they or anyone else is hurt.
- Children are taught the words stop and no. Caregivers avoid using those words unless there is danger.
- Children are taught their own telephone number, address, and parent's work numbers.
- Children are taught how to phone EMS (911).
- Children are taught how to Stop, Drop, Roll, Cool in case their clothes catch fire.
- Children are taught to point out any matches they find to an adult.

Vehicles

Yes No

- All vehicles are licensed according to state law and insured for the type of transport being provided.
- All drivers are licensed and instructed in child passenger safety.
- Everyone, during every ride, uses age-appropriate safety restraints.
- Staff encourage correct use of age-appropriate seat restraints by parents.
- Drivers use child-resistant door locks when the vehicle is in motion.
- All vehicles are locked when not in use.
- A well-stocked first aid kit is in the vehicle for every ride.
- The caregiver has on hand current emergency contact information when driving children.
- Trip plans include how to manage emergencies.
- Children wear identification when transported.
- Pickup and drop-off points are safe from traffic.
- Infant seats are installed correctly, with seats facing the rear of the car until the child reaches 12 months of age. Infants must ride in the back seat.
- Driver knows where children are before putting vehicle in reverse.
- Bicycles and other riding toys are stable, well-balanced, and of the appropriate size. They do not have broken parts.
- Children use helmets approved by ANSI (American National Standards Institute) or Snell Memorial Foundation when riding bikes, and other riding toys that have a wheel base of 20 inches.
- Young bikers know traffic rules.
- Children do not horse around while riding bikes and do not ride in the street.
- Young children never cross the street without an adult. Children should know rules for crossing the street.
- No child should ride in the front seat of a vehicle unless the child meets the criteria for front seat occupancy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (800) 424-9393.