



Office of Head Start

Environmental Health and Safety: *Center- Based Observation Guide*

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Pre-Site Document Review

Environmental Health & Safety Key Indicator #1—Safe and Clean Facilities

Licensing (EnvHS 1.3)

- ▶ Does the program have a current child care license for this center or FCC home?
- ▶ How often are fire-prevention inspections conducted? *Applies only to programs where it is required*
 - Annually
 - Semi-annually
 - Monthly
 - Fire-prevention inspections are not conducted
- ▶ Is there a current building inspection for this facility? *Applies only to programs where it is required*
- ▶ Review the results of the most recent building inspection. Which of the following best describes the results of the inspection?
 - Passed
 - Passed with concerns
 - Failed

Center Observation

Environmental Health and Safety Key Indicator #1 – Safe and Clean Facilities

Inspections (EnvHS1.1)

- ▶ Does the grantee conduct safety inspections of all facilities, including all indoor and outdoor learning environments?
- ▶ Review the results of the most current safety inspection for the setting you are observing. Are there any issues that have yet to be addressed?
- ▶ How do staff address issues identified during safety inspections?
- ▶ How often does the grantee perform safety inspections?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Bi-Monthly
 - Monthly
 - Semi-annually
 - Annually
 - Less frequent than annually

Air Quality and Overall Sanitation (EnvHS 1.1)

- ▶ Is the environment free of air pollutants, including mold, smoke, lead, pesticides, asbestos, and herbicides, as well as soil and water pollutants?
- ▶ Does the program maintain a smoke-free environment on center grounds?
- ▶ Are facilities, materials, and equipment free of any hazards that may cause harm to children, families, or staff?
- ▶ Does the program have a pest-management program?
- ▶ Is all sewage and liquid waste disposed of so as not to expose children and adults?
- ▶ Are garbage and trash stored in a safe and sanitary manner that does not allow easy access by children?
- ▶ Are toilets and hand washing facilities clean, adequate in number, in good repair, and easily accessible by children?

Emergency Alert Systems and Fire Safety (EnvHS1.1)

- ▶ Is a fire extinguisher available?
- ▶ Is the extinguisher easily accessible?
- ▶ Is there a service date on the fire extinguisher showing it has been updated at least annually?
- ▶ Is there a smoke detector system?
- ▶ Is emergency lighting available that allows children and adults to clearly see pathways in case of a power failure?

Environmental Health and Safety Key Indicator #2 – Healthy Learning Environments

Safety and Cleanliness of Indoor and Outdoor Space (EnvHS 2.1)

- ▶ Does the design of the playground and equipment promote the safety of children, including:
 - Appropriate height and accessibility?
 - No openings that could entrap a child's head or limbs?
 - Equipment on shock-absorbing surface?
 - Absence of sharp edges, rust, choking and/or strangulation hazards, garbage, and hazardous material (e.g., glass, needles, animal feces)?
 - Equipment is stable and/or secured to the ground?
- ▶ Are toxic substances stored in a safe and secure manner in a locked room or cabinet fitted with a child-resistant lock and inaccessible to children?

Environmental Health and Safety Key Indicator #3 – Safe Learning Environments and Supervision

Safe Outdoor Play Areas (EnvHS 3.4)

- ▶ Are outdoor play areas arranged so adults can see children and effectively supervise to prevent children from leaving and/or getting into unsafe areas?

Classroom Observation

Environmental Health and Safety Key Indicator #1 – Safe and Clean Facilities

Air Quality and Overall Sanitation (EnvHS 1.1)

- ▶ Is fresh air available in rooms occupied by children?
- ▶ Is the environment free of air pollutants, including mold, smoke, lead, pesticides, asbestos, and herbicides, as well as soil and water pollutants?
- ▶ Are chemicals for controlling pests used while children are present?
- ▶ Are toileting and diapering areas separated from areas used for cooking, eating, and children's activities?

Emergency Alert System and Fire Safety (EnvHS 1.1)

- ▶ Is there a smoke detector system?
- ▶ Was the smoke detector system tested within the last 12 months?

General Safety and Wellness (EnvHS 1.1)

- ▶ Is the heating-and-cooling system designed to prevent injury to children and adults?
- ▶ Are electrical outlets accessible to children designed to prevent shock through the use of covers, installation of child-protection outlets (e.g., tamper-resistant outlets), or use of safety plugs?
- ▶ Are windows and glass doors constructed, secured, and adjusted to prevent children's injury and escape?
- ▶ Are facilities, materials, and equipment free of any hazards that may cause harm to children, families, or staff?
- ▶ Is lighting bright enough so children and adults can clearly see activities, materials, and pathways?
- ▶ Are any unvented fuel-fired heaters present?

Evacuation Routes and Emergency Procedures (EnvHS 1.1)

- ▶ Are exits clearly visible?
- ▶ Are evacuation routes clearly marked?
- ▶ Are emergency procedures posted in this setting?

Occupancy Permit (EnvHS 1.3)

- ▶ Does the building have an occupancy permit?

Environmental Health and Safety Key Indicator #2 – Healthy Learning Environments

Safety and Cleanliness of Indoor and Outdoor Space (EnvHS 2.1)

- ▶ Are toxic substances stored in a safe and secure manner in a locked room or cabinet fitted with a child-resistant lock and inaccessible to children?
- ▶ Are the following areas clean and free of dirt and debris?
 - Carpets
 - Floors
 - Furniture
 - Toys
 - Materials
 - Counters and shelves
- ▶ Is there evidence of pests?
- ▶ Were provisions made to ensure the safety, comfort, and participation of children with disabilities?
- ▶ Does the classroom provide at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child (excluding bathrooms, halls, kitchens, staff rooms, and storage space)?
- ▶ Are there any tip-over or tripping hazards in the room?
- ▶ Are toys, materials, and furniture age-appropriate?
- ▶ Are furnishings in the room sturdy and in good repair?
- ▶ Does the program ensure that sleeping arrangements for infants (e.g., cribs, playpens, bassinets) are free of soft bedding materials (e.g., soft mattresses, pillows, stuffed animals, fluffy blankets, comforters)? *Applies only to programs serving infants and toddlers*

Hand washing (EnvHS 2.2)

- ▶ Did you observe a situation that required hand washing? Check all situations you observed where hand washing should have occurred:
 - After diapering or toilet use
 - Before food preparation
 - Whenever hands were contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids
 - After handling pets or other animals
 - After handling garbage
- ▶ Did hand washing occur at the appropriate times and include the following?
 - Staff assisting children as needed
 - Staff and/or children washing hands with soap and water

Spilled Bodily Fluids (EnvHS 2.3)

- ▶ If bodily fluids were spilled during your observation, did clean-up include all of the following?
 - Nonporous gloves worn
 - Spills/fluids cleaned up immediately
 - All areas cleaned and sanitized
 - Contaminated materials placed in a plastic bag and secured

Diapering (EnvHS 2.4)

- ▶ If diapering was observed, did staff do all of the following when changing diapers?
 - Before bringing the child to the diaper-changing area, washed hands and brought supplies to the diaper-changing area
 - Always kept a hand on the child
 - Cleaned the child's diaper area
 - If wearing gloves, changed gloves prior to putting on clean diaper
 - Washed the child's hands and returned the child to a supervised area
 - Cleaned and disinfected the diaper-changing surface
 - Washed hands

Proper Handling Of Breast Milk (EnvHS 2.5)

Applies only to program serving infants and toddlers

- ▶ Are any children currently on breast milk or formula?
- ▶ Is breast milk properly refrigerated and all containers labeled with the child's full name and the date the breast milk was collected?
- ▶ Is frozen breast milk defrosted in the refrigerator?
- ▶ Is prepared formula labeled with child's name and date of preparation?

Medication Management (EnvHS 2.6)

- ▶ Are any children currently receiving medications?
- ▶ Are over-the-counter medications in original containers, and does the program have written orders from a physician that includes dosage and length of time to administer the medication?
- ▶ Are non-emergency medications stored under lock and key?
- ▶ If children are currently receiving medication, compare labeling with information noted on the Medication Administration Log. Are all medications given as prescribed?
- ▶ Are prescribed medications in original containers with original prescription labels?
- ▶ Are all medications within their dates of expiration?

Environmental Health and Safety Key Indicator #3 – Safe Learning Environments and Supervision

Preschool-Age Group Ratio (EnvHS 3.2)

- ▶ What is the predominant age of children in the class, as determined at the start of the program year?
- ▶ How many staff members are assigned to this classroom or group?
- ▶ How many children are enrolled in the classroom according to the program's documentation?
- ▶ How many children are currently present in the classroom?

Infant/Toddler Group Ratio (EnvHS 3.3)

Applies only to programs serving infants and toddlers

- ▶ How many infants/toddlers are currently present in the group?
- ▶ How many staff members are currently present with the group?

Supervision (EnvHS 3.6)

- ▶ Are staff within arm's reach of children sitting in a high chair or on a changing table, and holding any children who are bottle-feeding?
- ▶ Are all on-duty staff supervising and engaging with children in a way that ensures the children's safety?
- ▶ Did you observe an instance in which a child or children were unsupervised?
- ▶ Are clear systems in place to account for the whereabouts of each child (e.g., attendance logs and sign-in/out sheets, routine head counts)?

Positive Guidance (EnvHS 3.6)

- ▶ Did staff use positive child guidance when responding to undesired child behaviors rather than corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, unnecessary restraint, humiliation, isolation, or denial of food, water, or bathroom privileges?