

Best Practices Checklist: Early Childhood Learning Centers

- ✓ Check if meets standard

Organization

- The Center has received or is in the process of applying for accreditation by the National Childcare Accreditation Council
 - The Director of Operations for the early childhood learning center operated by the school reports to a "Board of Trustees" for the center that includes representation from the university
 - The early childhood learning center organization includes a Director of Operations, several state certified teachers (BA or MA), several associate teachers (BA or AA).
 - Campus Facilities Department provides maintenance and repair for school operated programs
 - General Counsel's Office has reviewed
 - state law related licensing and employment for early childhood learning centers
 - advertising
 - exculpatory agreements
 - emergency medical consent forms issued by the center
 - Director of Operations
 - assures the facility is inspected daily and hazards are removed from child access
 - assures all equipment, toys, materials conform to safety guidelines for the respective age groups
 - Assures appropriate action is carried out for behavioral problems and health risks
 - Assures the annual maintenance and material budgets are adequate.
 - Oversee the center's application for accreditation by the National Childcare Accreditation Council
 - Director of Facilities has assessed the premises for lead paint, radon and asbestos.
 - Lead paint, radon and asbestos have been remediated from the premises
 - Assures key building services, heat, electric, telephone are serviced on a scheduled program
 - Performs a quarterly inspection of the property
 - Assists the Director in budgeting capital improvements to the facility

Employee Selection

- The university maintains a screening process for employees, counselors and volunteers that will work with children:
- Completion of a formal written application
- Reference checks
- An in-person interview
- Public Safety performs fingerprint, background and motor vehicle record checks for all teachers and staff volunteers.
- Staff seek out professional development opportunities on health and safety issues
- Staff training includes:
 - Emergency evacuation and drills
 - Health, safety and welfare responsibilities
 - Emergency response and evacuation
 - Disaster plan
 - Hazards in the workplace
 - Back and material handling procedures
 - Managing stress
 - Adult immunizations
 - Bloodborne pathogens

- How to report safety and health concerns
- Responding to an injured child
- Incident reporting
- Suspect child abuse must be reported to the local police department IMMEDIATELY

University Policy and Procedures

- The university policy and procedures are reviewed by the respective Dean, Human Resources, Risk Management and Environmental Health and Safety, Public Safety and General Counsel prior to implementation
- Proposed programs and activities involving minors and children are reviewed and approved by the respective dean, general counsel, risk management and if employment related, human resources prior to acceptance.
- The Risk Management office publishes and distributes a guideline and materials to all departments hosting programs or working with children on campus that discusses the measures they can take to avoid child abuse allegations:
 - Application to approve a new program involving minors and children
 - Avoiding one-on-one situations without others in the area
 - Encourage minimum 1 advisor: 2 children or greater ratio when mentoring
 - Encouraging the child buddy system (2 minors or children working together) when sponsoring youth programs
- The Office of the General Counsel publishes an Acknowledgement of Risk and Responsibilities / Waiver of Liability for each program involving minors and children.
 - An Acknowledgement of Risk and Responsibilities form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian of all minors and children

Participation agreements include:

- Child Health Form completed by a physician, with immunization records
- Emergency Medical Care Permission Form
- Child Escort Information for individuals who will pick-up the child
- Program Permission Forms for Field Trips
- Permission Form for Medication Administration
- All signed by a parent.
- A guidebook is published for parents outlining
 - Health requirements for children
 - vaccinations
 - communication of allergies
 - known disabilities
 - Types of unacceptable behavior that could result in displacement

Operations

- Cots are provided for naptime.
- Each child provides personal bedding.
- Cots are so arranged to prevent blocking of egress paths and doors
- Each infant is assigned a personal crib, not to be shared with another
- Cooking on-site limited to toasting in an area away from the normal play area
- Students bring their own snacks and lunch
- Learn and play areas inside and outside are segregated by age group
- Only materials and toys appropriate for the respective age groups as specified by Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines, are purchased.
- Cribs meet 2011 by Consumer Product Safety Commission design guidelines.
 - Non-conforming cribs have been destroyed
- Sanitation facilities for storage of soiled diapers are protected from child access

- Automatic water sprinkler protection of the building is supplemented by smoke and fire detection with remote alarm to Public Safety or the local fire department and a local building alarm
- Facilities are situated on the first ground floor facilitating evacuation
- Unused electrical outlets are protected from probing fingers
- Window shade cords are cut back as short as practical
- A systematic procedure for checking the safety of buildings, grounds and equipment has been adopted
 - Infants and toddler toys do not detachable parts that are smaller than a film canister
 - Staff clear tables throughout the day and sweep floors after each meal
 - A safe level area is available for toys on wheels
 - Each morning the facility is checked for dangerous objects and other hazards
 - The center seeks advice from parents about the safety of the facility
 - Medications, detergents, cleaning products, and garden chemicals are clearly marked and stored behind labeled and locked doors
 - Diaper storage areas are covered
 - Plants are identified and poisonous plants are removed and destroyed

Emergency Management

- The center prepares and publishes an emergency management plan including:
 - Emergency evacuation and drills
 - Inclement weather plan (closure)
 - Lost child response and search

Transportation

- Only pre-qualified bus service providers are contracted for field trips. Certificates of automobile liability insurance are on file in the business office.
- Volunteers transporting locally in their personal vehicles provide evidence of insurance, \$100,000/\$300,000/\$50,000 and uninsured/under insured coverage.
- No child rides in the front seat
- All children wear seat belts, no doubling up or approved car seat with a buckled harness
- Field trips do not exceed one hour drive time

Outdoor Playgrounds

- Design, construction and equipment selection and maintenance conform to state law applicable to playground equipment.
- Consumer Product Safety Commission standards, Handbook for Public Playground Safety, Pub. No. 325 guidelines are adopted for construction and maintenance.
- Signs are posted near the playground designating the applicable age group, 2 –5 years or 5 to 12 years
- Play areas are inspected daily before children arrive.
- The inspection is documented using an appropriate checklist for the equipment provided
- Fencing surrounding the area should be sufficiently distant from the equipment
- A playground maintenance manual is published
 - Who is responsible for inspections and repairs
 - Qualifications of the inspector
 - Frequency of the inspections
 - Procedures for reporting work, repairs and removing apparatus from use
 - Procedures for modifying apparatus
 - Procedures for budget repairs and equipment replacement
- Climbing equipment, swings or large pieces of equipment/furniture are securely anchored and have stable bases