Hazardous Materials

Children are much more vulnerable than adults to exposures of hazardous materials because their bodies are still developing. Of the more than two million human poison exposures reported to poison centers every year, children younger than 6 years account for more than half of those potential poisonings. The most common substances involved in children’s poison exposures are cosmetics and personal care products, cleaning substances, and medications. Exposure to a toxic substance can occur if certain chemicals are inhaled, ingested, or touch the skin.

(If a child is unconscious, not breathing, or having seizures from possible poison contact or ingestion, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately. If a child has mild or no symptoms, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222).

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Resources for State, Territory, and Tribal Lead Agencies

The following resources support best practices in the development of hazardous materials standards, policies, and trainings.

Training, Webinars and Resources about Healthy Child Care for Government Agencies
This web page from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) provides training, webinars, and additional resources with information on integrated pest management and webinars on bed bugs; green cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting; improving children’s environmental health; and lead.

Handling, Storing, and Disposing of Hazardous Materials and Biological Contaminants
This National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance brief contains information on handling hazardous materials as it relates to Child Care and Development Fund health and safety trainings and standards.

Closer to Zero: Action Plan for Baby Foods
The Closer to Zero plan works to reduce exposure to toxic elements in baby food. This page outlines the details of that plan.

Perinatal Cannabis Use in the Era of Increasing Legalization: Considerations for State MCH Programs
Cannabis should never be used in a child care setting. This resource provides information that can be used to guide public health policy decisions related to cannabis use in child care.
Resources for Child Care Providers

The following resources relate to the identification and the elimination of hazardous materials in child care programs.

Program Safety

- **Animals in Schools and Daycares**
  Class pets can spread germs in a classroom. This page provides guidance on safety practices for animals in a school or daycare setting.

- **NIOSH Fast Facts: Protecting Yourself from Poisonous Plants**
  This web page contains information on common poisonous plants and what to do if you are exposed.

- **CCHP Health and Safety Checklist**
  This health and safety checklist is a 112-item tool developed to assess key health and safety standards and identify ways to improve health and safety in early care and education programs. This checklist includes information on hazardous materials that can be found in child care facilities.

- **Laundry Room and Detergent Safety**
  Laundry detergents and other laundry products are poisonous and must be stored properly away from children.

- **Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity**
  This article from the American Academy of Pediatrics contains information on common sources of lead and the long-term effects of lead poisoning in children.

- **Guidelines for Radon Testing in Family and Group Family Day Care Programs**
  Breathing air that contains radon can lead to lung cancer. This page provides information on how to test for radon in family child care settings.

- **Guidelines for Radon Testing in Day Care Centers / School Age Child Care Programs**
  Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. This page contains information on testing for radon in child care centers.

- **Carbon Monoxide**
  Carbon monoxide is called the “invisible killer” because it’s a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. This web page has safety tips for protecting your home from carbon monoxide.

- **Healthy Breathing**
  This fact sheet presents information on secondhand and thirdhand smoke, asthma, and practices that child care programs can do to support healthy breathing.

- **Poison Control**
  This website has an emergency helpline for suspected poisoning. There are also resources for poison prevention information and pill identification.
Sample Exposure Control Plan
This sample universal exposure control plan from South Carolina is intended to serve as a guide for child care employers to the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration bloodborne pathogens standards.

Model Child Care Health Policies
These sample policies and checklists cover hazardous materials in child care settings.

Acute Marijuana Intoxication
Marijuana (also known as cannabis, weed, or pot) is a plant that is commonly used for its psychoactive effects. It is also used medicinally for conditions like chronic pain, cachexia, and seizures. Children who ingest marijuana through edibles or breathe in smoke are at risk.

Children and Gun Safety: What to Know and Do
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), guns killed almost 40,000 people in 2017, the highest amount in the nearly 50 years since the CDC started their electronic database. This article from Harvard Medical School outlines the importance of securely storing guns away from children.

Hand Hygiene

When & How to Use Hand Sanitizer
Hand sanitizer can be dangerous to children if swallowed. This page provides information on situations when using hand sanitizer is appropriate and why it is important to monitor children when sanitizing their hands.

Situations that Require Hand Hygiene
This web page has information on when child care staff must wash their hands.

Hand Sanitizers: Keep Children Safe from Poisoning Risk
Swallowing hand sanitizer can cause poisoning. This article from the AAP addresses hand sanitizer safety.

Cleaning Procedures

Routine Schedule for Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting
Appendix K from Caring for Our Children provides a chart outlining how often items in child care settings should be cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected.

Selecting an Appropriate Sanitizer or Disinfectant
The terms “sanitize” and “disinfect” are often used to mean the same thing, but they are different. Appendix J from Caring for Our Children has information on the difference between sanitizer and disinfectant and how to select the appropriate cleaning method.

Green Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting: A Toolkit for Early Care and Education
This toolkit presents practical information on how to keep early care and education environments clean and safe using practices and products that are less hazardous and that protect young children and staff from infectious diseases. The toolkit includes a curriculum, checklist, posters, factsheets for child care providers, and a training presentation.

Toy Safety in Child Care
This web page presents information on how to select safe toys for children to prevent injury.

Child Care Safety
This page contains links to resources such as webinars, infographics, and articles on toy safety.
**Pest Management**

**Integrated Pest Management in Child Care Centers: Protecting Our Children from Pests and Pesticides**
This presentation from the Environmental Protection Agency contains information on integrative pest management in child care centers.

**Dos and Don'ts of Pest Control**
This resource from ECLKC offers suggestions on how to keep children safe when considering pest prevention and control.

**Training, Webinars and Resources for Child Care Providers**
This web page provides training, webinars, and additional resources with information on integrated pest control and other practices for healthy child care settings aimed at child care providers. It includes training on environmental dangers that are common in child care settings, information about integrated pest management, webinars on promoting healthy child care facilities, and additional resources for child care providers.

**Toy Safety**

**Toy Safety in Child Care**
This web page presents information on how to select safe toys for children to prevent injury.

**How High-Powered Magnetic Toys Can Harm Children**
High-powered magnets, also called "rare earth magnets," are used in technology like MRI machines as well as common household items, but these magnets are also sold as toys in the form of 100 or more small magnetic balls or cubes that can be sculpted into different shapes. This page contains information on how high-powered magnetic toys can present a risk to children.

**How Small Batteries Can Become Dangerous to Children**
Button batteries and lithium coin batteries are small, round batteries that may be found in remote controls and other household items. These batteries can cause injury when stuck in a child's nose or ear, and possibly death when swallowed. This resource contains information on how these batteries can present a risk to children and what to do in case of an emergency.

**Choking Prevention**
This page has information on how common household items, including small toy parts, can pose a serious choking hazard to children.

**4 Keys to Holiday Toy Safety**
This one-page flyer from the Consumer Protection and Safety Commission contains four fast facts on holiday toy safety.

**Art and Craft Safety Guide**
This is a comprehensive guide to art and craft safety, including information on paints, glues, and other potential hazards related to common art supplies.

**Recalls**
This feature on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website provides a searchable database for all product recalls. Families and providers may register toys and other items to receive emails when products are recalled. As a reminder, child care providers are responsible for all child injuries related to a recalled item.
Resources to Share with Families

The following resources can be shared with families to reduce young children’s access to hazardous materials.

Safe Homes

**Carbon Monoxide**
Carbon monoxide, also known as CO, is called the "Invisible Killer" because it's a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. This web page has safety tips for protecting your home from carbon monoxide.

**NIOSH Fast Facts: Protecting Yourself from Poisonous Plants**
This web page contains information on common poisonous plants and what to do if you are exposed.

**Even Plants Can Be Poisonous**
Some common household plants can be toxic to children. This page contains a list of poisonous plants that should not be within a child's reach.

**Protect Your Family from Sources of Lead**
This web page contains information on sources of lead that may be found in a child's environment.

**About Radon**
Radon is a radioactive gas that cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted. Breathing in high levels of radon can put you at risk of lung cancer. This page provides information on sources of radon and how to test your home.

**Poison Prevention Packaging Act Brochure**
The Consumer Product Safety Commission created this brochure with information on preventing child poisonings from household chemicals and medications.

**Tips for Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe: A Developmental Guide for Home Visitors – Toddlers**
This web page shares best practices for keeping infants and toddlers safe at home. It presents information on proper safety precautions for the following scenarios: general safety, diapering and toileting, eating, sleeping, and playing.

**Childproofing Checklist**
This checklist is designed to prepare spaces for young children to keep them safe from household dangers.

**Are Essential Oils Safe for Children?**
Essential oils have become very popular over the years and are widely available in markets and pharmacies. Although essential oils can be beneficial for children, it’s important to know how to use them safely. This page contains information on how to safely use and store essential oils with children.

**Poison Control**
This website has an emergency helpline for suspected poisoning. There are also resources for poison and prevention information and pill identification.

**Acute Marijuana Intoxication**
Marijuana (also known as cannabis, weed, or pot) is a plant that is commonly used for its psychoactive
effects. It is also used medicinally for conditions like chronic pain, cachexia, and seizures. Children who ingest marijuana through edibles or breathe in smoke are at risk.

**Medication Safety**
Any kind of medication can cause harm if taken the wrong way. This collection of webpages from the AAP contains information on medication safety.

**The Opioid Epidemic: How to Protect Your Family**
Opioids are a category of highly addictive prescription pain medicine. This web page provides information for parents on how to monitor their family’s use of prescription pain medicine to prevent addiction and overdoses.

**Hand Hygiene**

**Handwashing: A Family Activity**
Handwashing is an effective way to prevent the spread of germs and keep family members safe from illness or infection. This resource has information on teaching children how and when to wash their hands.

**Pest Management**

**Dos and Don'ts of Pest Control**
This resource from ECLKC offers suggestions on how to keep children safe when considering pest prevention and control.

**Play It Safe: Reduce Your Child’s Chances of Pesticide Poisoning**
This presentation has information and tips on how to store pesticides and other harmful chemicals away from children.

**Cleaning Procedures**

**Green Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting: A Toolkit for Early Care and Education**
The Green Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting Toolkit contains factsheets for families, listed below:

- Choosing Safer Products for Cleaning and Sanitizing Your Home
- How to Reduce the Spread of Infectious Disease at Home
- Safer Disinfectant Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Laundry Room and Detergent Safety**
Laundry detergents and other laundry products are poisonous and must be properly stored away from children.

**Toy Safety**

**Toy Safety Tips**
This one-pager has information on how to keep kids safe during playtime.

**Safety and Injury Prevention: Toy Safety**
This resource from Seattle Children's Hospital provides information on toy safety. At the bottom of the page, there are PDFs that provide useful information on toy safety that are specific to the child's age.
Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association
This website contains information on product safety for infants and children, including toy safety, car seat safety, and disinfecting practices.

How to Buy Safe Toys
This webpage presents ten tips for selecting safe, developmentally appropriate toys for your child.

How High-Powered Magnetic Toys Can Harm Children
High-powered magnets, also called “rare earth magnets,” are used in technology like MRI machines as well as common household items. These magnets are also sold as toys in the form of 100 or more small magnetic balls or cubes that can be sculpted into different shapes. This page contains information on how high-powered magnetic toys can present a risk to children.

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Additional Resources

“Nothing” Video
This 1-minute video from safekids.org has an important message on injury prevention and keeping children safe.
The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) supports state and community leaders and their partners in the planning and implementation of rigorous approaches to quality in all early care and education settings for children from birth through age 12. The ECQA Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

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