

How to Green Your Child Care Business



Pesticides and Pest Prevention

- Use non-toxic techniques both inside and outside the facility to prevent and control pests. If a serious threat remains and pesticide application is the only viable option, then parents should be notified in advance and a licensed professional apply the least toxic, effective product at a time when children will not be exposed to the application area for at least 12 hours.

Air Quality

- Avoid conditions that lead to excess moisture, which contributes to the growth of mold and mildew. Maintain adequate ventilation and air flow, repair water leaks, and keep humidity within a desirable range.
- Do not allow car or other vehicles to idle near the facility.
- Do not use scented candles or air fresheners.
- Do not permit smoking anywhere on the premises or in sight of children.

Household Chemicals

- Use biodegradable, non-toxic cleaning products and the least toxic disinfecting products. When other products are required, they should be used only for their intended purpose in strict accordance with all label instructions. Store cleaning products where children cannot access them.

- Only use chlorine bleach when and where it is required or recommended by state and local authorities. Use it prudently and never use more than necessary.
- Use hand soaps without microbial agents, except as required by local health codes.
- Do not use aerosol sprays of any kind.
- Use only low – VOC (volatile organic compounds) latex paints and do not paint when children are present.

Lead

- Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula, and run the water for 5-10 seconds or until it feels noticeably colder.
- Keep the building free of flaking or peeling paint and regularly wash all areas around doors and windows.
- Do not use imported, old, or handmade pottery to cook, store, or serve food or drinks.
- Supply a rough mat at the entrance of our facility and encourage the wiping of shoes before entering. Clean the mat regularly.

Mercury

- Do not use any mercury-containing thermometers. Instead use digital thermometers.
- Safely store and recycle all used batteries and fluorescent and compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Furniture and Carpets

- Furniture should be in good condition without foam or inside stuffing exposed (same goes for stuffed animals or any other foam item).
- Ensure furniture is made of solid wood, with few, if any, items made of particle board.
- Avoid having wall-to-wall carpets.
- Area rugs should be vacuumed daily and cleaned at least twice a year using biodegradable cleaners.

Art Supplies

- Use only non-toxic art supplies approved by the Art & Creative Materials Institute (ACMI) See www.acminet.org/inex.htm for a list.

Plastic and Plastic Toys

- Avoid toys made out of soft plastic vinyl. Buy only those labeled “PVC-free”.
- Never use the microwave to heat food that is in plastic containers, plastic wrap, or plastic bags.

Treated Playground Equipment

- Avoid playground equipment made of treated wood.

Recycling and Garbage Storage

- Recycle all paper/cardboard, glass, cans, and plastic.
- Keep garbage covered at all times to avoid attracting pests and minimize odors.

Diapers

- Consider using flushable hybrid diapers. The soiled, biodegradable liner is flushed down the toilet into the sewage system, rather than sending yet another diaper to the landfill. You can then insert a new liner into the reusable cloth pants.

Nutrition

- Try to purchase fresh food items from local growers and suppliers, organically grown if available.

This information is provided as a community service of ARCHS’ St. Louis Area Communities Against Toxics (SLACAT) Community Partnership.

For more information refer to www.stlarchs.org.

