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To: Family Day Care Licensees
Day Camp Licensees

From: Patty Hammes, Director *Patty Hammes*
Bureau of Regulation and Licensing

RE: Health and Safety Issues

With warmer weather upon us, the time is right to review some health and safety issues as well as to share some updates about child care related initiatives.

Sun and Heat Related Safety Tips

The heat and sun of summer can make playing outside an adventure. Children may not be aware however, when they are experiencing too much sun and heat. As a child care provider you must take steps to insure that children do not become overheated or burned by the sun. The hours between 10 AM and 2 PM are the times when the sun is the most intense. If children are going to be outside during the day and particularly during these times, you need to take preventative measures and children need to be watched closely to prevent problems.

Heat exhaustion can occur when a person's body becomes overheated and dehydration is a distinct possibility as well. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include fainting, rash, fatigue and nausea. Skin may become clammy, or moist and dry. If heat-related symptoms appear, immediate action should be taken to reduce the individual's body temperature. Cool showers, baths, and sponge baths can be used to reduce body temperature. In addition, wet clothing has a cooling effect. To prevent dehydration, children should be offered clear liquids such as water frequently and encouraged to drink even if they say they are not thirsty.

The summer sun can also pose a risk to children. Severe sunburns in childhood have been linked to the development of skin cancer later in life. Protective clothing and the use of sunscreens are essential. Just as a reminder, there are 2 ways that you can handle the use of sunscreens in your child care program. **Parent provided sunscreen** – You may ask parents to supply the sunscreen that will be applied to their child prior to going outside to play. The sunscreen should be labeled with the child's name and written permission for application should be secured. **Center provided sunscreen** – In this situation, you supply one type of sunscreen that is used by all children after obtaining written permission from the parents. Parents should be informed about the type of sunscreen provided by the center and its protection level. If a parent prefers a specific brand or protection level, the parents may supply their own product. Then if the center changes either the brand or protection level, parents should be informed of those changes and again give written permission for the new type. In either case, the center does not need to document the application in the center medical log. These same procedures can be followed for the use of insect repellents as well.

The use of protective clothing such as hats and cover-up clothing can also be used to help protect children against the effects of too much sun. Protective clothing should be one of the first lines of defense against sun exposure. Long-sleeved shirts with collars and long pants provide the most protection because they leave less skin exposed to the sun. Loose-fitting clothing is more comfortable since it allows air to flow through and cool the skin. Hats offer the best method of minimizing ultraviolet radiation to the face, head, ears and neck. Different styles of hats offer varying levels of protection but any hat is better than no hat. Don't forget about sunglasses! Protect your eyes and your children's eyes with sunglasses with protection rating of at least 95% of UVB rays and 60% of UVA rays. And while we're talking about protective clothing, remember to have parents protect their children's feet and toes by having the children wear closed toe shoes such as sneakers. Sandals and flip-flop type shoes are fun to wear, but they don't offer much protection while running and playing.

Playground safety

Now is the time to look at your outdoor play space as well. Are there areas outdoors where children can play in the shade? Is there a specific time when shade is not present? Can you arrange your daily schedule to allow children the opportunity to play during those times of the day when shade is present? You can erect both permanent or temporary shade structures in outdoor areas by using umbrellas or shade cloths.

Each year over 200,000 children are injured while playing on a playground. The safety of each piece of playground equipment as well as its placement within the playground space should be considered when evaluating a playground for safety. Checking playgrounds for broken or rusting equipment and unsafe debris such as broken glass and other hazards can go a long way towards preventing injuries. Play structures should have regular, periodic maintenance to minimize the potential for corrosion or deterioration from rot, insects or weathering. Areas on structures that need particular attention include hooks that hold swings; any moving parts; places where pieces of equipment are joined together, and any wood surfaces. Openings larger than 4 inches in diameter can cause a child's head to become trapped. Wood that is splintering or cracking can be a source of splinters.

Outdoor play time is a time for running and active physical play, but sometimes children become so engrossed in play that they forget to watch where they are going. Swinging swings can present a hazard if they are placed in a path where children like to run. Children love to climb and explore, therefore you should make sure that a safe fall zone is present around any equipment, in case a child decides to jump or loses his/her balance and falls to the ground. Appropriate surfacing under equipment will also help protect children from injury if they fall. Play World Playground Systems has published a guide to help assess the safety of playground equipment. You can obtain a free copy of this audit guide from Play World Systems by calling 1-800-233-8404 and requesting "Your guide to assessing ASTM/CPSC compliance, Playground Audit Guide". The Wisconsin Child Care Information Center (1-800-362-7353) and your licensing specialist also have information related to appropriate surfacing materials and other playground safety information.

Water Play

Water with its rippling, shimmering appeal is a magnet for children. Children under the age of 5 have no fear of water. They associate water with play not with danger. Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths to children ages 14 and younger. Child drowning can happen in a matter of seconds – the time it takes to answer the phone. Often there is no splashing to warn of trouble. Of all age groups, children ages 1 – 4 have the highest drowning death rate and of all preschoolers who drown, 75 % are missing from sight for five minutes or less. It is up to the adults caring for children to protect them from the dangers that water provides. Because of the dangers inherent in water, the Bureau is

recommending that water tables, sprinklers and squirt bottles replace wading pools as a way to allow the children to experience the fun of water related activities during the hot summer months.

Last year the Bureau developed some supplemental licensing material to provide guidance when centers use swimming pools and wading pools. In addition, since water gardens and ponds are becoming an addition to many yards, we developed some guidelines regarding the presence of these landscape formations in an outdoor play yard. Please contact your licensing specialist if you have questions related to wading pools, swimming pools or water gardens/ponds etc. on the premises of your center.

In addition, standing water can be a breeding ground for insects. Items that can allow water to collect, including automobile tires should have drain holes to allow water to drain off easily and containers or other items that can collect water need to be checked frequently and emptied as needed. Drain holes should be on the bottom of the item and need to be checked for blockage. Watch playgrounds, especially after a rain, for areas of standing water or poor drainage and take steps to ensure that this hazard is eliminated.

Children's Products Recall Information

In conjunction with the United States Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC), we are enclosing an April 2000 RECALL ROUNDUP announcement from CPSC that highlights some product recalls and safety announcements relating to children from recent years. Information about periodic recalls of hazardous products can be accessed at the CPSC website (www.cpsc.gov). In addition the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection compiles a listing of the children's related products that have been recalled during the previous month and provides this information via a newsletter called Keep Your Kids Safe. You can request to receive an electronic copy of this newsletter by sending an e-mail to mr.tuten@datcp.state.wi.us. To request a paper copy, please call (800) 422-7128 and then press zero (0) to speak with product safety. Leave your name, address or fax number and request a copy of the Keep Your Kids Safe newsletter.

Accident Reporting

Family day care centers and day camps must report accidents resulting in the death or serious injury of a child to the Bureau within 48 hours after the occurrence. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has requested that the Bureau share information related to accidents in child care programs for future review. The Consumer Product Safety Commission is an independent Federal regulatory agency that helps keep American families safe by reducing the risk of injury or death from consumer products. CPSC is collecting information from states about accidents and injuries in child care programs in order to evaluate the causes of accidents and to enhance prevention of injuries. CPSC is also interested in specific toys or equipment that may be involved in an injury to a child. This information will assist this Department and CPSC to help families and caregivers protect children.

Beginning June 2000, the Bureau will be sending a copy of the accident reports to the CPSC at their request for review. Identifying information about individual children will be blocked out and not be shared with CPSC to protect the families and children's confidentiality. The Consumer Products Safety Commission may contact a center to obtain additional information about an accident or product. You will see a change in the accident report forms available from the department forms center that asks you to identify specific toys or equipment that is involved when a child is injured. I am enclosing a copy of the revised Accident Report Form for you to use when reporting injuries.

Attachments

C: Interested Parties