

Preventing Injury in Child Care Settings



BCHealthPlanning

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Introduction

Unintentional injuries are the single leading cause of death for British Columbia children and youth aged 1-24. On average, a British Columbia child or youth is hospitalized every 40 minutes due to an unintentional injury. Each year more than 260 children are killed and over 12,000 children are hospitalized as a result of unintentional injuries.

We are concerned about the safety of our children. Whether the setting is a family day care home, a preschool, a group day care, other community settings, or parent's home, the principles and practices of Injury Prevention serve as a foundation for ensuring children's safety.

The Government of British Columbia has placed increasing priority on the prevention of injuries and illness. The Ministry of Health's PreventionCare initiative builds awareness of the extent to which injury and illness are preventable and encourages British Columbians to take action to protect themselves and their families.

This handbook provides an overview of the attitudes, knowledge and skills required by caregivers in their day-to-day work with children from birth through six years of age. It offers a practical framework for understanding childhood injuries and concrete suggestions for avoiding them!

Parents will also find the information useful in child-proofing their own homes as well as checking the child care settings they have chosen for their children.

For readers who wish to pursue Injury Prevention Issues in more depth, a bibliography and resource list are included.

A. Injury Prevention

Setting the Stage



Did you know . . .

- the vast majority of injuries are predictable and preventable.
- most injuries to young children result from burns, poisoning and choking or suffocation.
- most injuries to young children occur in the late afternoon or early evening when they are tired.
- injuries in early childhood settings occur more frequently at arrival and departure times than at other times of day.
- children are more likely to suffer injuries when they are unfamiliar with a setting.

Learning, exploring and developing new skills always involve some challenge and often, some risk! It is our responsibility to ensure the safest environment possible.

Planning for children's safety is the most effective tool for preventing injuries.

A systematic approach to planning involves:

- Active and Positive Supervision
- Safe Space Arrangement
- Developmentally Appropriate Programming and Activities
- Preventive Policies and Procedures

Active and Positive Supervision

Adults who are involved, aware and appreciative of young children's behaviours are in the best position to safeguard their well-being.

Here are some things to consider:

Know each child's abilities

Jennifer, a very active two year old, is fascinated with climbing but has not yet mastered the skill of coming down the ladder. Carlos, also age two, can manage this very well.

Establish clear and simple safety rules

"Inside we walk", "We climb up the ladder and come down the slide" and "Our toys stay on the ground when we climb" are rules that young children can understand.

Be aware of potential hazards

The log in the play yard is a source of much imaginative play. However, after a heavy rain or cold spell, the log is slippery and therefore "off limits" to the children.

Position yourself strategically

Standing nearby or being in the block play will encourage Sally to remember the rule "Your building can be as tall as you are" and discourage Michael from throwing blocks in frustration. Your presence not only serves as a reminder but also enables you to intervene quickly when needed.

Scan and circulate

Looking "up and out" and moving "with the action" are the best ways to be aware of the group as a whole and to anticipate potential trouble spots. Facing the open play space while sitting at the art table enables you to move quickly to the climber when you see the line-up growing.

Focus on the positive rather than the negative

Telling Dianne "Keep the water in the bucket" rather than "Don't splash the water" teaches her what is safe for herself, others and the environment.

Redirect

Paul, a toddler, has a tendency to bite when frustrated. Knowing this and positioning yourself close at hand will enable you to offer him a hard, plastic biting toy when needed.

With Susy, a two year old who has a tendency to hit others when angry, you might redirect her to the playdough table to "pinch and punch" something that cannot be hurt.

Safe Space Arrangement

Careful planning for children's play spaces can minimize the risk of injury.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

Consider traffic flow

In arranging your learning centres, try to avoid long corridors or large open spaces in the centre of the room. Both of these can lead to overly excited play or running.

Define play spaces

Heavy plastic sheets under the water and sand tables will confine the play, prevent slipping or falling and enable easy clean up. Placing a border around the swings will ensure safety not only for the "swingers" but for children involved in other activities.

Arrange the sleep area

Spacing sleep mats at least two feet apart will provide a path for children to walk easily and safely. Providing night lights in a darkened sleep room also will prevent tripping.

Plan for flexibility

When many children are excited about building a large block structure, consider pushing back a shelf unit. This will create a safer play space by avoiding congestion and decreasing frustration.

Developmentally Appropriate Programming and Activities

Plan and offer activities which match the needs, skills and abilities of the children in your care.

Here are some helpful strategies:

Provide appropriate activities

While toddlers enjoy placing pre-cut vegetable pieces in a soup pot, preschoolers can actually wash, peel and cut fruit for a salad.

While preschoolers welcome the challenge of hammering real nails into a piece of wood, toddlers are safe and satisfied with using a hammer and peg set.

For toddlers, walking along a strip of masking tape on the floor provides a safer choice than balance beams which are more for preschoolers.

Consider size and manageability

Children's height, strength and physical abilities are key factors when selecting tricycles, mounting hooks in cubbies or deciding to purchase chairs with or without sides.

Similarly, the size and weight of equipment such as balls, boxes and toys should ensure safe lifting, carrying or stacking.

When working with very young children, avoid small objects which could be easily swallowed or put in their ears or nostrils.

Plan field trips with safety in mind

Ensure the equipment in your neighbourhood park is suitable for the ages and developmental stages of your children.

Always try to select a route for your outing where crosswalks are clearly marked and driveways are fewer.

Make sure there will be enough adult assistance to provide close supervision.

Teach and review safety rules prior to your trip.

Preventive Policies and Procedures

Just as with all other areas of child care, policies for injury prevention define **what** to do and procedures outline **how** best to do it! These should be included in your Policies and Procedures Manual.

The following examples illustrate policies and procedures which may be adopted for your setting.

Policy: Field trips for our “over 3” group require one adult for every three children.

Procedure: Prior to the field trip, a staff member will take responsibility for enlisting help from parents substitutes and/or volunteers.

Policy: An injury prevention check will be completed every six months.

Procedure: Using the injury prevention checklist form, the condition of all indoor and outdoor equipment will be recorded and reported to the Equipment Chairperson. Any unsafe items will be removed or "off limits" until repairs are made.

Policy: A Reportable Incident form will be completed within 24 hours of the injury/incident.

Procedure: Staff present at the time of injury/incident will be responsible for:

- notifying the parents/guardians
- completing and signing the form
- filing the original at the facility and submitting one copy to the licensing officer

Policy: All staff will have current First Aid certificates.

Procedure: When hiring staff, the Head Supervisor/Director will record the expiry date of First Aid certificates for future monitoring.

Policy: All personal information required for handling children's emergencies will be recorded and easily available at all times.

Procedure: Completed and updated emergency information consent cards will be kept in a file box beside the telephone. Children's cards will be taken on all field trips.

Policy: Smoking when children are present is not permitted for health and safety reasons.

Procedure: Adults who smoke must do so outside the home or facility, in a designated area.

Adults who smoke are responsible for ensuring that matches, lighters, cigarettes and ash trays are stored securely out of children's reach at all times.

Suggestion:

It is recommended that parents receive a copy of your injury prevention policies when they receive a copy of your discipline policies.

B. Childproofing Indoor Settings



While the potential for injury is always around us, these practical suggestions can help to childproof the environment.

Furnishings

Young children love to hop and jump and therefore are vulnerable to falls, bumps and bruises.

- Round the corners and edges of equipment such as cabinets, shelves and tables to 1/2" (1.27 cm) radius.
- Keep furniture in good repair and free of sharp edges, splinters and pinch or crush points.
- Use double sided tape so that area rugs lay flat and stay in place.
- Bolt cubbies and cabinets over 4' (1.22m) in height to the wall using "L" shaped brackets.
- Store heavy objects on lower shelves.

Teach children to sit at tables when using small or pointed objects such as pencils or scissors.

Windows

Windows in any child care setting can be a source of severe injury to adventurous children.

- Ensure that low sliding windows open no more than 3 1/2" (9 cm).
- Be certain that windows which open out do not open into a walkway or other path.
- Use tempered or laminated glass to avoid shards if broken.
- Keep drapery and blind cords out of children's reach.
- Use perspex or plexiglass to protect low windows where it is not feasible to replace them with tempered or laminated glass.
- Protect glass in french doors with plexiglass or plywood or replace the doors.

Phones

Phones are a necessary distraction from the care of children.

- Install phone connections in strategic locations.
- Tape long extension cords along walls or under furnishings to prevent tripping.
- Consider using a cordless phone and taking the handset to areas where supervision is required.

Plants

Some common household plants can be poisonous if young children chew on or eat their leaves. Philodendron, for instance, is highly toxic if swallowed and can also cause skin irritation. Dieffenbachia or dumb cane and poinsettia can have similar effects. A leaf of either plant can produce severe mouth pain and swelling of the tongue.

For a complete list of poisonous plants, contact your local Health Unit or Department for a copy of the folder *What About Plants?* or the Poison Control Centre at 682-5050 or 1-800-567-8911.

- Remove any hazardous or poisonous plants.
- Store plant bulbs and seeds out of children's reach.

Hazardous Materials

A wide variety of materials can pose hazards to young children.

- All medications must be kept in a locked container.
- Check labels to avoid ingredients when purchasing art materials.
- Supervise children closely to ensure they don't put paint, brushes, crayons, pencils, pens or playdough in their mouths.
- Ensure that any toxic materials such as bleach or cleaning products remain in their original labelled containers, well out of children's reach.
- Be sure that ceilings and walls have no cracked or broken plaster and that there is no peeling or chipped paint.
- Repaint with non-lead paint those surfaces covered with high-gloss enamel before 1970.
- Ensure careful supervision when children are using toys with small parts or craft objects less than 1 1/2" (4 cm) in diameter which could lodge in their throats, noses or ears.

- Provide safe storage for purses, tote or diaper bags which may contain hazardous materials such as medications, skin preparations, nail polish, cigarettes, matches, lighters, pencaps or jewellery.

Hallways and Stairs

There are some positive steps you can take to make hallways and stairways safe.

- Ensure these areas are clear of toys, boxes, furniture or other items that might limit safe access or pose a tripping hazard.
- Keep these passages well lit.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairways over 4' (1.22 m) wide.
- Use solid plywood or vertical pickets placed closer than 4" (10 cm) apart to prevent children from falling through open spaces between handrails and stairs.

Gates and Doors

When children are not permitted access to another floor or area of a home or facility, these areas must be locked, blocked or gated.

- Secure doors with latches placed at adult height.
- Install safety gates at the top and bottom of all open stairways.
- Avoid safety gates with a “V” shape at the top so that children do not get their necks caught and choke.

Wiring, Electric Plugs and Appliances

Prevention and planning related to anything electrical is critical!

- Make certain that children do not have access to pieces of metal such as tweezers, hairpins or wire that they could push into contacts of electric plug outlets.
- Check periodically that safety covers for electric plug outlets are securely in place.
- Be very careful when electric plug outlets are located close to grounding surfaces such as hot air or hot water registers. In these situations, childproof electric plug outlets are recommended.
- Protect children from coming in contact with space heaters and radiators hotter than 110°F (43°C).

- Place any space heaters at least 3' (90 cm) from curtains, paper or furniture.
- Use ground fault interrupters when electric plug outlets are located in a bathroom.
- Locate any small electric appliances such as hair dryers, radios, kettles or toasters well away from sinks, tubs or water.
- Keep electric fans out of children's reach.
- Place or tape extension cords behind equipment or furniture to prevent tripping. Alternately, loop the cord around the back leg of a piece of furniture or cabinet. Never nail extension cords to the wall!
- Test smoke detectors monthly and change batteries, if used, twice yearly when you change your clocks.

Teach children safety rules regarding wiring, plugs and appliances.

Toys

Toys bring delight, fun and learning to children, but they can also be a source of injury.

- Check that toys are in good repair and free of sharp edges, pinch points, splinters or broken parts.
- Repair or discard broken toys immediately so that scratches, cuts and scrapes are avoided.
- Err on the side of caution when purchasing toys with small parts for young children.
- Avoid the possibility of choking by supervising very carefully when children are using small objects such as crayons, marbles, small bolts and beautiful junk!
- Ensure that young children do not have access to toys with strings or cords longer than 6" (15 cm) to prevent strangulation.
- Think about using festive streamers rather than balloons which can break and lodge in children's throats.
- Avoid toy boxes with lids as these can cause injury by falling and pinching.

Teach children to replace toys in baskets, plastic tubs, cupboards or shelves to eliminate tripping and falling over scattered items.

Walkers

While walkers can be fun for children, they present many hazards by giving infants quick access to things such as:

- tables and table cloths
- stoves and hot ovens
- all electrical appliances
- electrical cords and plugs
- unprotected stairways

WARNING: *Walkers are too hazardous to use in child care settings as caregivers cannot provide the extra attention required.*

Kitchens

Toddlers love to pull out pots and pans from cupboards and preschoolers love to participate in preparing foods! Still, some precautions are in order.

- Store caustic detergents and all poisonous substances such as bleach and cleaning solutions in cupboards with a lock or childproof safety latches.
- Keep scissors, knives, needles and pins out of children's reach.
- Mop up any spills immediately to prevent slipping.
- Store plastic bags, which can be the cause of suffocation, well away from children's reach.
- Take extra care if using styrofoam cups and plates or plastic utensils as chewed or broken off pieces could lodge in the child's throat causing choking.
- Place pots and pans with their handles turned towards the back of the stove to prevent spills causing burns.
- Be extremely careful while drinking or carrying hot items when children are in the area.
- Ensure highchairs have a wide base to prevent tripping.
- Locate highchairs away from appliances, windows and sharp corners of counters.
- Use safety straps while children are in highchairs or seated in hook-on-table chairs.

WARNING: *Avoid offering children under 4 years of age foods that increase the risk of choking, such as peanuts, hard candy, popcorn, seeds or lumps of peanut butter.*

Be certain that hot dogs, raw fruits or vegetables are cut in pieces too small to lodge in children's throats.

Sleeprooms

Whether using a bedroom in a family home or a designated room in a daycare centre, follow these safety tips.

- Purchase cribs manufactured after 1986 to ensure they meet current Canadian regulations on crib safety. Cribs must now be marked with the date they were manufactured.
- Be sure all crib parts are in good condition, with no loose or missing slats.
- Locate cribs, beds and mats away from windows and blind cords.
- Ensure that there is no more than a 1" (12.5 cm) gap between the mattress and the sides or ends of the crib.
- Check that the crib mattress support mechanism is secure.
- Use bumper pads which have no cuts or breaks.
- Prevent infants from falling out by discontinuing the use of bumper pads and removing any large toys as soon as they can stand.
- Remove cords from pacifiers, if used, to prevent strangulation.
- Discontinue use of any mobiles, crib exercisers and other toys strung over the crib when infants can sit up.
- Transfer children from cribs to beds or mats when they can climb out of the crib.
- Consider using a nursery monitor in the infant sleep room when you are involved elsewhere.
- Ensure that playpen walls are made of small mesh netting and that the vinyl pad and rail covers have no breaks or cuts.

WARNING: *Never offer propped bottles to infants. Never allow children under 4 years of age to sleep on waterbeds as these can cause suffocation.*

Bathrooms

Childproofing the bathroom requires particular care and attention.

- Ensure that platforms or stools used by children to reach the water taps are stable and will not slip.
- Store all toxic materials and cleaning products out of children's reach in a high closet or cupboards with a lock or childproof latch.
- Never leave children unattended on the diaper change table or in a bathtub.
- Make sure that containers of skin cream, lotion or powder are well out of children's reach to prevent from inhaling or swallowing these items.
- Prevent scalds and burns by installing control devices for all hot temperatures water taps so that the water temperature does not exceed 110°F (43°C).
- Test the temperature with your elbow before placing the child in the tub or bath.

Teach children to turn on the cold water tap before turning on the hot water tap.

Gyms or Gross Motor Areas

When children are involved in vigorous play, it is always a challenge to prevent injuries from falls and collisions.

- Make sure that equipment is stable and has no sharp edges, points, corners or splinters.
- Check climbers, slides, rocking boats and other equipment for protruding nails or bolts and loose parts.
- Arrange equipment to prevent collisions and ensure a safe traffic flow.
- Set up climbing equipment away from furniture, windows and walls to prevent children from falling against them.
- Place resilient matting under and around structures that are higher than 2" (60 cm) to protect children who may fall.

WARNING: Trampolines and rebounders are not recommended for child care settings as they have caused many head injuries.

Family Day Care

In a family setting, there are additional areas and items to consider when planning for injury prevention.

Basements

- Take care that children do not have access to controls for the furnace or hot water tank.
- Discard unused refrigerators.
- Keep paints, solvents, fertilizers, insecticides, laundry products and any other toxic items in a high closet or cupboard with childproof locks or latches
- Store flammable products far away from the furnace or hot water tank.
- Ensure that washers or dryers are not used as climbing or play spaces.

Workshops

- Ensure, wherever possible, that home workshops are not accessible to children.
- Lock doors or cupboards where hazardous materials or tools are kept if access to the outdoors is through the home workshop.

Fireplaces

- Screen fireplaces securely or equip them with protective guards.
- Clean chimneys at least once a year to prevent excessive build-up of combustibles.

WARNING: Keep all alcoholic beverages out of children's reach.

Ensure children do not have access to weapons, ammunition and other potentially hazardous objects.

Ensure compliance with federal laws regarding storage of weapons and ammunition.

Coping with Crises

While up to 90% of injuries are predictable and preventable, it is important to be prepared if emergencies do occur.

- Post next to the phone the number for:
 - ~ 911 Emergency services
 - ~ ambulance, fire and police where 911 is not in use.
 - ~ Your facility's address and phone number
 - ~ POISON CONTROL CENTRE
 - Lower Mainland: 682-5050 or 682-2344
 - Outside Lower Mainland: 1-800-567-8911
 - ~ Local hospital
 - ~ Ministry of Children and Family Development in the event of suspected abuse
 - Daytime: local office
 - Evenings & Weekends:
 - Lower Mainland 660-4827
 - other B.C. Communities 1-800-663-9122
 - ~ local Community Care Facilities Licensing Office
 - ~ local Health Authority
 - ~ alternate caregiver in case of emergency
- Keep in a small box by the phone up-to-date file cards which list:
 - ~ work and home phone numbers of parents/guardians and emergency contacts.
 - ~ names, addresses and phone numbers of children's doctors and dentists.
- Attach a list of contents to the inside cover or lid of all First Aid Kits and check regularly!
- Keep four quarters in any portable First Aid Kits for emergency phone calls to hospitals, parents, doctors or others; or have ready access to a cellular phone.

Remember: You can dial 911 without using a coin! Make sure all phone numbers and contacts are current!

C. Childproofing Outdoor Settings



Some degree of risk is an important ingredient of outdoor play. Our role is to minimize potential injury by ensuring a safe environment and supervising children carefully.

Comings and Goings

Here are some things to be aware of when children and their families are coming to or leaving from your home or centre.

- Repair uneven joints in outside walkways to prevent tripping.
- Remove moss or algae from wooden walkways.
- Block any stairwells or sharp declines in the yard that have a drop of 2' (60 cm) or more with 4' (1.22 m) fence.
- Install a handrail where stairs are more than 2' (60 cm) high.
- Close any open stairs by install risers at the back of each stair.
- Gate outside stairs from a deck at both the top and bottom.
- Check that fences and gates are stable and free of protruding nails, nuts or bolts.
- Trim low branches from trees and shrubs to prevent eye damage or scratches to the face.
- Sweep or clear walkways regularly.

Traffic Paths

When designing your playground, plan for clear circulation and traffic paths for both people and wheel toys.

- Define carefully the space around and between swings and slides to prevent collisions.
- Establish areas and rules for wheel toys - traffic signs, one-way routes, parking areas, adequate turnarounds.
- Create a specific area for sand play.

Equipment

Careful selection, installation and ongoing maintenance are key to playground safety!

- Consult your licensing officer for advice/guidelines when planning or renovating your playground.
- Comply with manufacturer's instructions when installing equipment and ensure manufacturer's maintenance procedures are followed so that warranties and guarantees are honoured.
- Check that climbing structures, footings, slides, rungs, steps, ropes, cables and chains are secure, in good condition and free of splinters or sharp edges.
- Ensure that swing hangers, chains and seats are in good repair and "S" hooks are securely closed.
- Check that equipment parts are not broken, worn, cracked, rusted, or missing and that nuts, bolts and screws are tight, recessed and/or covered with plastic caps.
- Be sure that children are not wearing scarves, ties, clothes with drawstrings or clothes that are too loose which may get caught on equipment.
- Ensure that riding toys are well maintained and stable.
- Provide helmets for children riding tricycles or bicycles to protect their heads and to encourage a lifelong habit.

Teach children how to use equipment safely.

Resilient Surfaces

More than 70% of all playground related injuries are from falls onto hard surfaces. Various types of energy absorbing materials will soften the impact of falls. These include loose materials like wood chips, pea gravel and coarse washed sand or synthetic materials like rubber and foam mats.

- Choose the resilient material which best suits your weather conditions and the specific application.
- Avoid using pea gravel with infants and toddlers who are likely to put these small bits into their ears, noses or mouths.

- Ensure that loose resilient surfaces are maintained between 6-12" (15-30 cm) in depth depending on equipment height.
- Rake sand or other loose resilient materials frequently to keep them soft and to fill holes and bare spots.

Remember: Regularly check all traffic paths and surfaces for litter, glass, sharp objects and animal droppings.

Plants

Many outdoor plants may cause stomach upsets, skin rashes, internal organ damage and even death. In fact, almost half the calls to the Poison Control Centre relate to plants!

Here are some examples of poisonous plants:

Trees	Shrubs	Vines	Bulbs	Plants
Horse Chestnut	Azalea	Climatis	Hyacinth	Anemone
Oak	Holly	Ivy	Daffodil	Buttercup
Yew	Hydrangea	Wisteria	Crocus	Rhubarb leaves
Laburnum	Laurel		Tulip	Tomato leaf & stem
	Rhododendron			

From: "What About Plants" B.C. Poison Control Centre

- Remove, where possible, any hazardous outdoor plants.
- Trim any low branches from trees and bushes that cannot be removed.

Teach children not to put leaves, stems, bark, seeds, berries, nuts or wild mushrooms into their mouths.



Pools and Ponds

While pools and ponds are fun in hot weather, they present particular hazards for young children.

- Supervise kiddie pools or plastic pools constantly while they are in use.
- Store pools upside down when not in use.
- Protect children from drowning in ornamental ponds by draining them, filling them in with sand or fencing them in.

Field Trips

Injuries are more likely to occur when there is a change in routine or setting. Field trips have the potential for increasing children's risk of injury.

- Check destinations and routes in advance, where feasible, to identify opportunities and hazards.
- Recruit additional adults or volunteers to accompany the group and provide extra supervision.
- Take along a portable first aid kit including coins for making emergency phone calls.
- Carry with you emergency information/consent cards for each child.
- Ensure that at least one staff member has a valid first aid certificate.

Vehicles

- Ensure that there are sufficient safety seats or seat belts for each person and that these are correctly installed and used.
- Lock all vehicle doors when in motion.
- Keep emergency/consent cards for each child and a first aid kit in each vehicle.
- Make a habit of carrying a blanket, water, some non-perishable foods, a flashlight and winter emergency supplies.
- Find a safe place to pull over if a child or the group gets overly excited.
- Use teachable moments to discuss traffic signs and road safety.

Remember: Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle!

D. Reviewing and Reporting Incidents



When an injury occurs, much can be learned about prevention from where, when and how it occurred and how it was handled.


- Complete a Reportable Incident form and, when required, submit one copy to your Licensing Officer.
- File all Incident Report forms in a central location, with a copy in the child's file.
- Analyse completed reports periodically to determine any patterns regarding time of day, equipment, location or supervision issues.
- Take corrective action, where appropriate, by adjusting your schedule, removing or limiting the use of equipment, relocating equipment or furnishings and/or increasing supervision.

Injury Prevention Checklist


Creating a safe environment is an ongoing process. This Injury Prevention Checklist is a tool to assist you in this process.


Additional copies are available through your health unit/department.

While potential hazards may be identified by any number of people - both children and adults - what matters most is that one individual accepts responsibility for taking corrective action!

 Indoor Settings	OK	ACTION REQUIRED		
	✓	PLEASE SPECIFY	ASSIGNED TO	DATE COMPLETED
Furnishings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture is in good repair & free of sharp edges, splinters, pinch or crunch points. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugs are laying flat. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy objects are stored on lower shelves. 				
Windows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drapery & blind cords are out of childrens reach. 				
Plants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulbs & seeds are stored out of childrens reach. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no hazardous or poisonous plants. 				
Hazardous Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic materials & cleaning products are in original containers & out of childrens reach. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceilings & walls are free of cracked or broken plaster & peeling or chipped paint. 				
Hallways & Stairways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear of toys, boxes or other items that may limit easy access or cause tripping. 				
Gates & Doors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas where children are not permitted are protected by secured doors or safety gates. 				

 Indoor Settings	OK	ACTION REQUIRED		
	✓	PLEASE SPECIFY	ASSIGNED TO	DATE COMPLETED
Wiring, Electric Plugs & Appliances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety covers for electrical plug outlets are in place. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space heaters are at least 3' (90cm) away from flammable items. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small electrical appliances are well away from sinks or tubs. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical fans are out of children's reach. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke detectors are tested every month. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batteries in smoke detectors are changed twice a year. 				
Toys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toys are in good repair & free of sharp edges, pinch points, splinters or broken parts. 				
Kitchens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poisonous materials are stored in cupboards with locks or childproof latches. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scissors, knives & other sharp items are out of children's reach. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic bags are not accessible to children. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highchairs are located away from appliances, windows and sharp corners. 				
Sleeprooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cribs are in good condition with no loose or missing slats. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cribs, beds & mats are located away from windows & blind cords. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cribs have less than 1" (2.5cm) gap between mattress and crib side or edge. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The crib mattress support mechanism is secure. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bumper pads are free of cuts or breaks. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bumper pads & large toys have been removed from cribs of infants who can stand. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toys are not strung over cribs of infants who can stand. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vinyl covered pads & rail covers for playpens are free of cuts or breaks. 				

 Indoor Settings	OK	ACTION REQUIRED		
	✓	PLEASE SPECIFY	ASSIGNED TO	DATE COMPLETED
Gyms & Gross Motor Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment is free of loose parts or bolts, protruding nails or splinters. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing equipment is located away from windows, walls & other furniture. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures higher than 2' (60cm) have resilient mats under & around them. 				
Bathrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platforms or stools used at hand basins are stable & slip proof. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic materials & cleaning products, skin cream, lotions & powders are not accessible to children. 				
Basements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paints, insecticides, laundry products & other toxic items are not accessible to children. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flammable products are stored away from furnace or hot water tank 				
Guns & Rifles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guns and rifles are unloaded & locked away in an area not accessible to children. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ammunition is stored separate from the firearm & in a locked closet. 				
Alcohol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol is out of childrens reach. 				

 Outdoor Settings	OK	ACTION REQUIRED		
	✓	PLEASE SPECIFY	ASSIGNED TO	DATE COMPLETED
Comings & Goings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fences & gates are stable and free of protruding nails, nuts or bolts. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkways are level. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low branches are trimmed from trees and shrubs. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden walkways are free of moss & algae and are non-slip. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkways are swept regularly. 				
Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing structures, slides & swings are stable. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rungs, rails & steps are free of splinters or sharp edges. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing hangers, chairs & seats are in good repair & "S" hooks are securely closed. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment parts are not broken, worn, cracked, rusted or missing. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts, bolts & screws are tight, recessed and/or covered with plastic caps. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ropes, chains & cables are in good condition. 				
Resilient Surfaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient material under & around climbers & swings is between 6-12" (15-30cm) deep, depending on equipment height. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose resilient materials are raked & there are no holes or bare spots. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground is free of litter, glass, sharp objects & animal droppings. 				

Checklist completed by: _____

Date: _____

All follow up completed by: _____

Date: _____

References, Reading and Resources

In both Canada and the United States, national pediatric and public health organizations have recently published comprehensive references and guidelines for child care programs:

- Canadian Pediatric Society. **Well Beings: A Guide to Promote the Physical Health, Safety and Emotional Well-Being of Children in Child Care Centres and Family Day Care Homes, Vol. 1 & 2.** Ottawa Ont.: Canadian Pediatric Society, 1992. (Available from Canadian Pediatric Society, 401 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON, K1H 8L1).
- **Caring For Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs.** Washington, DC: American Public Health Assn./American Academy of Pediatrics, 1992.

Two other recent publications provide a wide ranging overview of health and safety issues, including a focus on injury prevention, in child care programs.

- Shapiro, Kendrick A, Kaufman R. Messenger KP (eds). **Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs.** Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1991 edition.
- Aronson, Susan S. **Health and Safety in Child Care.** New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991.

For outdoor playground design and safety issues, two key publications, the first providing a technical standard and the second an overview of safety and design principles are:

- **A Guideline on Children's Playspaces and Equipment.** Toronto, Ont.: Canadian Standards Association, CAN/CSA-A614-MM90, Rev. ed. 1991.
- Esbensen, Steen B. **The Early Childhood Playground: An Outdoor Classroom.** Ypsilanti, MI: High Scope Press, 1987.

For both parents and caregiver there are a number of available books providing general information on childproofing environments. These include:

- Vandervort, Don. **Making Your Home Child-Safe.** Menlo Park, CA: Sunset Books, Lane Publishing, 1988.
- Stewart, Arlene. **Childproofing Your Home.** Addison Wesley, 1984.
- Miller, Jeanne. **The Perfectly Safe Home.** New York, NY: Simon & Shuster, 1991.

Videos also provide information about childproofing and injury prevention for both adults and children. In child care settings these might be used with children and/or parents as part of an injury prevention education program.

- **KidsCare** is a compilation of 2 videos, **Home Safety With Radar** for children and **An Instant In Time** for parents. Distribution by the National Film Board of Canada (contact 1-800-661-9867). The KidsCare initiative is a national awareness program on child safety relating to consumer products and includes product safety information materials suitable for display or distribution (contact Health Canada).

- **Home Safe** produced in conjunction with the Canadian Red Cross Society provides information about first aid and injury prevention for parents and other caregivers.
- **Good Beginnings: Family Day Care**, the educational video series developed by the Western Canada Family Day Care Association of BC, includes a video on **Promoting Health, Safety and Nutrition**. (Available from WCFDCA or the Open Learning Agency).
- **Family Child Care Health and Safety Video and Checklist** focuses on creating safer home environments in family day care homes. (Available from Redleaf Press, St. Paul, MN).

The Canadian Institute of Child Health (885 Meadowlands Drive East, Suite 512, Ottawa ON., K2C 3N2) provides a range of safety and injury prevention related materials including programs especially directed to parents and caregivers including:

- **Safe Not Sorry** and **When Child's Play is Adult Business** booklets.
- **Max the Safety Cat** program which uses a handpuppet, Max, and accompanying curriculum manual to deliver safety messages to young children.

Information and materials on traffic safety and seatbelt use for young children are available through the Traffic Safety Programs Department of the Insurance Corporation of BC. Information on bicycle safety and helmet use is available from Cycling BC. Curriculum materials on both these areas is also available from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in Washington, DC.

As part of the renewed focus on injury prevention education and action a number of new initiatives are developing at the national and provincial level. These include:

- **Safe Kids Canada** will support public education, research and the development of new prevention programs., Support will be provided to the development of local injury prevention coalitions.
- **Safe Start** is a BC-wide injury prevention program coordinated by BC's Children's Hospital. Safe Start will reach out to children most at risk by working within communities to educate parents about potential hazards.

