

Head Start/Early Head Start Policies and Procedures

Facilities, Supplies, Materials and Equipment

(This is a supplemental policy/procedure. It does not supersede community care licensing regulations and/or and Head Start Performance Standards)

Procedure

Guidance: In accordance with 1302.47, Safety Practices, of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, programs must establish safety practices that ensure children are kept safe at all times. Facilities where children are served, including areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, and eating will meet state, federal and local regulations to ensure child safety. *The Caring for Our Children Basics* guide is referenced for additional information and best practices.

This procedure does not supersede state, federal or local laws and regulations. It serves as program guidelines and expectations which complement existing standards, laws and regulations.

Procedure:

FACILITY

All facilities will meet licensing requirements in accordance with Section 1302.21(d)(1) and 1302.23(d) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and be kept safe through an on-going system of preventive maintenance.

In addition to Head Start Program Performance Standards, state and federal laws and regulations, other special provisions include:

Ceilings:

- Ceilings shall remain free of any items (hanging or posted) such as artwork, curtains, flyers, canopies, signage (with exception of exit signs), etc. This includes any ceiling surface in the facility including entryways, hallways, classrooms, offices, common areas, kitchens/food prep areas, teacher work areas, etc.
- Exit lights and signage shall remain visible at all times.

Floors:

- For centers who are housed in historic buildings or have hardwood floors, no tape of any kind may be used on the floors.
- For all other centers, only red plastic tape from facilities may be used on the floors. Anytime the tape on the floor becomes dirty, old or starts to come up, it needs to be replaced.
- Upon notice from facilities that a center's floors will be waxed; all red plastic tape must be removed and may be replaced after the waxing has occurred.

Walls:

- Artwork may be displayed on the walls as long as no more than 25% of the wall space is covered. Nothing to be posted on the doors for any reason.
- Bulletin boards should be used as much as possible to display artwork, flyers, notices, etc. The use of bulletin boards helps limit damage to the walls/paint often caused by tape, nails, etc.
- Recycling posters should be displayed on the wall over the waste bins. Only Painters tape may be used on the walls. Masking or Scotch tape are not allowed at any time.
- Staples may be used sparingly, when the Painters tape is not sturdy enough to hold the item (there should not be excessive number of staples on the walls). Any staples that are not in use must be removed promptly.
- 3M or Command products may not be used on classrooms', offices' and/or common areas' walls at any time.
- Anything posted on walls or bulletin boards, needs to be current and in good repair. Materials that are faded, torn or dirty needs to be replaced.
- Push pins are not permitted in the center (i.e. in classrooms, offices and/or common areas).
- Walls shall not be painted, stenciled and/or wallpapered, in any form, except by SETA facilities personnel and/or SETA contracted vendors.

Path to Egress (Emergency exits):

- Doorways, exit access paths, passageways, corridors, stairwells, and exits should be kept free of materials, furniture, equipment, and debris to allow unobstructed egress travel from inside the child care facility to outside.

Extension Cords/Electrical Cords:

- Only power strip/surge protectors are permitted for use in the facility. Extension cords are not permitted. When used, power strips should not be placed through doorways, under rugs or carpeting, behind wall-hangings, hanging from the ceiling, or across water-source areas.

- Power strips should not be frayed or overloaded.
- Power Strips should be placed beyond children's reach.

Plants:

- Poisonous or potentially harmful plants are prohibited in any part of the child facility that is accessible to children.
- Plants should be labeled as to type of plant and "non-poisonous"
- All plants not known to be nontoxic should be identified and checked with the local poison center to determine safe use.
- Plants may only be contained in plastic containers. No glass containers are permitted, including terrariums are permitted.
- Cactus plants/succulents with sharp edges/stickers are prohibited in the facility (indoors and outdoors).

SUPPLIES/MATERIALS

Supplies/materials shall meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC) or the American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM). In addition to Head Start Program Performance Standards, state and federal laws and regulations, other special provisions include:

Art and Craft Materials

- Only art and craft materials that are approved by the Art and Creative Materials Institute (ACMI) should be used in the child care facility. Art and craft materials should confirm to all applicable ACMI safety standards.
- Materials should be labeled in accordance with the chronic hazard labeling standard, ASTM D4238.
- It is prohibited to use unlabeled, improperly labeled, old, or donated materials with potentially harmful ingredients.

GENERAL FURNISHINGS AND EQUIPMENT

Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, strollers, and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children, and as applicable, other equipment and materials meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC) or the American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM).

In addition to Head Start Program Performance Standards, state and federal laws and regulations, other special provisions include:

Indoor and Outdoor Furnishings

- Equipment, materials, furnishings and play areas should be sturdy, safe, and in good repair.
- Children should be supervised at all times when using art/writing materials and never allowed to draw/write on play structures or walls.
- Equipment, materials, furnishings and play areas should meet the recommendations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for control of safety hazards.
- All equipment or furnishings in the facility (indoors and outdoors) shall be purchased from a SETA-authorized vendor. Non-SETA-authorized equipment or furnishings purchases require Program Officer's and Manager's approval including but not limited to tables, chairs, shelving units, storage units, couches, chairs, coffee tables, tires, garden boxes, etc.
- All outdoor furnishings and equipment shall be designed and made for outdoor use.
- Indoor furnishings shall not be used outdoors.
- Pillows and soft goods used in the classroom must be designed for child use (i.e. no dog/cat beds)
- Padding for soft fall zones will be provided by SETA-approved vendors. Mattresses/futons are prohibited in the classrooms.