

Smoking, Tobacco, Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, and Toxic Substances in Child Care



Intent Statement

The age, defenselessness, and dependence upon the judgment of caregivers/teachers of the children under care make the prohibition of the use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and toxic substances an absolute requirement for children's safety and well-being.

Procedure and Practice

Because of the safety hazards of smoking and the health risks to children of second-hand and third-hand smoke exposure, smoking any time in proximity of child care areas (on the facility campus) is prohibited. This includes times when children are transported, when playing in outdoor play areas not attached to the facility, and during field trips.

- Infants and young children exposed to secondhand smoke are at risk of developing bronchitis, pneumonia, and middle ear infections when they experience common respiratory infections and infants may be at increased risk for SIDS.
- Third-hand smoke, or the gases and particles clinging to smokers' hair and clothing, cushions, carpeting and outdoor equipment after visible tobacco smoke has dissipated, are a health risk for children. The residue includes heavy metals, carcinogens, and even radioactive materials that young children can get on their hands and ingest, especially if they're crawling or playing on the floor.
- Residual toxins from smoking at times when the children are not using the space can trigger asthma and allergies when the children do use the space.
- Cigarettes used by adults are the leading cause of ignition of fatal house fires.
- Adults that smoke are modeling unhealthy behavior for children.

Because safe child care necessitates alert, unimpaired caregivers/teachers, the use of alcohol or illegal drugs and substances any time in proximity of child care areas (on the facility campus) is prohibited, including times when children are transported, when playing in outdoor play areas not attached to the facility, and during field trips. Off-site use prior to or during work hours, of alcohol, illegal drugs, over-the-counter (OTC) medications or prescription medications that have not been prescribed for the user, is prohibited.

- Adults under the influence of alcohol and other drugs cannot take care of young children and keep them safe.
- Alcohol and illegal drug use and misuse of prescription or (OTC) drugs prevent caregivers/teachers from providing appropriate supervision and care to infants and children by impairing motor coordination, judgment, and response time.

Education

Developmentally appropriate health and safety education materials regarding the health risks of smoking and second hand smoke will be used in children's activities. Staff should also share these with the families whenever possible.

Information to employees about available drug, alcohol, and tobacco counseling and rehabilitation, and any available employee assistance programs will be provided.

Applicable

This policy applies to all staff, substitute staff, parents and volunteers in the child care setting.

Communication

This policy will be reviewed with parents upon application and a summary copy will be included in the parent handbook. This policy will be reviewed with staff upon implementation, at orientation, and annual staff training.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd edition.* Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. Also available at <http://nrckids.org>.

Division of Regulated Child Care. 922KAR2:120: Child Care Health & Safety Standards <http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc>

Kentucky Child Care Health Consultation Program <http://kentuckycchc.org>

Reviewed by

Director/Owner

Board Member

CCHC/Health Professional

Staff Member

Parent/Guardian

Effective Date/Review Date

This policy is effective immediately. It will be reviewed yearly by the center director.