

HEALTH LINK ONLINE

Uniting Children, Parents, Caregivers and Health Professionals

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Heat-Related Illness

Outdoor play helps develop gross motor skills, provides a change of environment, helps prevent obesity and promotes enjoyment of nature. However, in warm weather, everyone who cares for children should be aware of heat-related illness. Know how to prevent it, and how to recognize it.

Good preventive measures include: drinking plenty of fluids before and during activity as well as throughout the day. For example, each 20 minutes offer a drink of water, even if the children don't seem thirsty. Dress children in one layer of lightweight, light colored clothing made of absorbent material to help sweat evaporate. Provide shade for children while they are outdoors.

Have the children play in a sprinkler to cool off when it is very hot.

On warm days, listen to local weather reports for the predicted heat index and air quality. When the weather forecasts say the heat index or air quality could pose a significant health risk, have the children remain in cool indoor settings. The heat index correlates the outdoor temperature and the relative humidity. The Iowa Department of Public Health has a color coded chart to determine when heat index conditions are comfortable, require caution or are dangerous for outdoor play. The weblink for the chart is:

www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/common/pdf/weatherwatch.pdf

Heat-related illness can occur whenever children play actively in a warm environment. Children can overheat and become dehydrated easily. Signs that suggest a child is in trouble are: the skin is hot and pink or red; sweating has stopped; the child feels dizzy and nauseous; the child is complaining of a headache, stomach cramps, or is breathing rapidly. If you suspect a child has any symptoms of heat-related illness, remove the child to a cool and shaded place. Cool the child's skin with cool water. If the child does not feel better quickly, call for medical advice right away.

Beth DelConte, MD, FAAP— Pediatric Advisor, ECELS-Healthy Child Care Pennsylvania



Sun Safety Resources

The Sun Safety Alliance has a *Sun-Safe Childcare Project*. They have materials you can download, including children's activities, teacher resources and parent education materials on their website. Go to <http://www.sunsafetyalliance.org/resources.html>

The American Academy of Dermatology makes grant awards of \$8,000 each to non-profit organizations that serve children for the purchase of permanent shade structures to provide shade and ultraviolet (UV) ray protection for outdoor areas. The Academy also provides a permanent sign to be displayed near the shade structure promoting the importance of sun safety. The Academy receives support for this program from Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Company. Applications for the 2009 Shade Structure Program are available. Applicants must be sponsored by a dermatologist who is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology. The application guidelines are at <http://www.aad.org/public/sun/grants.html>.

Playground Supervision Online Course Available

Playground Supervision for Child Care Providers is a valuable, interactive, one-hour, self-paced, online course. It is available from The National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS).

Once you sign up online, you have two weeks to complete the course. The content includes new ideas and techniques for safe supervision practices in the outdoor play environment. The focus is the ABC's of playground supervision:

Anticipate potential dangers and problems, recognize unsafe **B**ehaviors, and assess the **C**ontext or environment of the play area.



You should complete the Course Preparation segment prior to the training. It is easier to use the course navigation instructions if you print them out before you begin. Then you can refer to these instructions while you are online.

The cost is \$15.00 with an additional \$10.00 fee for CEU credit. To access the course, go to the NPPS website www.playgroundsafety.org. For more information from NPPS by phone, call: 800-554-PLAY(7529).

Sandy McDonnell, ECELS Training/Technical Assistance Coordinator

Promote Influenza Vaccine for 2008

All children and all those who care for children in group care settings should get yearly flu vaccine. In 2007, flu vaccine prevented many deaths and serious illnesses. Plan flu vaccine campaigns for this fall. The PA Department of Health is planning to offer free flu vaccine to attendees at the Early Childhood Education Summit for PACCA-Head Start-PAFPC-OCDEL on October 20-22, 2008.

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ECELS and Keystone STARS



Keystone STARS promotes quality in early learning programs such as child care and Head Start. Programs can earn a designation of STAR 1 to STAR 4 level based on how well they meet quality standards.

Keystone STARS provides technical assistance and support for programs as they move up the STARS quality ladder. Statewide, ECELS offers technical assistance, professional development and linkages to child care health consultants to improve health and safety in programs in Keystone STARS as well as those not yet in STARS.

Approximately 4,000 programs participate in Keystone STARS in Pennsylvania. Participating programs include centers, group child care and family child care homes. Keystone STARS is a state-funded program operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (PA DPW). For many years, PA DPW has sustained the work of ECELS with annual grants.

Oral Health Resource

Denise Cressman, President of the Pennsylvania Home-based Child Care Association suggests registering on the Colgate website to access a wide range of oral health education materials, games, curriculum and special offers at www.colgatebsbf.com. You'll find a variety of creative ways Colgate has linked oral health learning with literacy and other learning objectives. Denise says she has adapted some of the website's K-3rd grade *Legend of Tooth Kingdom* activities for younger children. The curriculum features language, art, math, and social studies.

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