

Early Childhood Education Linkage System (Healthy Child Care Pennsylvania)
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To: Pennsylvania Early Learning Practitioners

From: Susan S. Aronson MD, FAAP
Pediatric Advisor

Libby Ungvary, M.Ed.
ECELS Director

Re: ECELS Environmental Health Self-Learning Module

Dear Early Learning Practitioner:

Thank you for your interest in the ECELS Environmental Health Self-Learning Module. This module uses an Environmental Health module from a curriculum that is posted on the website of the California Childcare Health Program. Although the California materials support a workshop, the content is appropriate for this Pennsylvania self-learning module. The module addresses many types of environmental hazards and provides extensive follow-up resources, fact sheets, references and handouts. Please disregard California-specific references in the materials. We have added some Pennsylvania-specific references and notes below.

The Learning Objectives for this self-learning module are:

1. To describe why young children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental exposures.
2. To identify the leading environmental health risks for children.
3. To describe the effects of hazardous exposures on children's health.
4. To describe actions to reduce environmental health exposures.
5. To describe three ways to address children's environmental health needs in early learning programs.
6. To identify the key environmental health resources available to assist and support early learning practitioners and families.

To receive two hours of Professional Development credit in the PA Keys to Professional Development system for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module, follow the instructions below:

This self-learning module is available online or in print from ECELS. If you are requesting the print version from ECELS, you will receive all documents described below.

1. Print out and complete a copy of the Registration Form for ECELS Self-Learning Modules. Find the link to this form on the ECELS website in the general instructions for using Self-Learning Modules.

2. Read the first 18 pages of this module on the California website, and then view the remaining pages to become familiar with them. The California module has 74 pages. After the first 18 pages, the module offers group activities, resources, references, checklists and handouts. To access the California material most easily, click on the direct link below:

http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/CCHA/17_CCHA_EnvironHealth_0506_v3.pdf

If you have difficulty using the extended website address, try starting from the homepage of the California Childcare Health Program: <http://ucsfchildcarehealth.org/>. Click on the tab at the top of the page labeled “Publications and Resources,” then click on “Training Curricula” on the left pane of the page, and then select [The California Training Institute Curriculum for Child Care Health Advocates](#). Scroll down to the topic “Environmental Health” near the bottom of the list of topics covered in this course. If you still have difficulty finding the material, contact ECELS (800-243-2357 or 800-395-3948) for help.

Please note: ECELS cautions that the recommendations found in the California curriculum on pages 53-55 describe home-made cleaning products and “earth-friendly” approaches. These recommendations are not evidence-based and not supported by the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics. ECELS recommends checking manufacturer’s labels for toxicity and proper use before using any product. Also, when dealing with a mold problem, ECELS recommends consulting the EPA at <http://www.epa.gov/mold/cleanupguidelines.html> or call 800-438-4318 for a free copy of the EPA guide, Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings.

3. In the California Childcare Health Program Environmental Health module, complete the **CHEMICAL HAZARD SURVEY OF ECE PROGRAM** on page 35 and 36 (in the English version), and the **CHILD CARE INVENTORY FOR AIR POLLUTION HAZARDS** on pages 59-63. You will be asked to describe the results of your use of these survey tools in the answers to the questions in the “ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module” that you must return to ECELS for professional development credit. If you cannot assess some items on these surveys in your facility, list those items as hazards. Not knowing the status of a potential hazard is a hazard.
4. Review the handouts on pages 59-63 in the California Childcare Health Program Environmental Health module. There are many that you may want to copy for staff and parents in your facility. In the answers to the questions on the “ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module” that you return to ECELS, you will be asked to list which handouts you plan to copy and distribute in your program.
5. Plan with your co-workers how to reduce environmental health hazards in your facility. You will be asked to describe your plans for environmental health hazard reduction in the answers to the questions on the “ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module” that you return to ECELS.
6. Share the information on environmental health with families in your program. In the answers to the questions on the “ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module” that you return to ECELS, you will be asked to describe what information you shared with families on this topic and how you did it.
7. Print out and answer the questions on the “ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module” that you return to ECELS that follow this memo.

Each staff member requesting credit for completion of this module should return the following items to be checked for satisfactory completion of the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module:

- Your answers to the questions on the “ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module”
- Your completed Registration Form for ECELS Self-Learning Modules.

Send the completed items to:

**ECELS/Healthy Child Care PA
Rose Tree Corporate Center II
1400 N. Providence Road, Suite 3007, Media, PA 19063**

FAX: 484/446-3255

If you have any incomplete or incorrect information, an ECELS staff member will call you to help you complete the module satisfactorily. When satisfactory completion is accomplished, ECELS will register two hours of credit for you in the PA Keys to Professional Development system.

This module was adapted with permission from
The Instructor’s Guide to The Curriculum for Child Care Health Advocates, The California
Childcare Health Program, Environmental Health Module, 1st edition - 2006
http://ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/Instructors_Guide/CCHA_IG_17_EnvironHealth_v3.pdf

Primary Messages of ECELS Environmental Health Self-Learning Module

1. Children have special vulnerabilities to environmental toxins and hazards.
2. The adults in the children's environment must protect them from exposure to lead, pesticide and household chemicals by reducing the presence of these toxins in the environment and by using the least toxic chemicals.
3. Children are affected by poor environmental factors, including air quality (indoor and outdoors), water quality and certain weather conditions, such as sun and ozone.
4. Adults can advocate for improved environmental health and can protect children from the effects of adverse environmental factors.
5. Children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental toxins because of their developmental stage and physical size.
6. The five worst environmental risks to the health of young children are environmental tobacco smoke, lead, air pollution, pesticides and drinking water pollution (Crain, 2000; Gratz & Boulton, 1993).
7. Exposure to lead is the most common health problem in children. Lead poisoning affects every system in the body and can cause harm even at low levels.
8. Indoor air is often more polluted than outdoor air. Air pollutants can come from sources such as air fresheners, cleaners, adhesives, arts and crafts supplies, and materials for buildings or furniture.
9. Only 1% of pesticides applied indoors reach the targeted pest, and the rest may pollute surfaces and air in the treated environment.
10. Sunscreen alone is insufficient for solid sun protection. The best line of defense against the harmful rays of the sun is a combination of protective clothing, hats with a broad brim and sunglasses that block 100% of the ultraviolet rays.
11. Washing a child's hands with soap and water immediately after outdoor play and especially before eating continues to be an important prevention strategy in attempts to minimize exposure to environmental hazards.

Pennsylvania-Specific Environmental Health Resources

The PA Department of Environmental Protection offers information on environmental topics under the categories of Air, Land, Water, and Energy. Information about laws and local activities are posted. Contact information for PA Department of Environmental Protection Regional Offices is posted on this site also. Visit the site at www.depweb.state.pa.us. Click on the topic heading, then select the fact sheet that interests you. For example, the fact sheet on Air Pollution in PA describes common pollutants found in the air outdoors and indoors, what you can do to improve the air, air pollution laws, the responsibility and contact information for the offices of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has a Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program comprised of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP), Lead Hazard Control Program (LHCP), and the Lead Surveillance Program. The Department of Health provides a toll-free Lead Information Line (**1-800-440-LEAD**) to respond to caller inquiries and provide written materials about childhood lead poisoning. For more information visit the PA DOH website at www.dsf.health.state.pa.us, look under the programs for Family Health and select Lead Poisoning Prevention.

ECELS Self-Assessment for the Environmental Health Self-Learning Module

Name of Person Completing this Self-Learning Module _____

Address _____

Name of Early Learning or School-Age Facility _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ Fax Number (with area code) _____

Director/Administrator/Operator of Facility _____

Directions: **Circle the one best answer** for each question where choices are offered. The answers to the multiple choice questions are in the material that you have been instructed to read and review to complete this module.

Fill in the answers to the other questions. Use additional sheets of paper if you need more room to answer any of the questions.

1. What are the five worst environmental risks to the health of young children?
 - a. Pesticides, lead, dirt, tobacco smoke, and spoiled food
 - b. Mold, lead, tobacco smoke, pesticides, and contaminated drinking water
 - c. Tobacco smoke, lead, pesticides, ozone, and mold
 - d. Tobacco smoke, lead, air pollution, pesticides and drinking water pollution
 - e. Tobacco smoke, spoiled food, lead, dirt, pesticides

2. Sandboxes can be made safe for children by:
 - a. Making sure the sides are non-toxic materials, not creosote-saturated railroad ties
 - b. Buying only natural river, beach or silica-based sand, not products made from crushed limestone, crushed marble or other types of sand that are dusty to avoid asbestos or asbestos-like materials
 - c. Covering the sandbox to prevent contamination with animal feces and parasites
 - d. Raking the sand regularly to remove debris and dry it out.
 - e. All of the above.

3. Noise pollution can be reduced by:
 - a. Adding absorbent surfaces and varying the height of ceilings and furniture
 - b. Reducing sources of loud noises
 - c. Separating quiet and noisy play areas
 - d. Blocking noise from outside the child care area with properly designed windows, seals on doors, and outdoor landscaping
 - e. All of the above

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4. A surface should be visibly clean before a chemical is applied to sanitize or disinfect it.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. Which chemicals are safe and effective as sanitizing solutions in early education and child care settings?
 - a. Diluted household bleach mixed fresh daily in a dilution of 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart of water, and then applied as a spray which is left in contact with surfaces for at least 2 minutes.
 - b. Chemicals which say they are registered as "Hospital Grade Germicide" sanitizers or disinfectants with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and have a Manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) that the maker of the product provides that says they can be safely used where children are present.
 - c. Vinegar diluted with water, 1 part vinegar to 4 parts water
 - d. Responses a and b
 - e. Responses a, b and c

6. Which of the following health concerns are related to carpeting?
 - a. Carpets gather molds and dust mites
 - b. Carpets gather lead dust, pesticides and other cleaning chemicals used on them
 - c. When carpets are contaminated by body fluids, they pose a bigger sanitation challenge than similarly contaminated hard surfaces
 - d. Carpets, carpet pads and carpet adhesives may emit toxic chemicals that should be thoroughly ventilated
 - e. All of the above

7. In the Environmental Health module of the California Childcare Health Program module, complete the **CHEMICAL HAZARD SURVEY OF ECE PROGRAM** on page 35 and 36 (in the English version), and the **CHILD CARE INVENTORY FOR AIR POLLUTION HAZARDS** on pages 59-63. Describe the results of your use of these survey tools below. If you cannot assess some items on these surveys in your facility, list those items as hazards. Not knowing the status of a potential hazard is a hazard. What hazards did you find? What actions will your program use to reduce the risk from these hazards in the next 6 months?

Attach additional pages if needed for your response.

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Chemical Hazard Survey of ECE Program

Hazards Found

Risk Reduction Actions in the Next 6 Months

Child Care Inventory for Air Pollution Hazards

Hazards Found

Risk Reduction Actions in the Next 6 Months

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Name of Early Learning or School-Age Facility _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ Fax Number (with area code) _____

Director/Administrator/Operator of Facility _____

8. Review the handouts on pages 59-63. There are many that you may want to copy for staff and parents in your facility. List which handouts you plan to copy and distribute in your program.

9. What information have you shared with families on environmental health? How did you share this information?

Environmental Health Topic

How you shared this information with parents