



Eco-Healthy Child Care

Eco-Healthy Child Care ensures early childhood learning environments are as healthy, safe and green as possible by reducing children's exposure to toxic chemicals.

Art Supplies



Health Concerns

Some art and craft supplies contain toxic ingredients that, when used or stored in the play room, create a significant risk to the health and well-being of children. Lead, Asbestos, and Organic solvents are sometimes used to preserve art products and to improve application. These toxic ingredients can trigger asthma, allergies, headaches, and nausea. Some inks, adhesives, pigments and clay may contain chemicals that can lead to chronic disease like cancer after repeated exposure.

Because children are more vulnerable, it is important to purchase and use supplies that are certified as non-toxic. Because young children are more likely to have contact with products on skin, hair, mouth and eyes, children in grade six and lower should only use non-toxic art and craft materials.

How Are Children Exposed?

Inhalation: The dusts and vapors from art and craft materials can be inhaled, and can damage developing lungs.

Ingestion: Children are especially vulnerable to ingesting chemicals from art supplies as they regularly put their hands into their mouths.

Skin Contact: Chemicals in art supplies can irritate skin, and pass through skin into the blood stream.

Tips for Safer Art & Crafts:

1. Use only non-toxic art supplies approved by the Art & Creative Materials Institute (ACMI). Look for ACMI non-toxic seals: AP, AP New, AP + PC, CL, CP, HL/CR, HL/NT at www.acminet.org.
2. Read labels and identify precautions.
3. Keep the workspace ventilated with open windows and fans, or work outside.
4. Do not allow children to eat or drink while using art and craft materials.
5. Ensure children wear protective smocks and wash their hands thoroughly after using art and craft supplies.
6. Use caution when considering the use of household supplies as art materials (PVC piping, liquid starch, shaving cream).

Products to Avoid:

1. Solvent Based Products (markers, oil-based paints and cements) may be extremely flammable and release toxic vapors
2. Products that contain lead and other heavy metals (some paints, glazes and enamels)
3. Products that can be inhaled, or get into children's eyes, such as: clay in dry form, powdered paints, and aerosols (spray paint, hair spray, and whipped cream)
4. Commercial Dyes
5. Instant Papier-mâché (may contain asbestos fibers, lead or other metals from colored printing ink)
6. Permanent felt tip markers or scented markers (hazardous if inhaled or ingested)
7. Powdered clay, paint or wheat paste (hazardous if inhaled)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call: 202-543-4033, ext. 13
Email: info@ecohealthychildcare.org
Visit: www.cehn.org/ehcc

Art Supplies Resources

- Teacher's classroom checklist:
www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/pdfs/kit/checklists/teacherchkstbkgd.pdf
- Guidelines for the safe use of art and craft materials: www.oehha.ca.gov/education/art/artguide.html
- List of materials prohibited for use in CA schools grades one through six.
www.oehha.ca.gov/education/pdf_zip/ArtListMay2007.pdf
- Art & Creative Materials Institute:
www.acminet.org

A recipient of EPA's Children's Environmental Health Excellence Award in 2006, Eco-Healthy Child Care (EHCC) is a national program that seeks to improve the environmental health of children by partnering with child care professionals to eliminate or reduce environmental health hazards found in child care facilities. Originally created by the Oregon Environmental Council in 2005, EHCC is now managed by Children's Environmental Health Network.