



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.

Pesticides

Health Concerns

Children may be exposed to pesticides by playing on floors, lawns, and play areas; eating pesticide-treated foods; or by handling treated pets. When pesticides are applied as a spray or aerosol, fumes often linger in the air. Such fumes are liable to drift into schools and homes through ambient air or ventilation systems.

The health effects of pesticides are dependent upon the chemical class and formulation of each pesticide, and the level and length of exposure. Acute exposure to pesticides can cause breathing difficulty, chest tightness, vomiting, cramping, diarrhea, blurred vision, sweating, headaches, dizziness, and loss of concentration. Long term exposure to pesticides can lead to asthma, cancer, reproductive harm, kidney/liver damage, birth defects, nerve tissue damage and neurobehavioral problems.

What Is a Pesticide?

A pesticide is any substance used inside or outside to prevent, control, repel, or kill insects, plants, fungi, and other pests. Of main concern is children's exposure to pesticides that contain harmful chemicals. Many chemical pesticides can spread through the air when sprayed, and seep into soil and water. Pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, plant growth

regulators, rodenticides, miticides (mite control), and molluscicides (snails and slugs).

Pesticides and the Developing Child

It is important that child care facilities and homes are free of chemical pesticides. Even low levels of some pesticide exposure are a threat to young developing bodies. Many pesticides take a very long time to break down. They persist indoors for weeks on furniture, toys and other surfaces and can persist for years in household dust. Research indicates that levels of pesticides in indoor air are often ten times higher than those measured in outdoor air.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive way to control pests and weeds. IPM uses techniques that pose the least hazards to people, property, and the environment. IPM is also cost-effective.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

Think twice before buying or using any chemical pest control products. Usually there are non-chemical solutions that work just as well.

Examples of IPM:

- Clean up food and drink spills right away (pests need food to survive).
- Fix plumbing and other water leaks (pests need water to survive).
- Seal or caulk cracks and holes (insect entryways).
- Remove clutter so pests have fewer places to hide.
- Use environmentally friendly strategies to deter pests: borax, citrus oils, cedar chips or fragrant herbs.
- Keep trash in a closed container and take it out frequently; don't let trash pile up.
- Maintain healthy soil to deter weeds and eliminate habitats favorable for pests, such as removing standing water.

If You Must Use Chemical Pesticides

- ◆ Make certain that the individual applying pesticides is a licensed professional.
- ◆ Ensure that pesticides are not applied when children are present—make sure there is a minimum of 48 hours between application and children's exposure.
- ◆ Do not allow baits/traps to be placed in areas accessed by children.
- ◆ Store pesticides out of children's reach. Place child-resistant latches on lids and cabinet doors.
- ◆ Keep all pesticides in their original containers, with their original cap securely in place.
- ◆ Keep the National Capital Poison Center telephone number handy: 1-800-222-1222.

IPM Resources

- The IPM Institute of North America, Inc.
www.ipminstitute.org/
- Beyond Pesticides
www.beyondpesticides.org
- UC Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu
- California School Integrated Pest Management Program
www.schoolipm.info
- Pest control tips and programs for child care centers:
www.spcpweb.org/childcare/
- Pest Control in the School Environment: Adopting Integrated Pest Management
www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/brochure
- Shopper's guide to pesticides in produce
www.foodnews.org/pdf/EWG_pesticide.pdf
- Pesticide Action Network of North America (PANNA)
www.panna.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.

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