

# FACT SHEET



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## Potential Environmental Hazards in Day Care Facilities



### Why should I be concerned about environmental hazards inside and outside of the day care facility?

- Very young children spend most of their time near the ground where environmental hazards may exist.
- Children crawl and put things in their mouths.
- Illness and disease may be caused by contact with environmental hazards.
- Children are still developing and are more vulnerable to many environmental pollutants.

### What are some common environmental hazards that may be present in the day care setting?

- Carbon monoxide
- Mold
- Chemicals in soil
- Second-hand tobacco smoke
- Dust/dirt
- Cleaning products
- Arsenic in pressure-treated wood
- Pesticides/insect repellants
- Craft supplies
- Lead paint
- Radon gas

### What can I do to reduce environmental hazards?

#### Mold

- Repair leaky plumbing and clean up standing water promptly to prevent bacteria & mold growth.
- Clean moldy areas with a bleach solution (1 part bleach + 9 parts water).
- Remove and discard carpets/rugs if they have been wet more than 24-48 hours; do not let children play or sleep in/near the area.

#### Carbon Monoxide

- Install a carbon monoxide detector and maintain it properly.
- Maintain fuel-burning appliances with a yearly checkup and cleaning.

#### Chemicals in Soil

- Cover bare soil with grass or mulch.
- Keep children's play area away from the building foundation.
- Have children wash their hands and face after playing outdoors.

#### Second Hand Smoke

- Never allow smoking anywhere in the building/home or grounds.

**Dirt/Dust**

- Keep carpets clean.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter and vacuum only when children are not present.
- Use barrier mats at each entrance.

**Cleaning Products**

- Avoid using cleaning products around children.
- Store cleaning products out of children's reach.
- Switch to products that contain less toxic chemicals ("green" products).

**Arsenic in Pressure-treated wood**

- Seal decks and playscapes with a weather-resistant coating such as a penetrating, oil-based stain.
- Keep children out from under the deck area.
- Put a fresh layer of sand or wood chips under playscapes after sealing.

**Pesticides/Insect Repellants**

- Empty garbage frequently.
- Store food in closed containers.
- Consider non-chemical options to control weeds and pests.
- Use insect repellants with no more than 10% DEET (do not use on infants).
- Remove standing water after rainfall to prevent mosquito breeding.

**Craft Supplies**

- Buy ACMI (Art & Creative Materials Institute) approved products labeled "A" for use by young children.

**Lead Paint**

- Wash children's hands often, especially before eating or napping.
- Keep play area clean: wash bottles, pacifiers, toys and stuffed animals regularly.

**Radon**

- Test for radon between the months of November and April as required for daycare centers and group daycare homes that use the 1st floor or basement.
- Reduce high levels of radon, when found.

More information about environmental hazards can be found on the CTDPH web site: [www.dph.state.ct.us](http://www.dph.state.ct.us) or by calling the Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program at 860-509-7740, the Lead Program at 860-509-7299, or the Radon Program at 860-509-7367.

State statutes and regulations regarding the environment in child day care facilities can be found in Section 19a-79-7 (centers and group homes) and in Section 19a-87b-9 (family day care homes) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

**Additional Resources:**

Connecticut Department of Public Health Day Care Regulations Unit: [www.dph.state.ct.us](http://www.dph.state.ct.us)

Environmental Protection Agency: [www.epa.gov/iaq](http://www.epa.gov/iaq)

Children's Health Environmental Coalition: [www.checnet.org/healthhouse](http://www.checnet.org/healthhouse)

Art and Creative Materials Institute: [www.acminet.org](http://www.acminet.org)