

Pre-licencing information on health and safety in early childhood centres

In order to assure the Ministry of Health that Early Childhood Services meet the minimum standards required by the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, and are therefore safe, healthy environments, assessments of services are undertaken. These assessments are carried out by designated officers who provide advice on any improvements that can be made to the Centres environment to staff and boards of management.

The Ministry of Health also have their own set of expectations of ECE services to ensure the health and safety of staff and children attending the centre. These are separate from the Ministry of Education's Licensing criterion. The requirements are listed below and will be checked during the Ministry of Health's designated officer's assessment for the health report. These requirements will also be monitored as part of the Ministry of Health ongoing surveillance programme.

Food safety and Nutrition

Food preparation areas are assessed for compliance with hygiene and safety requirements and to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to provide for the hygienic storage and preparation of foods and the effective cleaning of utensils.

Water Supply

Each service must have access to an adequate and safe drinking water supply. Supplies and monitoring programmes, where applicable, are assessed in relation to the Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand 2005 (Revised 2008).

Sanitary Facilities

Services are assessed for the adequacy and maintenance of toilet, hand washing, bathing and laundry facilities. Hot water storage and temperatures will also be examined to ensure minimum requirements are met.

Communicable Disease Control

A facility must be available for the temporary isolation and care of at least one sick child.

Sleeping Facilities

Where a sleeping facility is required this is assessed in terms of safety, storage and communicable disease control.

Hygiene Laundering

Linen used by children and adults is hygienically laundered. A procedure for the hygienic laundering of linen used by the children or adults is required.

General safety and hygiene

Designated Officers will assess the centre's policy in respect of a range of general health and safety matters including:

- Food safety.
- Animal hygiene.
- Heating, lighting, ventilation and noise.
- Sewage disposal (non-reticulated).
- General hygiene and cleanliness.
- General safety and maintenance for premises, furniture, fittings, equipment and materials.

Health and Hygiene policies and procedures

It is anticipated that centres will have a range of policies and procedures dealing with health and hygiene issues. Examples may include policies on routine cleaning, infection control, food hygiene training, and the handling of soiled clothing and surfaces.

Immunisation Records

The Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1995 require centres to maintain registers of each child's immunisation status. Health Protection Officers and Medical Officers of Health are authorised to examine these records.

For further advice, contact the Environmental Health Team at Auckland Regional Public Health Service on (09) 623 4600. For general advice please contact Healthline on 0800 611 116

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