

Protecting Children from Harmful Chemicals

You do your best as an ECE operator or owner to ensure children are safe from physical harm and germs to prevent sickness while in your care. But did you know there is a program that can help you assess if your area may have added risks for chemical exposures?

- Their bodies are still developing.
- They crawl and play on the ground.
- They have more hand to mouth contact.
- Exposures as children can have health effects into adulthood.



Resources



Choose Safe Places
for Early Care and Education
Planning. Guidance. Protection.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
atsdr.cdc.gov/safe-places



Health and Risk Assessment Program
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Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education (CSPECE)

Information for Early Child Care and Education Owners/Operators



CSPECE Program

Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education (CSPECE) is a federal initiative to ensure early care and education (ECE) locations are safe so children are not exposed to environmental hazards during their care. It encourages owners and operators to carefully consider the location of these facilities and adopt practices that will reduce harmful exposures to the children in care and help ensure the environment where they grow, learn and play is safe.

ECE facilities may contain contaminants like lead from former land use or from nearby sites and activities that can harm children's health. Because many children spend a majority of their time during the week in a child care center, it is important to be proactive about keeping these environments safe from harmful substances.

Where can toxic chemicals come from?

Former Use of the Property

When businesses like factories, dry cleaners or warehouses close, contaminants may be left behind in the air, soil and water.

Nearby Sites and Activities

Contaminants from neighboring businesses can travel by air, soil and water to neighboring properties.

Naturally Occurring Substances

Certain chemicals occur naturally in the earth and can pose potential health risks. For example, radon can accumulate in indoor air and arsenic and other naturally occurring metals may be found in soil and drinking water.

Drinking Water

Metals, nitrates, and bacteria are common water contaminants that can affect children's health.



The best way to learn if there are environmental hazards at a proposed ECE location is to research the property.

How Missouri is Helping

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is implementing a program that encourages thoughtful consideration about where to locate ECE facilities. DHSS is adopting practices and supporting policies that help ensure ECE programs are located in facilities where children won't be exposed to environmental hazards.

Contact the Health and Risk Assessment team at DHSS to help determine environmental impacts at your prospective ECE facility. Their expertise in human exposure to chemicals can help you understand your situation and give advice on what to do next.



Information and recommendations are available. This program is voluntary and free.