



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION

EHS Circular Letter # 2010-04

TO: Local Health Directors of Health
Chief Sanitarians

FROM: Suzanne Blancaflor, M.S., Chief, Environmental Health Section

DATE: March 10, 2010

RE: New Initiative: Child Daycare S·A·F·E·R Project

The Department is pleased to announce the Child Daycare **Screening Assessment For Environmental Risk**, or **Child Daycare SAFER Project**. This new initiative will help prevent chemical exposures to daycare children by ensuring that child daycares do not operate on land or in buildings that could be contaminated with harmful chemicals left behind by past (or current) industrial or agricultural use. The Child Daycare SAFER Project also seeks to identify and prevent situations in which co-located businesses using hazardous chemicals (such as nail salons or dry cleaners) might be adversely impacting the indoor environment of a daycare.

The goal of the Child Daycare SAFER Project is to proactively identify daycares that may be operating (or plan to operate) on land or in buildings that could be impacted by hazardous chemicals. Once identified, any necessary follow-up to abate environmental contamination hazards can be done quickly and efficiently. The Department has developed a Protocol which establishes new procedures for collecting information to identify daycares of potential concern. All daycares identified through the new Protocol receive follow-up by the Department for environmental contamination issues. The following procedures are included in the Protocol.

- The Department compares its database of licensed daycares with the CT Department of Environmental Protection database of hazardous waste sites. The database comparison identifies daycares located on or near sites with environmental contamination.
- During regularly scheduled daycare inspections, Department inspectors use a new form (Environmental Issues Referral Form) to help them identify property and building characteristics (as well as adjacent businesses) that could signal the presence of chemical contamination at the daycare.
- A new form has been added to the daycare license application to collect information from the applicant about the history of the daycare building and land. This helps the Department determine whether a past use could have left behind residual chemicals that could be a concern.



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Local Health Department Role

Local Health Departments are not being asked to take any specific actions relative to the new Child Daycare SAFER Project. However, please be aware that the Department may request assistance from Local Health Departments if a daycare needs follow-up to determine whether there are contaminants at the daycare that could pose a health threat. The Department does not expect environmental contamination problems to be frequent at daycares. When such problems are identified, staff in the Department's Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program (EOHA) have primary responsibility for coordinating follow-up actions and will inform the Local Health Director whenever a daycare needing follow-up is identified in their town/district. EOHA will also work closely with the Department of Environmental Protection on any necessary investigation and/or remediation that may be needed.

Another situation in which Local Health Departments can play a valuable role is providing assistance to daycare applicants who may contact them for information needed to complete the new property history form. Local Health Departments may have knowledge about past industrial/manufacturing or agricultural uses of a property planned for daycare use. The property history form encourages daycare applicants to ask their Local Health Department (and other town departments) about past uses of the buildings or property planned for daycare use that could have resulted in residual chemicals at the daycare property.

Lastly, local health department staff who are doing daycare inspections are welcome to use the Environmental Issues Referral Form to familiarize themselves with characteristics at a daycare property or building that could signal a former manufacturing/industrial or agricultural use. Local health departments are encouraged to refer daycares to EOHA if they see anything that suggests that hazardous chemicals could be impacting a daycare.

For More Information

An attached brochure summarizes this new Child Daycare SAFER Initiative. The full Protocol, Environmental Issues Referral Form for daycare inspectors and the property history form are available on the internet at www.ct.gov/dph or by calling 860-509-7740. For answers to any questions regarding Child Daycare SAFER activities, please contact the Department at 860-509-7740.

Please share this information with the land use planning, zoning and permitting staff in your town.

cc: Suzanne Blancaflor, M.S., Chief, Environmental Health Section
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