



## STARS Preschool Health and Safety Guidelines

*All programs must meet applicable STARS preschool health and safety standards*

### **Prevention and control of infectious diseases:**

- The parents of each child admitted to the preschool facility shall provide the name of the physician or health care facility the parent wishes to have called in case of an emergency.
- Children must be without fever of 101 degrees F or greater and be without vomiting and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before they return to the preschool facility, except that children with immunization-related fevers need not be excluded if they are able to participate in the routine of the preschool program.
- Children with a bacterial infection must be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before they return to the preschool program.
- If a child develops symptoms of illness while at the preschool facility and after the parent or guardian has left, the preschool program must isolate the child immediately from other children in a room or area segregated for that purpose; contact and inform the parent or guardian as soon as possible about the illness and request the parent or guardian pick up the child, and report each case of suspected communicable disease the same day by telephone to the local health authority.
- Before a child under the age of six may attend a Montana preschool facility, that facility must be provided with the documentation required by that the child has been immunized as required for the child's age group according to the [Public Health and Safety Division Immunization Requirements](#).

### **Medication administration:**

- No preschool employee, owner, or operator may administer any medication to a child without the written authorization of the parent or guardian, including the child's name, date or dates for which the authorization is applicable, dosage instructions, and the signature of the child's parent or guardian.
- If an emergency arises and the parent or guardian of the child is unavailable, an employee, owner, or operator may administer medicine to a child if:
  - A medical practitioner provides a written authorization containing the child's name, date or dates for which the authorization is applicable, dosage instructions, and the medical provider's signature; or
  - A medical practitioner, emergency service provider, or 911 responder verbally directs the employee, owner, or operator of the preschool facility to immediately administer a medicine to the child, in which case the child must then be transported to a health care facility or a medical practitioner for follow up care within a reasonable time by the child's parent or guardian or by an employee, owner, or operator of the preschool facility.

- An employee, owner, or operator of a preschool facility may not give medication to a child in a manner that is inconsistent with the container instructions on dosage or frequency unless directed to do so by a medical provider.
- If the teacher/facility elects to administer medication to children, the preschool facility must maintain the following documentation on site:
  - A medication record which includes:
    - The written authorization of the parents for the care-giver to administer medication;
    - The prescription by a health care provider if required; and
    - A medication administration log.
  - A written medication administration policy which includes, at a minimum:
    - Types of medication which may be administered; and
    - Medication administration procedures to be followed, including the route of medication administration, the amount of medication given, and the times when medication is to be administered.
  - A health care and medication plan for children who may have special health care needs or those requiring medication for chronic health conditions which has been approved by a health care provider licensed in Montana.
- Any prescription medication brought into the facility by the parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative of a child shall be dated and shall be kept in the original container labeled by a pharmacist with the following information:
  - Child's first and last names;
  - The date the prescription was filled;
  - The name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; and
  - The medication's expiration date, and specific legible instructions for administration, storage, and disposal (i.e., the manufacturer's instruction or prescription label).
- Any non-prescription medication brought into the facility for use by a specific child shall be labeled with the following information:
  - The date and the child's first and last names;
  - Specific, legible instructions for administration and storage (i.e., the manufacturer's instructions) ; and
  - The name of the health care provider, parent, or guardian who made the recommendation.
- All medications, refrigerated or unrefrigerated, shall:
  - Have child-protective caps;
  - Be kept in an orderly fashion and be stored away from food at the proper temperatures;
  - Kept in a location inaccessible to children or kept in a locked box.
- Medication shall not be used beyond the date of expiration

**Prevention and response to emergencies:**

- Each provider shall adopt and follow written policies for first aid consistent with recommendations from the American Red Cross. These policies must include but are not limited to:

- Procedures for handling medical emergencies, including calling the Emergency Montana Poison Control center at 1 (800) 222-1222 when a child is suspected of having ingested any poisonous or toxic substance; and
  - Directions for calling parents or someone else designated as responsible for the child when a child is sick or injured.
- A first aid kit must be kept on site at all times and must contain necessary supplies to provide immediate care for children.
- The preschool teacher is responsible for notifying DPHHS of any environmental danger or other hazard on the facility property that the teacher is aware of that could affect the health, welfare, or safety of children in care.
- A portable first aid kit must accompany staff and children on trips away from the facility.
- The facility shall submit a report to the appropriate local office of DPHHS within 24 hours after the occurrence of an accident causing injury to a child which resulted in the child being hospitalized, requiring ambulance transport or intervention, or physician treatment, or any fire in the facility when the services of the fire department were required. A copy of the report shall be provided to the parents of the children involved, and a copy retained on file at the preschool facility.
- A notation of all injuries must be made on the child's medical record including the date, time of day, nature of the injury, treatment, and whether the parent was notified.

**Building and physical premises safety:**

- No extension cord will be used as permanent wiring. All appliances, lamp cords, and exposed light sockets must be suitably protected to prevent electrocution.
- Any pet or animal, present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, must be in good health, show no evidence of carrying disease, and be a friendly companion of the children. The preschool facility is responsible for maintaining the animal's vaccinations and vaccination records. These records must be made available to the department upon request. The provider must make reasonable efforts to keep stray animals off the premises.
- Firearms are not allowed on the premises.
- The Emergency Montana Poison Control Center number, 1 (800) 222-1222 must be posted at all telephone locations at the preschool facility.
- In an emergency, all occupants must be able to escape from the facility in a safe and timely manner.
- All facilities must have two accessible exits on each level. The two exits must be far enough apart from one another to avoid having them both blocked by fire and smoke. Aisle ways and corridors leading to the exits must be kept clear of obstructions.
- If the preschool program chooses to lock the facility door to prevent unauthorized access to the facility the facility shall have no lock or fastening device which prevents free escape from the interior.
  - The locking device must not require a key, a tool, or special knowledge or effort to open the door from the inside.
  - The locked door must be easily opened with one motion from the inside of the facility.
  - Installation of locking devices may not prohibit access by parents. A facility may not utilize locking devices in a manner to prevent unannounced access by authorized individuals,

including parents. If a lock is used, the provider must make adequate provision to allow authorized people's unannounced access to the facility and must provide authorized personnel including parents with information on how to gain access.

- Any outdoor play area must be maintained free from hazards. The play area must be enclosed with a fence in good repair that is at least four feet high without any holes or spaces greater than four inches in diameter.

The play environment should include equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate.

- The play area should be well drained.
- Children with disabilities should be able to participate in the outdoor curriculum and activities.
- The outdoor play area should be arranged so children can be supervised by sight and sound at all times. Staff should practice active supervision, meaning they are moving around supervising and monitoring all play.
- There should be an area for children to have large motor experiences such as running, climbing, balancing, riding, jumping, crawling, scooting and swinging.
- Sandboxes should allow for drainage, if necessary by type and location. Sandboxes should be covered when not in use and cleaned of all foreign matter on a regular basis. Staff must replace sand as often as is necessary to keep sand clean and free of debris.
- Tripping hazards should be addressed.
- Playground shall not be shared with younger or older children at time of play.
- Equipment needed to meet Developmental Skills: Climbing and sliding structures, tricycles with helmets and paths to ride on, water and sand play equipment, art materials, structural materials (loose parts) for imaginative play, natural features to experience the seasons, various sizes of balls, wheeled vehicles to push or pull, walking board, crawl through equipment, toys for digging. Lockable storage units may be necessary to store equipment and materials.
- Toys, play equipment, and any other equipment used by the children must be of substantial construction and free from rough edges, sharp corners, splinters, unguarded ladders on slides, and must be kept in good repair and well maintained.
- Outdoor equipment, such as climbing apparatus, slides, and swings, must be anchored firmly, and placed in a safe location according to manufacturer's instructions. Recommended ground covers under these items include sand, fine gravel, or woodchips with a depth of the ground cover being at least six inches.
- Trampolines are prohibited for use by children and must not be accessible.

#### **Handling and storage of cleaning materials:**

- Cleaning materials, flammable liquids, detergents, aerosol cans, and other poisonous and toxic materials must be kept in their original containers and in a place inaccessible to children. They must be used in such a way that will not contaminate play surfaces, food, food preparation areas, or constitute a hazard to the children.

#### **Transportation:**

- The preschool program shall obtain written consent from the parents for any transportation provided.

- The operator of the vehicle shall be at least 18 years of age and possess a valid Montana driver's license.
- Children shall never be left unattended in a vehicle.
- Facilities providing transportation for children under six years of age or children six years of age but weighing less than 60 pounds shall comply with the following requirements:
  - All vehicles shall be equipped with children's car seats or booster seats that meet federal Department of Transportation recommendations for the age and weight of the child being transported; and
  - Car seats or booster seats shall be fastened securely to the seat or to the floor of the vehicle. Children shall be secured with safety belts which are secured within the vehicle according to factory assembly.

Supervision:

- Teachers must supervise children at all times.
- The Teacher, and all designated teaching staff, shall be responsible for direct care, protection, supervision, and guidance of children through active involvement or direct observation.

Children's records:

- The facility shall have a master list of the name, address, and phone number of all children enrolled and their parents.
- If medications are administered at the facility, the facility shall maintain a medication administration log.
- Prior to a child being enrolled or entered into a preschool facility, the following information must be on file:
  - Written information on each child explaining any special needs of the child, including allergies;
  - A release or authorization of persons allowed to pick up the child;
  - Necessary medical forms, including all medication authorization and administration logs, signed and updated immunization records, and the names of emergency contact persons;
  - An emergency consent form. This form must accompany staff when children are away from the preschool site for activities.



Department of Public Health and Human Services  
Quality Assurance Division  
Licensure Bureau  
Leigh Ann Holmes, Chief  
(406) 444-7770  
Fax: (406) 444-1742  
[LHolmes@mt.gov](mailto:LHolmes@mt.gov)