

Are you opening a new child care business? Consider these environmental public health concerns.

CHILDREN NEED SAFE PLACES

Choose your location wisely when opening a child care business

You may meet all other licensing requirements and create a wonderful environment in which children can thrive, but if your child care facility is located where children and staff come into contact with harmful chemicals, the children in your care are not safe.

Selecting the right location for your child care business is essential to protect the health of children and the success of your business.

We're here to help!

Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education, an Environmental Public Health program within the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, helps ensure early care and education (ECE) programs are located safely away from environmental contamination.

Keep in mind:

Children are not small adults

Children are usually more sensitive to toxic chemicals than adults.

- Their young, growing brains are more vulnerable.
- Children drink more water and breathe more air relative to adults.
- Crawling and hand-to-mouth behavior can increase exposure to chemicals in their environment.
- Exposure to toxic chemicals as a child can have lifelong effects.



Chemical hazards may be hard to detect

Some toxic chemicals can be smelled or tasted, while others can't. The best thing to do is to research the history of your property.

- How was the property used in the past? Were hazardous chemicals used on site? Businesses such as funeral homes, dry cleaners, automotive garages and nail salons may pose contamination risks. Know the history of the building and the land.
- Do nearby businesses use chemicals? These chemicals could migrate onto your property and present a health risk to the children in your care.
- Test for lead-based paint and asbestos. These materials were widely used in buildings constructed before 1978, and may still remain in older buildings.
- If the property uses well water, test the water regularly for arsenic and lead which can occur naturally.
- Cleaning products, insect repellants, weed killers, and pesticides can all be dangerous if not used properly.

It makes good business sense

- Having to shut down your business due to contamination, unsafe drinking water or a chemical leak would be expensive and costly.
- Minimize the risk to your business by carefully considering your location.

Contact Us:

Our scientists know about the health effects of toxic chemicals, and can help answer any questions you may have when choosing a location for your new business. Please email us at eph@alaska.gov if you have any questions or concerns, and for more information please visit: www.atsdr.cdc.gov/safeplacesforece/index.html

**When we work together,
we can protect children
from unwanted chemical
exposures.**

