



Health and Safety

Early Childcare Health Advocacy

Childcare programs have many responsibilities in providing quality services to the children and families enrolled in their programs. To ensure that areas concerning health, safety and nutrition are being addressed, many programs are assigning a Healthcare Advocate. The Healthcare Advocate functions to oversee that the relationships between their program, the families and health professionals is strengthened while promoting and assessing health and safety in that environment. The Healthcare Advocate also arranges for professional development and links the program with community resources that address health, safety and nutritional concerns in the care of children. The Healthcare Advocate understands that change may take time and that the responsibility to provide quality care lies in the hands of each employee in a program.

Communication between the program, the families and health professionals is important to the care of children. Programs need to develop a relationship with the parents of the children so that education in health, safety and nutrition can be more accurately assessed and addressed. The Healthcare Advocate has a working knowledge of the need for required immunizations and can refer parents to community health professionals, clinics and resources where medically sound information and services can be accessed. The Healthcare Advocate ensures that the program educates parents and employees of the need for health screenings. Health screenings that are required for children while in an early childcare program include but are not limited to height, weight, body mass index (BMI), hearing and vision. Some screens may be ordered based on observed developmental delays in areas of speech and cognitive abilities. Health screenings are not diagnostic, but are a tool in determining a child's readiness for learning and functioning in a school setting and in life. The Healthcare Advocate is able to arrange for needed screenings to be done on site and can refer families to health professionals for follow-up care as needed.

The Healthcare Advocate (HCA) is aware of community outreach programs that can provide quality education in health, safety and nutrition to the employees and families of the program. The HCA can direct the employees and families to websites like ECELS and the American Academy of Pediatrics for evidenced based resources in those areas. The HCA will use, refer to and guide others to resources including but not limited to, "Caring For Our Children," "Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools," and "Healthy Young Children" in the development of policies regarding health, safety and nutrition. The HCA encourages and assists the program in Keystone Stars participation, advancement and NAEYC accreditation.

An HCA understands that improvement and change in a program takes time and devotion. Identifying areas where change is needed/required, setting priorities and delegating tasks for implementing health, safety and nutritional standards is coordinated through the HCA.

More than half of the children in Pennsylvania are enrolled in early childcare programs. The Healthcare Advocate ensures that the care of these children is following accepted standards and therefore helps programs prepare the child for school readiness and future health.



IN THIS SECTION

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- CRIB STANDARDS
- CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN 3RD EDITION



[Link to](#)

[The New Crib Standard: Questions and Answers](#)

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

A SAFER GENERATION OF CRIBS

New Federal Requirements



5 New Federal Requirements:

- ☒ Traditional drop-side cribs cannot be made or sold; immobilizers and repair kits not allowed
- ☒ Wood slats must be made of stronger woods to prevent breakage
- ☒ Crib hardware must have anti-loosening devices to keep it from coming loose or falling off
- ☒ Mattress supports must be more durable
- ☒ Safety testing must be more rigorous

Beginning June 28, 2011 all cribs sold in the United States must meet new federal requirements for overall crib safety.

 SafeSleep is a campaign of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.



www.cpsc.gov



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The National Resource Center released the online and hard copy print versions of ***Caring For Our Children, 3rd edition*** on 6/24/2011. The publication is available online at <http://nrckids.org> and in hard copy from the bookstores of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association. ECELS organized an audio conference on 6/23/2011 to discuss some of the significant changes in the 3rd edition as well as new tools available to implement some of the standards. An MP3 recording of the audio conference and the handouts are available on the ECELS website at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org. To access the audio conference recording and handouts, go to the section on Publications and Media, then select "Let's Talk - ECELS Audio Conferences" from the section's drop down menu.