

Importance of health and safety in early childhood

[Law](#), [Security](#)



Importance of Health and safety in early childhood When opening a centre one of the most important things is Health and Safety. Making sure that the children, families and teachers are in a safe and healthy environment is paramount. The centre should ensure that all teachers and management have the same expectations regarding health and safety, that's why it is important that everyone reads the Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood and Care Centres 2008 which clearly states the high standard that everyone has to abide by.

Three really important practices from the Licensing Criteria are " Providing a Safe Environment", " Identifying and responding to childhood illness" and " Nutrition across the Early Years". As per the regulations of the licensing criteria premises and facilities standard it is up to the management and teachers to insure the premises that are being used provide sufficient and suitable space for a range of activities, eating, sleeping, toileting and food preparation to cater for a number and age range of children.

With this in mind teachers need to be mindful when setting up the environment to make sure that they are putting out equipment that is safe and will support the child's development. The environment needs to be set out in a way that is appealing to children and offers a range of activities, a space for quiet activities, room for physical play and spaces for a range of group and individual learning experiences that are age and ability appropriate for all children's learning, also making sure that the environment does not impact on the supervision of the children.

It is up to the teachers to be responsible in keeping the environment safe by doing regular safety checks and noting down any equipment that needs

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fixing. Being able to identify and respond to childhood illness is an important part of the teacher's role. Teachers should be knowledgeable in all illnesses, especially contagious and infectious illness. When working at a centre all teachers should be familiar with the centre's policy on illness and how to deal with it accordingly, also when new families start at the centre the parents should be shown or given a copy of the policy so they are also familiar with the centre's policy on illness.

It is up to the teachers to ensure that if a child becomes unwell while attending the centre they are kept either in a separate room or a safe distance from other children so as to minimise the spread of the infection. Making sure all linen used by children is hygienically cleaned is one way to stop the spread of infection. In accordance with the licensing criteria teachers must keep a written record of all serious illnesses that occur at the centre.

Concentrating on the Healthy side of health and safety it is up to the teachers to promote the importance of healthy and good nutrition to the children. Some fun and interesting ways teachers can teach children about healthy eating and good nutrition is getting the children involved in setting up and growing a vegetable garden, allowing the children to help with the preparation of meals giving the teacher the opportunity to talk about the different foods and which ones are healthy choices to eat.

As teachers we are constantly being observed by the children so therefore we should be role modelling healthy eating by eating fruit with the children and making sure to only drink water around the children, no sugary drinks. By doing this we are also keeping in accordance with the licensing criteria by <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-health-and-safety-in-early-childhood/>

supervising children while eating and offering water regularly. Children often learn more by observing others than by what they are told so as teachers we need to embrace their way of learning and lead by example.

To be successful in implementing the health and safety practices discussed above all teachers and management need to be aware of the policies regarding all aspects of health and safety, then they will be knowledgeable in implementing it into the centre and will feel comfortable talking to parents about the relevant policies regarding their child's well-being. With the help and guidance of the Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008 there is no reason why a centre cannot set up a healthy and safe environment for children of all ages and abilities to further the child's mental and physical development.

Reference List Marotz, L. R. , Cross, M. Z. , & Rush, J. M. (2005). Health, safety, and nutrition for the young child (6th ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Learning. Ministry of Education. (1996). Te Whariki: He whariki matauranga mo nga mokopuna o Aotearoa/ Early childhood curriculum. Wellington: Learning Media. Ministry of Education. (2008). Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008 And Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework. Wellington: New Zealand Government. Retrieved 20 March, 2013, from <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ServiceTypes/CentreBasedECEServices.aspx>.