

MSDE Office of Child Care
Weather Appropriate Child Care Activities

1. Child Care Indoor Temperature and Humidity

A draft-free temperature of 68°F to 75°F should be maintained at thirty to fifty percent relative humidity during the winter months. A draft-free temperature of 74°F to 82°F should be maintained at thirty to fifty percent relative humidity during the summer months. All rooms that children use should be heated and cooled to maintain the required temperatures and humidity.

These requirements are based on the standards of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), which take both comfort and health into consideration. High humidity can promote growth of mold, mildew, and other biological agents that can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation and may trigger asthma episodes in people with asthma. These precautions are essential to the health and well-being of both the staff and the children. When planning construction of a facility, it is healthier to build windows that open. Some people need filtered air that helps control pollen and other airborne pollutants found in raw outdoor air.”

Resource: CFOC-3rd “Standard 5.2.1.2: Indoor Temperature
Link to Caring for Our Children Standard for Indoor Temperature:
<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/5.2.1.2>

2. Sun Safety Including Sunscreen

Caregivers/teachers should implement the following procedures to ensure sun safety for themselves and the children under their supervision:

- a. Keep infants younger than six months out of direct sunlight. Find shade under a tree, umbrella, or the stroller canopy;
- b. Wear a hat or cap with a brim that faces forward to shield the face;
- c. Limit sun exposure between 10 AM and 4 PM, when UV rays are strongest;
- d. Wear child safe shatter resistant sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection;
- e. Apply sunscreen.

Over-the-counter ointments and creams, such as sunscreen that are used for preventive purposes do not require a written authorization from a primary care provider with prescriptive authority. However, parent/guardian written permission is required, and all label instructions must be followed. If the skin is broken or an allergic reaction is observed, caregivers/teachers should discontinue use and notify the parent/guardian.

If parents/guardians give permission, sunscreen should be applied on all exposed areas, especially the face (avoiding the eye area), nose, ears, feet, and hands and rubbed in well especially from May through September. Sunscreen is needed on cloudy days and in the

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winter at high altitudes. Sun reflects off water, snow, sand, and concrete. “Broad spectrum” sunscreen will screen out both UVB and UVA rays. Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, the higher the SPF the more UVB protection offered.

Sunscreen should be applied thirty minutes before going outdoors as it needs time to absorb into the skin. If the children will be out for more than one hour, sunscreen will need to be reapplied every two hours as it can wear off. If children are playing in water, reapplication will be needed more frequently. Children should also be protected from the sun by using shade and sun protective clothing.

Sun exposure should be limited between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM when the sun’s rays are the strongest. Sunscreen should be applied to the child at least once by the parents/guardians and the child observed for a reaction to the sunscreen prior to its use in child care.

Resource: CFOC-3rd “Standard 3.4.5.1: Sun Safety Including Sunscreen
Link to Caring for Our Children Standard for 3.4.5.1: Sun Safety Including Sunscreen:
<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/3.4.5.1>

3. Insect Repellent and Protection from Vector-Borne Diseases

Caregivers/teachers should consult with a child care health consultant, the primary care provider, or the local health department about the appropriate use of repellents based on the likelihood that local insects are carrying potentially dangerous diseases.

General Guidelines for Use of Insect Repellents with Children

- a. Apply insect repellent to the caregiver/teacher’s hands first.
- b. When applying insect repellent on a child, use just enough to cover exposed skin.
- c. Do not apply under clothing.
- d. Do not use on children’s hands.
- e. Avoid applying to areas around the eyes and mouth.
- f. Do not use over cuts or irritated skin.
- g. Do not use near food.
- h. After returning indoors, wash treated skin immediately with soap and water.
- i. Caregivers/teachers should wash their hands after applying insect repellent to the children in the group.
- j. If the child gets a rash or other skin reaction from an insect repellent, stop using the repellent, wash the repellent off with mild soap and water, and call a local poison center (1-800-222-1222) for further guidance

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k. If repellent is used on broken skin or an allergic reaction is observed, discontinue use and notify the parent/guardian.

Insect repellents should be EPA-registered and labeled as approved for use in the child's age range. Aerosol sprays are not recommended. Pump sprays are a better choice. Regardless of the type of spray used, caregivers/teachers should spray the insect repellent into her/his hand and then apply to the child. It is not recommended to directly spray the child with the insect repellent to prevent unintentional injury to eyes and mouth. Preschool children, toddlers, and infants should not apply insect repellent to themselves. School age children can apply insect repellent to themselves if they are supervised to make sure that they are applying it correctly. Parents/guardians should be notified when insect repellent is applied to their child since it is recommended that treated skin is washed with soap and water

Protection from Ticks

Caregivers/teachers should take the following steps to protect children in their care from ticks:

- a. Remove leaf litter and clear tall grasses and brush around homes and buildings and at the edges of lawns;
- b. Place wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration to recreational areas;
- c. Mow the lawn and clear brush and leaf litter frequently;
- d. Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees;
- e. Ensure that children wear light colored clothing, long sleeves and pants, tuck pants into socks; and
- f. Conduct tick checks of children when returning indoors

Mosquitoes and ticks can carry pathogens that may cause serious diseases (i.e., vector-borne diseases such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease) . Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that usually causes mild illness that lasts from several days to a week. The mosquito that spreads Zika virus is found everywhere in the world including the United States. Zika can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus. Infection during pregnancy can cause certain birth defects.

Resource: CFOC-3rd "Standard 3.4.5.2: Insect Repellent and Protection from Vector-Borne Diseases

Link to Caring for Our Children Standard for 3.4.5.2 Insect Repellent and Protection from Vector-Borne Diseases: <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/3.4.5.2>



Understand the Weather



Wind-Chill

- 30° is **chilly** and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is **cold**
- 0° to 15° is **very cold**
- 32° to 0° is **bitter cold** with significant risk of **frostbite**
- -20° to -60° is **extreme cold** and **frostbite** is likely
- -60° is **frigid** and exposed **skin will freeze** in 1 minute

Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered **comfortable**
- 90° beginning to feel **uncomfortable**
- 100° **uncomfortable** and may be **hazardous**
- 110° considered **dangerous**

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
		Wind Speed in mph								
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Air Temperature	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	-1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
	-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43
	-20	-20	-34	-41	-45	-48	-51	-53	-55	-57
	-30	-30	-46	-53	-58	-61	-64	-67	-69	-71



Comfortable for out door play



Caution



Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
Temperature (F)	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	102	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	136							
	104	119	124	131	137									
110	136													

Child Care Weather Watch

Watching the weather is part of a child care provider's job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? **Clothe** children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). **Beverages** help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. **Sunscreen** may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. **Shaded** play areas protect children from the sun.

 Condition **GREEN** - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.

 Condition **YELLOW** - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child.

OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.

 Condition **RED** - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk.

INFANTS/TODDLERS should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions.

OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

Blizzard Warning: There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.

Heat Index Warning: How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

Relative Humidity: The percent of moisture in the air.

Temperature: The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind: The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

Wind Chill Warning: There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

Winter Weather Advisory: Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.