

November 2016

This month's edition of the *Eco-Healthy Child Care® Spotlight Series* features *Penelope's Place*, a family child care facility located in Eugene, Oregon.

Penelope's Place opened in 2006 and has been an Eco-Healthy Child Care® (EHCC) endorsed facility since 2008. Penelope Jones-Vaughn, Director of *Penelope's Place*, currently cares for 16 children ages 6 weeks to 10 years. At *Penelope's Place*, their philosophy is to nurture and encourage children's natural sense of curiosity and to assist children in appreciating the joys of discovery.



Children playing outdoors at Penelope's Place

children's exposure to potential off-gassing of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Penelope sought out the EHCC endorsement because she wanted to improve the environmental health of her program, for the benefit of the children in her care. When first completing the EHCC Checklist, Penelope realized she was already following many of the best practices listed on the EHCC Checklist. However, there were some practices she began implementing as a result of the EHCC program. For example, Penelope read EHCC's Lead Fact Sheet and learned that cold water is less likely to leach lead from water pipes. Since realizing that she could easily prevent lead exposure, Penelope now only uses cold water for cooking, drinking and making baby formula. Penelope has also replaced the carpet in her family child care facility with wood flooring to reduce

children's exposure to potential off-gassing of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In addition to integrating new eco-healthy practices in her family child care, Penelope has been expanding her communications with the parents she serves. Through a parent newsletter and other communications, parents have been made aware of the EHCC program and the related eco-healthy practices that she has adopted. What makes *Penelope's Place* especially stand out is the program's commitment to using only cloth diapers for all children that are diaper dependent. This is not a requirement on the EHCC checklist; *Penelope's Place* has gone above and beyond the expectations of an EHCC endorsed facility. Every year an estimated 18 billion diapers are thrown into landfills. Even using cloth diapers on part-time basis can reduce one's environmental impact.

Still, there are challenges to being eco-healthy. One specific challenge that *Penelope's Place* has faced is that while aerosol sunscreens are not used within the child care, parents have sent aerosol sunscreens with children to school. In order to prevent this from happening, Penelope developed a policy that aerosol sunscreens provided by parents will not be used. She works to make sure that parents and their children are aware of the new policy and the environmental health effects associated with aerosol spray products. Looking ahead, Penelope would like to replace the use of bleach with an eco-healthy alternative like peroxide based bleach, when sanitizing and disinfecting.

We are pleased to highlight *Penelope's Place* for the EHCC Provider Spotlight Series for all that they do to protect children's health! To learn more about *Penelope's Place* visit their website [here](#).