



SAFE SITING OF CHILD CARE FACILITIES



WHAT IS SAFE SITING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Safe siting involves choosing safe locations for child care facilities. Safe siting of child care facilities ensures that children and child care staff aren't exposed to toxic chemicals during their time in the facility.

Even if current state child care licensing regulations are being met, it is still possible that child care facilities are located in areas or buildings where exposure to toxic chemicals is taking place. This can put children-- who are particularly vulnerable to chemical exposures--and child care staff, at risk of health problems including cancer, asthma and learning disabilities. For example, a child care facility could be located near a dry cleaner or housed in a former polluted industrial building all of which can increase exposure to harmful chemicals.

WHAT ARE SOME FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A SAFE SITE FOR A CHILD CARE FACILITY?

- **Former Use of Site**--Determine whether or not harmful chemicals were ever made, used or dumped at or near the site.
- **Nearby sites/activities**--Find out if there are businesses or manufacturers that are currently, using harmful chemicals near the site of interest. Children can be exposed to chemicals that are being used or produced nearby through the air or through the water source in the area.
- **Naturally occurring pollution**--Check that the site is not at increased risk for natural contaminants such as radon or arsenic.
- **Safe drinking water**--Ensure that the drinking water that will be in the facility is safe and free from contaminants such as lead.



WHAT IS BEING DONE TO ENSURE THAT SAFE SITING OF CHILD CARE FACILITIES IS A PRIORITY?

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has created the **Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education** program and manual to encourage consideration about where to locate child care facilities. It offers towns, cities, and states guidance on how to adopt practices that will make sure child care facilities are located away from chemical hazards.

The **Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education Guidance Manual** offers tools to help state and local health departments build safe siting programs in their communities. The Manual also encourages child care providers to consider environmental hazards when locating early learning facilities. **Click to learn more.**

Since 2017, the Eco-Healthy Child Care® program has collaborated with the Environmental Law Institute and the National Association of County and City Health Officials to assist ATSDR in providing support to state health departments in implementing the **Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education Guidance** program.



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